

Spring 2000

UNLV Magazine

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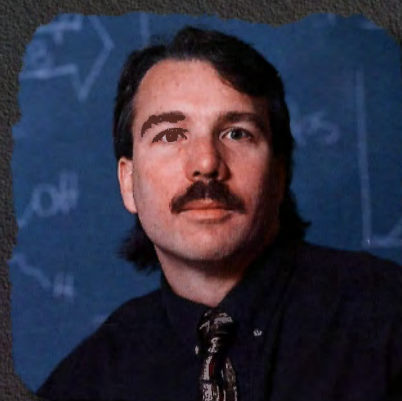
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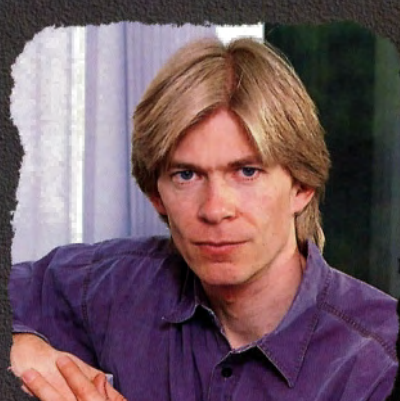
SPRING ♦ 2000

UNLV *Magazine*

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



UNLV's Team of Cancer Fighters



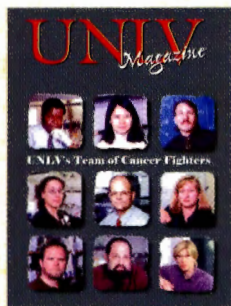
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on the cover:

The scientists of the UNLV Cancer Institute. Photos by David Phillips.

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The foster care system in our country is facing a crisis, according to Ramona Denby. As the social work professor attempts to sort out the issues through her research, she finds that easy answers are hard to come by.

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When dance professor Louis Kavouras isn't choreographing, teaching, composing, painting, or performing, he's chairing his department and finding time to dance professionally in New York. It's just all in a day's creativity, he claims.

BY BARBARA CLOUD



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Twice-elected Sheriff Jerry Keller started out with a couple of different career ideas, but law enforcement wasn't one of them. The UNLV alumnus reflects on how and why he became the top cop in the fastest-growing city in the nation.

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Bennett Donates \$5 Million to Build New UNLV Preschool

A \$5 million gift from William G. Bennett, owner of the Sahara Hotel and Casino, will build a new preschool on the UNLV campus, President Carol C. Harter announced recently.

The gift came from the Bennett Foundation through the UNLV Foundation and is earmarked for an early childhood center building.

"This new gift will help us build the third phase of a project that began with moving the Paradise Elementary School into a new building on the UNLV campus in 1998," Harter said. "Mr. Bennett's generosity and interest in education also made possible the new William G. Bennett Professional Development Building, which is located adjacent to the Paradise Elementary School. The three facilities will provide a professional practice education program that we believe will become a national model."

Bennett gave \$2.7 million in 1998 to support construction of the professional development building that bears his name.

"Mrs. Bennett and I have a tremendous amount of respect for Carol Harter, and we appreciate the fine job she is doing at UNLV," William Bennett said. "We are pleased that the prior gift we made has been used to build the Professional Development Building. We were excited by the opportunity to fund the construction of a new preschool facility adjoining that building. We believe that these two buildings will complement each other, providing the university and the community with a one-of-a-kind complex."

Gene Hall, dean of UNLV's College of Education, said, "We are excited about the opportunity to develop a model space for the educational development of young children. We expect this facility will be excellent for the children who are enrolled in it, and we hope it will become a site that educators around the country will want to visit."

Noting that the first five years of life are critical to the development of young children, Hall said the College of Education will host a national invitational conference of leading practitioners in early childhood education to gather information and ideas for the new preschool.

"We must be thoughtful about what we know and what others know about early childhood education as we build

this school," Hall said.

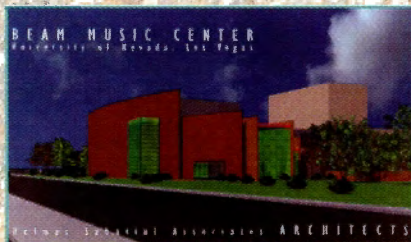
The existing preschool in the College of Education will move into the new facility when it opens, he said. The school will serve the children of UNLV students and faculty, some children from the school district, and some special-needs children. The school currently serves more than 200 children; the new facility could serve as many as double the current enrollment. ☐

Construction Under Way on New Lee & Thomas Beam Music Center

Construction has begun on UNLV's new Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center, located along Maryland Parkway on the campus' northeast corner.

The \$7.3 million privately funded project is another product of the university's longtime partnership with the Beam family, according to UNLV President Carol C. Harter.

"UNLV students are extremely fortunate that the Beam family has supported this very important project for the College of Fine Arts," said Harter. "Like Frank and Estella Beam Hall, the Thomas T. Beam Engineering Complex, and the Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery, this new facility will be a tribute to an outstanding Las Vegas family that really understands the importance of quality higher education. Our music faculty has worked closely with Holmes Sabatini Architects to design a facility that will begin a new era in fine arts education at UNLV."



The 35,000-square-foot structure is being built by Haydon Construction. The building will provide much-needed classroom, performance, and office space for the music department.

"The Beam Music Center is sorely needed by the university, the college, and the department of music," said Jeff Koep, dean of the College of Fine Arts. "In the past 20 years, the number of music majors has doubled to nearly 300. We have also doubled the size of the faculty in the same period. New graduate degrees have been added in several music areas in answer to local and national demands. Such growth requires additional space; the Beam family's generosity assists us in dealing with the space problems and helps us move toward the future."

The building will include a music library listening center, a state-of-the-art recording studio, and a 300-seat recital hall. ☐

Geologist Studies Yucca Mountain with \$1.4 Million Grant

UNLV geologist Jean Cline has been awarded a \$1.4 million federal grant to conduct a study that will help determine the suitability of Yucca Mountain as a nuclear waste repository.

The funding, which came from the U.S. Department of Energy, is paying for a two-year study in which Cline and other scientists will try to determine whether hot fluids have seeped into the site that is being considered for the repository and, if so, when that infiltration occurred.

"If water did seep in, it is important to know whether it happened within the past two million years," said Cline, an associate professor of geoscience. "If fluid made its way in more than two million years ago, that would not necessarily make Yucca Mountain a risky site for a repository. However, if the invasion occurred more recently, it could indicate the potential for the same thing to happen again, which could make a repository in that location risky."

In conducting their study, Cline and other scientists will examine small samples of ancient fluid, called "fluid inclusions," that are trapped in the rock at Yucca Mountain.

Part of Cline's mission is to build a consensus based on findings of the study, so that at the conclusion of the project, matters are resolved to the satisfaction of both the state and federal governments.

To that end, scientists from the state, the U.S. Geological Survey, the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board are meeting regularly to discuss project findings. ☐

New UNLV Foundation Building Scheduled for Completion in May



The new UNLV Foundation Building, located in the northeast area of the campus near Maryland Parkway, is scheduled for completion in May. The 23,000-square-foot structure was designed by Tate and Snyder Architects and is being built by Carson Construction at a cost of \$3.9 million. UNLV Foundation trustees, who initiated the project, have taken an active role in providing the necessary private funding. The building will provide office space for the Foundation staff who are responsible for generating private financial support for the university.

Rogers and Keller Named Top Association Award Recipients

Philanthropist Jim Rogers and Sheriff Jerry Keller have been named recipients of the top UNLV Alumni Association awards.

A strong supporter of the university, Rogers received the UNLV Alumni Silver State Award, the highest honor awarded by the Alumni Association to a non-alumnus of the university.

Rogers, a prominent Las Vegas attorney, presented a \$28.5 million charitable gift pledge and donation to the new William S. Boyd School of Law in November 1998. He founded Valley Broadcasting Company in 1971 and has served as CEO of KVBC-TV Channel 3 in Las Vegas since 1979. He is also the

principal owner of Sunbelt Communications Company, which owns and operates NBC-affiliated television stations in Nevada, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

Keller (see page 18 in this issue), who graduated from UNLV in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in education, has been named Alumnus of the Year, considered the highest honor awarded to a graduate by the UNLV Alumni Association.

Keller, a native Las Vegas, was elected sheriff in 1994 and then re-elected in 1998. He began his career in law enforcement in 1969 when he joined the Clark County Sheriff's Office.

Over the course of the next decades,

Keller rose through the ranks of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

Individuals from several of UNLV's colleges have also been recognized by the association as Outstanding Alumni for 1999. They include the following: Kevin Page, College of Business; Ethan Acres, College of Fine Arts; William Clark, College of Sciences; Roger Wagner, William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration; Dario Herrera, College of Liberal Arts; Cynthia Montoya, College of Education; Ramona Denby (see page 10 in this issue), Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; and Carol Rayfield, College of Health Sciences. ☐

UNLV Alumni Association Offers Free E-mail to Alumni

Let the UNLV Alumni Association be your door to the world of cyberspace.

The association now has the means to offer free E-mail service to all alumni who want it.

And, all alumni, regardless of where their E-mail accounts are based, are eligible to receive "Alumni Bullets," a series of E-mail messages alerting alums to upcoming events of interest.

Additionally, alumni can do their Internet shopping through the Alumni Association's home page and benefit their alma mater at the same time.

"We're excited to be able to offer all

these electronic services to our alumni," said Carl Cook, assistant director of alumni relations. "The alumni themselves can benefit by subscribing to the free

E-mail service and then provide a benefit to the university by accessing our home page to do their Internet shopping."

The free lifetime E-mail service, GoRebels.net, is provided by Phutursoft, a company founded by a UNLV alumnus. To sign up for the service, go to GoRebels.net. There you will find the instructions

necessary to register.

The "Alumni Bullets" updates are already being sent to all alumni for whom the association has E-mail addresses. If

you are not yet receiving this information and would like to, call Cook at 895-3621 or E-mail him at ccook@ccmail.nevada.edu and provide him with your E-mail address.

To do your Internet shopping, go to the Alumni Association's home page at www.unlv.edu/Alumni and click on "zUNLV.com." Then click on "Shop Now." This will link you with a wide variety of vendors. When alumni do their Internet shopping through the Alumni Association, the university's vendor, z-university, will give UNLV a percentage of the sales made. That money will be used to help fund scholarships and programs that benefit students.

"So, while many of the vendors could be reached in other ways, UNLV will benefit if alumni shop through the Alumni Association," Cook said. ☐



Alumni Association Programs Designed to Honor Faculty

The UNLV Alumni Association has instituted two programs designed to recognize and encourage outstanding UNLV faculty members.

The new Student-Centered Awards are given each year to six professors who excel in making the students the focal point of their efforts.

Professors chosen for the 1999-2000 academic year are Warren McNab, professor of health and physical education; Francisco Menendez, chair of the film department; Shashi Nambisan, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering; Carole Rae, professor of dance; Jerry Simich, associate professor of political science; and Wanda Taylor, associate professor of geoscience.

The professors were recognized at the fall student leadership luncheon, along with 70 student leaders who were on hand to receive scholarships.

"It is a fitting tribute to match our student leaders and our best student-focused faculty in one great celebration,"

said Carl Cook, assistant director of alumni relations. "They have a lot in common, and all make our university a better place. The Alumni Association is proud to acknowledge the hard work of our dedicated faculty and those they teach."

Through another program also intended to reward worthy faculty members, the Alumni Association has pledged to contribute a total of \$5,000 annually to one or more student-focused educational programs nominated by faculty members.

In 1998, \$5,000 was awarded to the film department to help fund a campus-wide "make-your-own-film" competition designed to promote campus spirit and pride.

In 1999, \$4,000 was awarded to the psychology department, while \$1,000

went to the math department. The psychology department was given the money for its Achievement Center, a state-of-the-art training program for students. The award to the math department will help the department pay for a mathematics competition to be used in selecting the top three math students at UNLV; those students will then represent the university in a national math competition.

Jim Ratigan, UNLV Alumni Association president, said he is proud of the association's ability to help support those faculty members with the most student-focused goals.

"The Alumni Association supports the university in so many ways, and we are glad to be able to help promote student-centeredness at UNLV. As our membership grows, so will our ability to support worthwhile programs such as these," Ratigan said. ☐



Seven New Degree Programs Available on UNLV Campus

Seven new degree programs — four graduate and three undergraduate — are now available at UNLV.

A doctoral degree in anthropology.

Students enrolled in the program can choose from one of four subdisciplines — archeology, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, or linguistic anthropology. Five students are currently enrolled in the program, which concentrates on, but is not limited to, the study of humans in arid lands and how people adapt to harsh environments. For more information, call 895-3912.

A doctoral degree in psychology. The program offers two separate tracks — one in clinical psychology and one in applied experimental psychology. Currently, a total of 10 students are enrolled in the doctoral program. Students will be added each year, until the number of students reaches approximately 50 to 70. For more information, call 895-3305.

A master's degree in construction management. The new three-semester, 32-credit construction management master's program will prepare students to become construction site managers. The new program will be a companion to the master's degree in engineering with an emphasis in construction, which is already available at UNLV. For more information, call 895-3701.

A master of education in health promotion.

Any individual who wants to help make a person, a family, a company, or a community healthier will be interested in the new master of education in health

promotion program. The program was designed to have a multi-disciplinary approach that will allow students to choose one of four concentrations within the health promotion field: education, administration, counseling, or an interdisciplinary track. For more information, call 895-4030.

A bachelor's degree in nutrition

sciences. This new program will prepare students for careers in medical nutritional therapy, community nutrition, consumer nutrition, wellness, food and nutrition management, education, and research, among others. Nutrition sciences will be available to students as a minor as well as a major. For more information, call 895-4328.

A bachelor's degree in health sciences. This degree program will provide students with a broad knowledge base of general health sciences issues; it will

equip them with the core science knowledge they will need should they decide to pursue medical or dental degrees or other graduate degrees in the science field. For more information, call 895-3693.

A bachelor of fine arts degree in dance. Students planning to become professional dancers or who hope to become choreographers may be interested in pursuing

UNLV's new BFA in dance. The new program provides equal emphasis on ballet, modern dance, and jazz with the goal of producing well-rounded graduates. As part of the program, each student will be able to stage a concert during his/her senior year. For more information, call 895-3827.

UNLV is also now offering a new graduate-level course of study in public history that will provide students with a background in the practical application of historical research. For more information, call 895-3544. ☐



IN MEMORIAM

John Nixon

John Nixon, an emeritus professor of management information systems, died July 2. He was 66.

Nixon, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1974, retired in 1993. Prior to coming to UNLV, he held teaching positions at Arizona State University and California State University, Fullerton, and worked in private industry, primarily for Rockwell International, Inc.

He taught a number of courses at UNLV, including accounting, computer programming, industrial management, and decision analysis. His research focused on new applications of quantitative methods in solving business decision problems.

Edward Chance

Edward Chance, a professor of educational leadership, died July 22. He was 52.

Chance, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1995, had previously held teaching posts at the University of Oklahoma and South Dakota State University. He also held administrative and teaching posts at several secondary schools.

He was the author of several books, book chapters, and scholarly articles on the subjects of rural education and educational leadership development. The National Rural Education Association has named its annual dissertation award after him.

Eva Bortman

Eva Bortman, an emeritus professor of education, died Sept. 13. She was 82.

Bortman, who was an elementary education reading specialist, taught at UNLV from 1966 until she retired in 1985. Upon her retirement, she established the Eva C. Bortman Scholarship for education majors, which is still being awarded today.

Collaborating Against Cancer

The founding members of the new UNLV Cancer Institute have joined together in an effort to fight cancer through their research. Find out how these committed scientists are trying to improve the prevention, detection, and treatment of the deadly disease.

BY SUZAN DIBELLA

IN JUNE OF LAST YEAR, A SMALL group of UNLV scientists formally joined together in the pursuit of a noble shared goal: improving the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of cancer.

Representing three different UNLV colleges, the eight faculty members — all of whom had been conducting research on their own on various subjects related to cancer — officially became the founding members of the new UNLV Cancer Institute.

The reason for formalizing the collaboration of these scientists was perhaps best articulated by UNLV President Carol C. Harter at the time she announced that the institute had been approved by the UCCSN Board of Regents.

"For many years," she said, "we have

had faculty scientists doing intriguing cancer research. We expect the new institute to serve as a valuable think-tank for our cancer researchers while also making them more visible to the external community."

Today, the institute boasts an additional faculty member and more than eight months of formal collaboration. The team of scientists from the departments of chemistry, biology, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and health physics meet regularly to share insights on their research and generate a valuable exchange of data and theories.

But the collaboration doesn't stop on the UNLV campus; they are being joined in their research endeavors by several faculty members from the University of Nevada School of Medicine and several

physicians from University Medical Center. At the same time, members of the institute continue to pursue increased grant funding; the group's status as an institute is expected to enhance the likelihood of members obtaining such funding.

UNLV Magazine recently asked these scientists to describe their research. Here's what we found out.

George Plopper

Finding ways to stop cancer from moving around the body is cell biologist George Plopper's research challenge. He believes it could have a remarkable impact on the way cancer is treated.

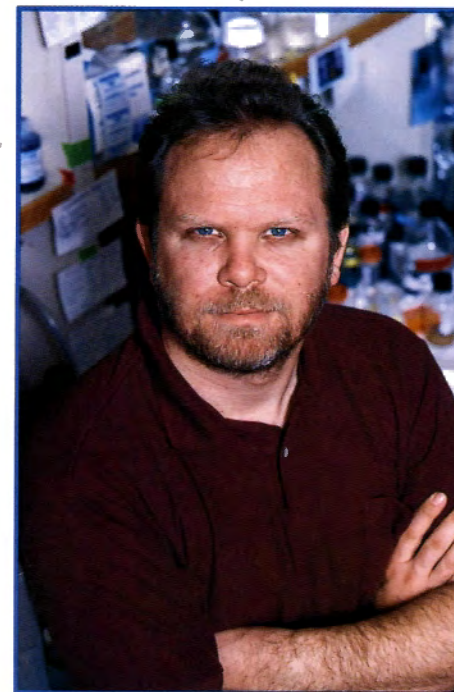
But to understand why it's so critical, he explains, you must first understand

how cancer works.

"Cancer is a disease that kills people because cells that normally know when and where to grow in your body 'forget' this because they mutate, and they grow at inappropriate times and in inappropriate places," he explains. "For example, if you get skin cancer, skin cells can start to grow in the middle of your lung so that your lung can't function anymore. People who die of cancer most often die of organ failure, because their organs get 'mixed up' in this way."

He adds that the most common way to treat cancer is to stop cancer cells from growing at inappropriate times; the idea is that a non-growing or dead cancer cell can't interfere with other organs.

"There are thousands of ways to stop cells from growing," he says. "The problem is that most of these treatments also stop normal healthy cells from growing, so that patients who receive these treatments often feel more sick than they did with just the cancer. This is why their hair falls out, they get diarrhea, or suffer other side effects from treatment. In simple terms, when one



Biologist George Plopper: "If we find a way to stop cancer cell migration, it would change the way patients are treated."



Engineering professor Lori Bruce: "The goal of our research is to design a computer system that can automatically detect and diagnose tumors in mammograms."

takes anti-cancer drugs, one enters a race to see which will die first: the cancer cells or the healthy cells. That 'race' can be devastating, and in many cases, the cancer cells outlive the normal cells, so that patients get horribly sick but die of organ failure anyway."

But, Plopper says, if cancer cells remained in just one place, then treatment could be more effective and less destructive to the rest of the body.

"One way to help increase the effectiveness of cancer treatments is to target the other behavior of cancer cells — namely their propensity to grow in inappropriate places in the body. To grow in a different part of the body, a cancer cell has to crawl, or move, from one organ to another. We want to stop that from happening. The idea here is that if one could at least make the cancer cells stay put in one place, we could target the cells locally with the thousands of treatments available and leave the rest of the body alone."

But getting cancer cells to "sit still" in one part of the body is very hard to do, since researchers don't know what makes them want to get up and move in the first place.

"Why on earth would a skin cell want to move into a lung? Really, nobody knows," Plopper says. "My research tries to address this question in two ways. First, we study how cancer cells move. We compare

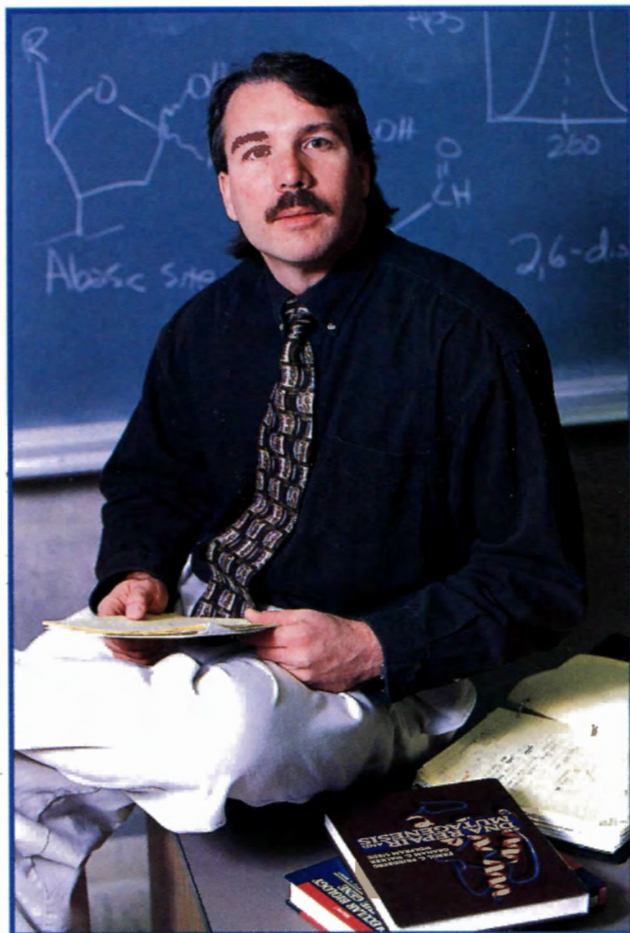
breast cancer cells to normal breast cells, and ask what differences between them might explain why the cancer cells move. We'd like to focus on these differences, and try to find a way of interfering with the biological processes in the cancer cells that make them move to other organs; if we could design drugs that interfere with this process, we could stop cancer cells from moving. Second, we test new drugs to see if they can interfere with cancer cell movement but leave the normal cells alone, even if nobody knows how they might work. The idea here is that, regardless of how they work, drugs that would keep cancer cells in one place would be useful in the clinic and would compliment existing treatments for cancers."

Lori Bruce

Lori Bruce is teaching computers how to find breast masses on mammograms, as well as how to determine if they are benign or malignant.

"Radiologists rely on mammograms to detect any abnormal areas of the breast," says Bruce, a faculty member in UNLV's department of electrical and computer engineering. "Our goal is to provide them with a tool to increase the effectiveness of diagnosing breast cancer."

To that end, her research includes



Chemist Ronald Gary: "We want to know the details of how DNA repair biochemistry works, so that we can appreciate and perhaps enhance our body's natural ability to prevent cancer."

developing computer systems that can automatically detect masses, highlight these areas for the radiologist to analyze, and make determinations about whether the mass is benign or malignant.

In a state-of-the-art computer laboratory, Bruce and her research team train the computer systems to detect tumor images produced by the mammogram and then to make decisions, or diagnoses, based on the shape and texture of the tumors. She uses advanced mathematics and electrical engineering tools to train the computer systems.

"We have a database of mammograms that we use to train and test our automated systems," she says. "The database of mammograms has been read by radiologists."

gists. The malignant tumors have been proven by biopsies, and each patient has had a one-year followup. So we know the correct diagnosis for each mammogram. We give this information to our computer systems for training purposes."

During the training phase, she also sets aside a portion of the mammograms and does not tell the computer system the true diagnoses.

"We then use these 'unknown' mammograms for testing the system," she says. "We keep track of how well the system is diagnosing the mammograms and use this information for improving our designs."

Ronald Gary

Chemist Ron Gary is in the repair business — the repair of DNA, that is.

"DNA is the genetic blueprint within every cell of the body that dictates cellular behavior," Gary says. "I study natural biochemical systems that repair damaged DNA."

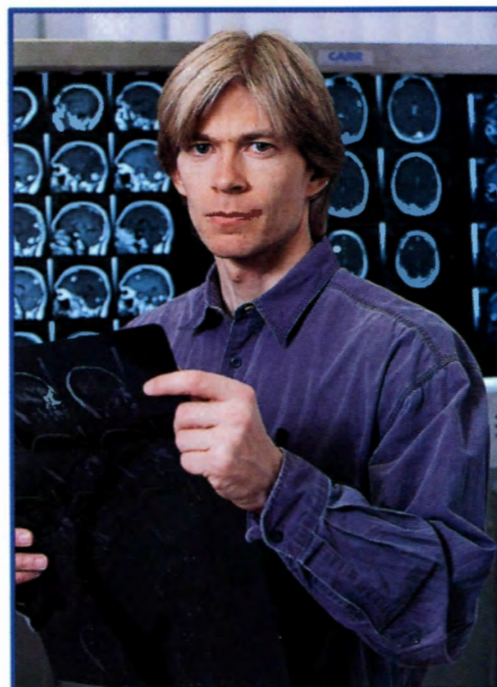
DNA, he explains, becomes damaged to some extent all the time; it is an inevitable part of life. Some environmental factors, such as sunlight, cigarette smoke, and pollution, can accelerate the rate of DNA damage. "If left unrepaired," he notes, "this damage causes changes in DNA, called mutations, that make the cell behave abnormally. If normal cells acquire DNA mutations that cause them to grow uncontrollably, they can become cancer cells."

Therefore, he points out, protecting

DNA from damage is very important in preventing cancer.

"Fortunately, normal cells have a built-in way to prevent mutations," he says. "They have biochemical systems that find sections of DNA that have been damaged, and they restore them to their original condition. The more efficiently these systems work, the lower our risk of getting cancer will be."

Hence, his research seeks to discover the details of how DNA repair biochemistry works in the effort to enhance the human body's natural ability to prevent cancer.



Health physics professor Steen Madsen: "Several studies have shown that photodynamic therapy may prove useful in prolonging survival and/or improving the quality of life of brain tumor patients."

"We study the properties of specific repair proteins to see what they do individually and also how they work together as a molecular team to repair DNA. We want to learn the precise role of each protein, and then assemble this information to form a model that describes the repair process as a series of steps leading to the end point, which is completely

repaired DNA. Along the way, we learn the requirements and vulnerabilities associated with each step; these are the potential sources of problems in terms of cancer development."

Steen Madsen

Steen Madsen is examining ways to use light to kill a particularly resilient type of cancerous brain tumor.

"Patients with malignant brain tumors have a very poor prognosis," says Madsen, a UNLV health physics professor. "The best available treatment — using surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy — results in typical survival of about 10 months. When the treatment fails, it's usually due to the reappearance of the tumor at the original site. This is due to the fact that the tumor cells not removed during surgery are very resistant to chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy."

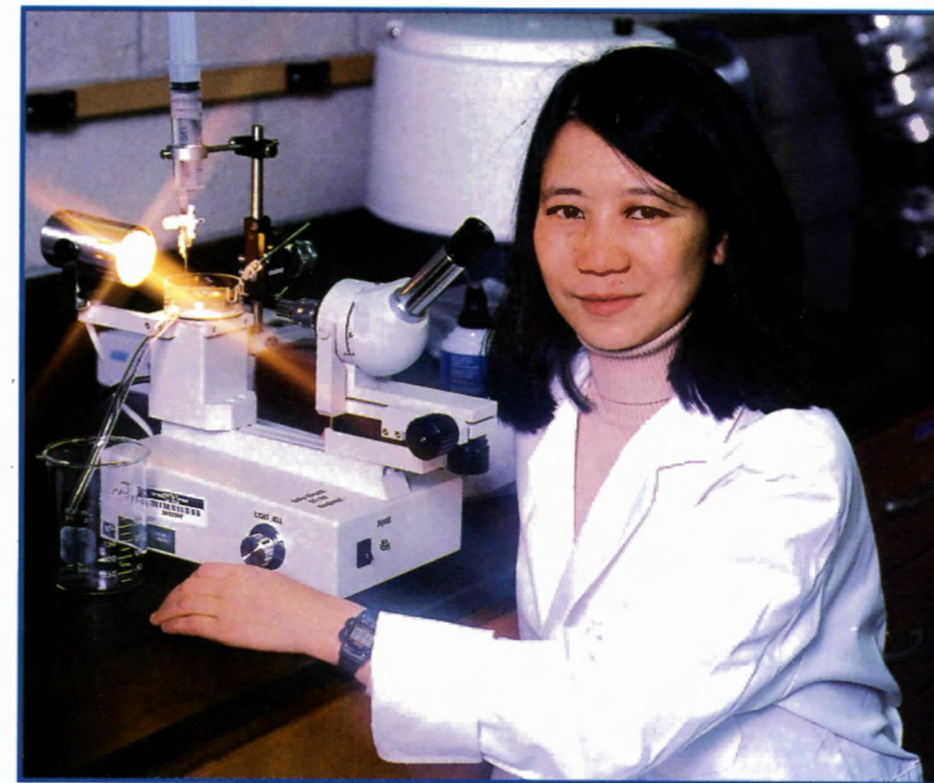
One treatment that holds promise, Madsen says, is photodynamic therapy, in which laser light is used to activate a cancer-killing drug that has already been administered to the patient.

"My primary research focus is to evaluate the effectiveness of photodynamic therapy, or PDT as it's called, in the treatment of aggressive brain tumors," he says. "PDT is a two-stage treatment. In the first stage, a drug is administered to the patient; the drug accumulates in the tumor and, in the second stage, it is activated with laser light. The activated drug leads to the eventual destruction of the tumor tissue."

The effectiveness of this treatment, he says, depends, in part, on being able to deliver the laser light to the tumor. This is usually accomplished by the insertion of optical fibers into the tumor tissue or the cavity in which the tumor is situated, Madsen says.

"The drug can also be used as a diagnostic tool to locate tumor cells. This is possible since the drug emits light when it interacts with the laser. This light can be seen with a special type of camera."

Madsen's research has already attracted the attention of several neurosurgeons who



Biomedical engineer Bingmei Fu: "The purpose of my project is to develop a strategy that can increase blood vessel wall integrity in order to prevent or retard cancer cells from moving in and out of the bloodstream."

have wanted to use the therapy in clinical trials; he is now collaborating with them to develop experimental PDT treatment for cancer patients in California and Norway.

Bingmei Fu

The way cancer cells move through blood vessel walls is the research interest of biomedical engineer Bingmei Fu.

"The spaces between blood vessel walls and surrounding tissue are normally large enough to allow only water and nutrients to pass through," Fu says. "However, when the size of that space increases due to illness, larger molecules and cells, including cancer cells, can cross the vessel wall, leading to a greater likelihood that cancer will spread throughout the body via the bloodstream."

Through her research, she explains, she hopes to better understand what chemicals affect the integrity of the blood vessel

walls; her goal is to find ways to prevent cancer cells from permeating those walls and then traveling throughout the body.

Another related aspect of her research involves discovering ways of helping cancer-fighting drugs reach cancerous tumors. Once again, she is examining the permeability of the vessel walls to analyze the steps of drug delivery to tumors through the blood vessels surrounding it.

"New and more effective anti-cancer agents are being developed these days, but the clinical results have not met the high expectations of researchers," she says. "One of the many difficulties is that it is hard for these agents to make their way into the blood vessels of the tumor and into the cancer cells."

If successful, her research will yield mathematical models that will be used by other researchers to determine how much and how frequently cancer-fighting drugs should be administered to patients.

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Fostering A Greater Understanding

Burdened by the quantity of children needing care, a shortage of open homes, and regulations that would test the patience of a saint, the foster care system in our country is facing a crisis, according to Ramona Denby. As the social work professor attempts to sort out the issues through her research, she finds that easy answers are hard to come by.

BY LAURIE FRUTH

IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE responsible for an 11-year old child. You provide care, love, and relentless support for her. You attend parent-conference meetings, monitor her homework, and buy her school supplies. You take her to doctors' appointments and on family outings. You laugh when she's silly and comfort her when she's sad, and you worry that she seems to be sad most of the time.

Then one day, you receive a

phone call and learn that she will be removed from your home within two hours. You don't know why she is leaving or if you will ever see her again. But you do know that separations like this happen far too frequently in your home, and the emotional toll may soon be more than you're willing to pay.

Although the above story is fictional, scenarios just like it are played out all too often in foster homes across the country, according to Ramona Denby, a UNLV social work professor. Denby is conduct-

ing research to find out why foster parents leave the system and what can be done to keep their homes open.

She explains that such scenarios add to the already overwhelming frustrations faced by those who choose to open their homes to children in need. For some, the rewards of foster parenting are too few and far between, and they are choosing to opt out of the system altogether. At the same time, the number of children in need of foster care is growing, Denby notes. Government estimates report that

more than half a million children will spend part or all of this year in some form of foster care. Many will spend that time in group-care facilities — the current equivalent of orphanages — because there aren't enough foster homes to meet the demand for services.

The crisis in foster care is not news to Denby. Like many of her colleagues, she is concerned about the critical shortage of foster homes and the long-range effects this will have on this nation's most vulnerable population of children.

"The shortage of foster care homes is a big problem now because of the sheer number of children we see entering the system," Denby says. "This is a number that has not gone

down or even remained constant. Each year we see a growth in the child welfare system, and finding suitable placements for these kids becomes tougher each year."

Denby adds that the largest percentage of children who enter the system each year are the hard-to-place preadolescents who have been exposed to neglect and substance abuse in the home.

"These are the kids who tend to linger in foster care," Denby says. "Most of them have behavioral problems as a result of the drug exposure and neglect they've experienced in their homes. Add to that the fact that, in many cases, parental rights are not terminated until the child has been in the system for some

time. By the time these kids are free to be adopted, no one is interested in adopting them."

That leaves foster care. But according to Denby, even when homes are available, the placements are often temporary because most foster parents are not prepared to handle the myriad problems these kids bring into their homes.

Denby says it's a Catch-22; foster parents take a child into their home and are then overwhelmed by the behavioral problems the child exhibits. The child is then removed from the home and placed in either another foster home or a group-care facility. But the move exacerbates the behavioral problems, creating new chal-



lenges for the subsequent care givers. Denby says multiple placements have other consequences as well, noting that children who grow up in multiple foster homes may never learn to form an attachment with another human being.

"When this happens, we begin to see them in other systems — like the criminal justice system," Denby says.

Denby admits that there are plenty of naysayers who look at the gloom and doom behind the statistics and throw their hands in the air. But she believes that understanding the root of the problem may suggest solutions, and she sees her research as a starting point.

Denby, a native Las Vegas who obtained her master's degree in social work from UNLV in 1990, began researching foster care while pursuing her doctorate at Ohio State University. She and her colleagues were interested in learning why people become foster parents and why they continue to foster. She surveyed 1,600 foster homes in the Midwest, half of which were active and half of which were closed. What she found was both surprising and gratifying.

"We thought that we would get complaints about the low level of reimbursement," Denby says, noting that the average stipend foster parents receive is just over \$400 a month per child. "But these parents made it clear that they didn't become foster parents to get a check from the state. They became foster parents because they are good at parenting, and they truly want to help children in their community."

Denby says this type of motivation is encouraging as her research shows that such altruistic feelings are

positively correlated with a foster parent's intent to continue fostering. But good intentions alone offer little defense against the very real emotional and behavioral challenges foster parents face — challenges that may cause a foster parent to drop out of the system.

Denby's survey found that foster parents are particularly distressed when a child in their care is returned temporarily to a biological parent. Denby explains that often a biological parent will make an effort to be clean and sober, and the child will be returned to the home. Unfortunately, the underlying variables that caused the child to be removed in the first place, she says, are still present; such efforts often fail, and the child is forced to endure yet another separation. From the foster parents' perspective, Denby says, this shuffling back and forth undermines their attempts to make a connection with the child and is emotionally draining for both child and foster parent.

Foster parents in the survey also complained that some social workers assigned to their cases were not or could not be, due to regulations at the time, forthcoming about problems the children experienced in the past or events that might affect the children in the future.

"The parents reported that they could be sitting at lunch and then suddenly receive a phone call from their social worker saying, 'I'll be there in an hour to pick Johnny up,'" Denby says. "Now the foster parents knew the decision to remove Johnny must have been in the works for some time. And they wondered why they were not privy to that information."

The foster parents in Denby's study concede that agency social workers have a challenging role, but they wonder if communication could

not be improved.

Denby says the recent passage of the Adoption Assistance and Safe Families Act of 1997 will make it easier for foster parents to assert their rights as care givers. She explains that this new legislation requires social service agencies to include foster parents in case conferences about the child and to notify the parent when decisions are made about the child. Denby says this legislation is a step in the right direction, but much more work needs to be done to reinforce the critical role that foster parents play.

Part of this work has to do with changing the perception of foster care parents as ancillary to the system they serve. Respondents to Denby's study indicated they felt that some foster care officials view foster parents as secondary rather than primary participants in the lives of the children; naturally, this makes it more difficult for parents to form a satisfactory relationship with foster care officials.

Denby notes that many of the parents in her closed-home sample reported that they received little, if any, feedback from the social workers assigned to their cases. They reported that they were given the "run around" when they asked for individual attention for the child in their care. Some admitted they didn't even know the names of the social workers assigned to their homes.

Denby believes the working relationship between foster parents and foster care officials could be enhanced if a concerted effort were made to reconceptualize the image of foster parents from that of ancillary help to that of paraprofessional — an image Denby believes would afford a higher degree of trust, regard, and respect. But she admits that even with a change in attitude, personalized attention will be hard to come by. She notes that

some social workers can be responsible for 40 to 50 families, a number too large to allow even the most dedicated social worker to provide the support that foster families say they need.

Denby says that part of the answer is better training for foster parents with emphasis in two areas: building an infrastructure of support for and between foster parents, and better preparation of foster parents to deal with the increasingly difficult behaviors exhibited by foster children.

"Some states, including Nevada, are including experienced foster parents and foster children in the training of new recruits. And this is important because they can provide a more realistic picture of what it means to be a foster parent," Denby says.

Denby also believes that foster care officials should help foster parents build a support network with one another through the use of monthly newsletters and phone trees.

Also, to help foster parents feel more competent to handle the needs of children in their care, Denby recommends that agencies augment their traditional training curriculum to include interactive visits to group homes and expanded and continuous workshops on various behavioral issues.

"If we truly want parents to take on these kids, then we need to be up-front about what they're getting into," Denby says. "This study told us what the parents need; now we have to do a better job of meeting those needs."

Denby hopes that better support

and enhanced training will prevent future foster homes from closing. But she admits more research is needed, particularly in the area of minority foster parenting. Denby conducted some preliminary research in this area while teaching at the University of



UNLV social work professor Ramona Denby is concerned about the critical shortage of foster homes and the long-range effects this will have on the nation's most vulnerable population of children.

Tennessee.

Her study there compared the fostering experiences of European-Americans with those of African-Americans.

Results of this study revealed that cultural differences do play a role in

the fostering experience. Denby noted that while European-American foster parents were more likely to leave foster care because they weren't receiving the support they needed from the system, African-American parents were more likely to leave

when their views on child-rearing conflicted with those advocated by the agency. Denby says this is particularly true with respect to discipline.

"Foster parents are not allowed to spank children," Denby says. "But many African-Americans report that they believe in a firm hand, and that may at times include spanking."

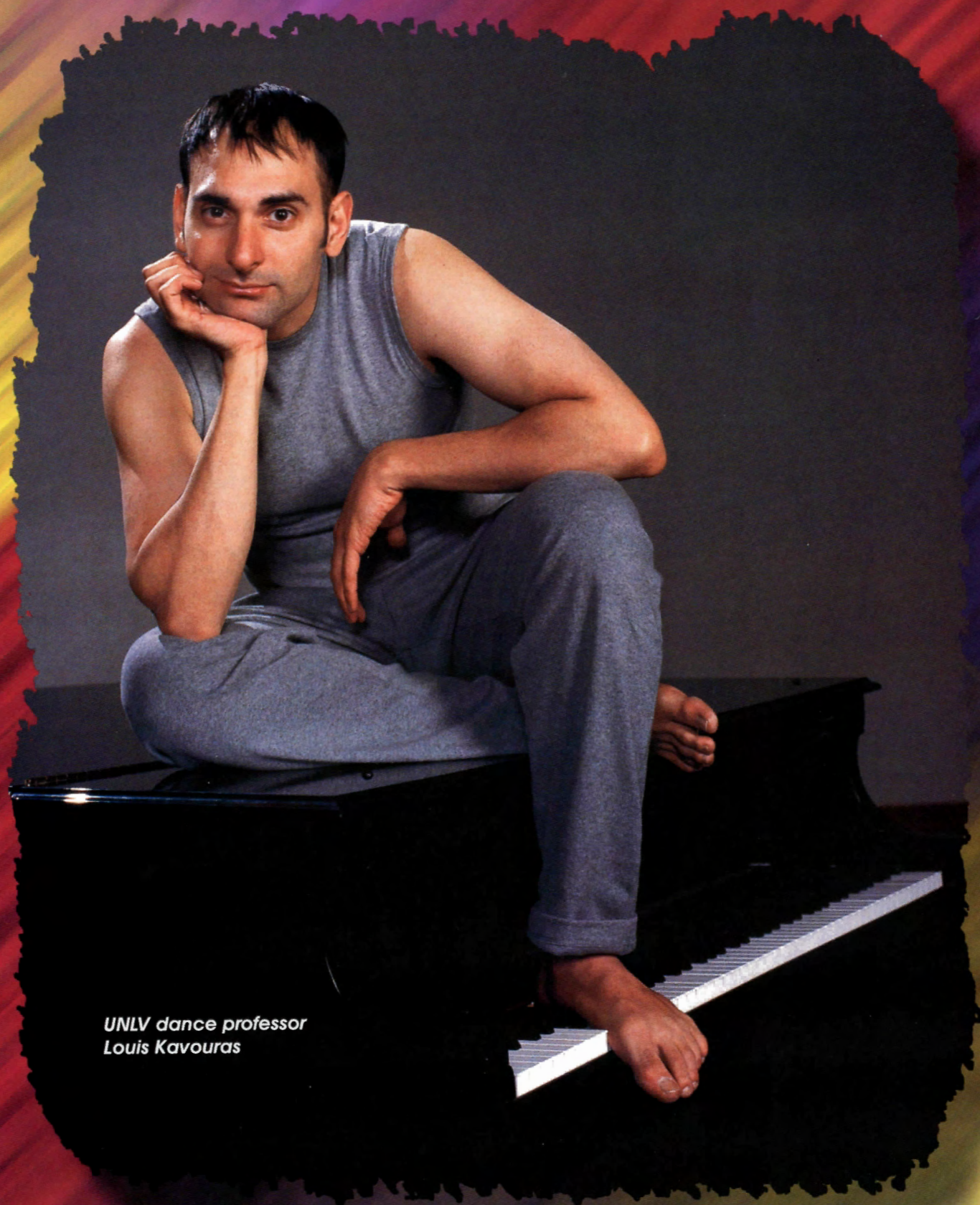
Denby says church attendance is another area in which many African-American parents disagree with agency policy. Agency rules forbid foster parents from forcing a child to attend religious services. But church is an important part of the African-American culture, and foster parents believe they cannot effectively raise a child without this influence, she says.

While Denby believes that these findings have important implications for the future recruitment and training of minority foster parents, she insists that better support from the

foster care system and enhanced training for all foster parents is needed to encourage satisfaction and retention among foster parents.

Denby is relatively certain that her

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UNLV dance professor
Louis Kavouras

Artistic Feat

Dance professor Louis Kavouras is on the move — literally. When UNLV's newest Renaissance man isn't choreographing, teaching, composing, painting, or performing, he's chairing his department and finding time to dance professionally in New York. It's just all in a day's creativity, he claims.

BY BARBARA CLOUD

WATCH LOUIS KAVOURAS' graceful moves, listen to his thoughtful commentary on aesthetics. You can tell right away — he was born to dance.

Yet, had he not decided to enroll in a certain elective in college, Kavouras might be building freeway bridges or programming computers today instead of serving as one of the premier exponents of modern dance in the United States.

As it is, he is the widely acclaimed principal soloist for the Erick Hawkins Dance Company in New York where he performs about one month each year. In 1997, New York critics named him "Best Soloist in New York" and one of the top 10 performers in the city. His dedication to modern dance extends beyond performing though; when he's not teaching dance to UNLV students or serving as chair of his department, he's choreographing his own pieces, designing sets for those pieces, or composing music for them.

And to think it all might have gone so differently but for one rather casual decision.

That decision was made in 1984 as Kavouras was leaning toward majoring in computer engineering at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

"I noticed that I had an open elective in my schedule and saw modern dance on the list of courses," he recalls, adding that although he had been active in dance and theatre in high school, he had never before studied that particular form of dance. "I knew a little about modern dance but not a lot. Ultimately, I found it to be, of all my classes, one of the most challenging."

Never one to avoid a challenge, Kavouras turned his full attention to a discipline that gave him a "context with which to view the world."

"I began to see that dance provided me with a place where I could completely lose myself and completely find myself, where I am constantly torn apart and reborn."

Engineering didn't have much of a chance after that realization hit, he says.

Kavouras not only completed a bachelor's degree in theatre (dance was an emphasis within theatre) at Case Western in 1987, but he went on to earn a master of fine arts magna cum laude in dance there two years later.

"People thought it was such a radical shift from engineering to dance, but for me the two are similar," he says. "Engineering looks at systems and logic and makes sense of structure; the dancer looks at bodies and motion and makes sense of the human instrument."

Kavouras likens choreography to writing computer programs.

"The way of thinking and structuring, looking at all the various elements, how the body is used, the logic of this phrase or that, and the sense of communicating an idea are similar," he says.

But, to Kavouras, the fact that movement is a "much more immediate, primal



In addition to all of his creative activities, Kavouras serves as chair of the dance department.

way of communicating" gives dance its special fascination.

"Dance brings us back to what's essential, to what it is to be human," he says. "For me that's the most powerful thing about art. It's an integrating force that brings us back."

He is quick to note, however, that the special fascination he finds in the art of dance was not shared by his parents at the time he chose it as a career.

"My parents thought I was out of my mind," he says.

It's true that dance was probably not high on the list of career options Kavouras' father had in mind for his son; in fact, it was pretty clear to Louis early in life that baseball would have been his father's first choice. The elder Kavouras frequently took his son to baseball games at the spring training camps near their Florida home.

"He wanted me to have the same love of the game he had, and I did love it," he says. "But at the time, I just wanted to go to the beach."

As a boy, Kavouras explains, he had developed a particular fondness for the ocean, and he attributes his later absorption in modern dance in part to his appreciation

of the sea's movement.

But, ironically, it was baseball, not the beach, that served as inspiration for his first choreographed work, which he created as a class project soon after he had turned to dance in college.

Interested in characterizing the movements of baseball players, Kavouras created *The Baseball Dance*, a piece originally choreographed simply as solos depicting the pitcher and the batter. The work became more complex over time as he introduced the rest of the team.

In addition to dealing with the growing complexity of the piece, he found himself juggling multiple roles in order bring an expanded version of it to the stage. Serving as both composer and set designer as well as choreographer, Kavouras not only had to determine the movement, but he also had to create appropriate music; the solos had been done in silence, but the larger work needed a musical context.

Working with an audio engineer, he sampled the sounds of a baseball game — the crowd, the crack of a bat, the ball hitting a glove — and scored them, adding a little Beethoven, *The Blue Danube* waltz, and organ music familiar to baseball fans everywhere.

Since that project, Kavouras frequently

finds himself in the multiple roles of choreographer, set designer, and composer.

Kavouras says he wrote *Baseball* for himself, but it has been performed on many stages through the years before many audiences, even one in Russia; it has become part of the repertory of dance companies in several cities. In fact, he says one of the best performances of the piece was by a Cleveland dance company as part of the pre-game show at the opening of Jacobs Field in Cleveland in 1995.

After graduating from Case Western, Kavouras continued on there as a dance lecturer for three years before joining the UNLV faculty in 1992. Through the years he has performed as a dancer in a number of productions, and, since writing *The Baseball Dance*, he has created more than 50 others pieces.

They have covered a variety of topics, some narrative and some abstract. He wrote a piece simply called *Rain* that attempted to capture his longing for a thunderstorm and the sense of relief that comes from a good, hard rain.

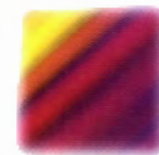
Most recently, he wrote a piece entitled *Icarus*, about the mythological character who flew too close to the sun, in an effort to portray the idea of "being close to the edge, of flying high, pushing the boundaries, yet needing to stay centered."

Representative of the modern dance style, all of his works are short pieces that are not constrained by the formal traditions of ballet.

"I want to create a kind of astonishment in my audience," he says.

Kavouras explains that modern dance is not the stuff of fluffy tutus and satin toe shoes. He notes that the legendary American dancer Martha Graham, whom he once met, is largely credited with breaking away from the formal structure demanded by traditional ballet to develop modern dance, which is generally characterized as more spontaneous, free-spirited, and highly personal. Other dancers, such as Merce Cunningham, further developed the form.

Kavouras found his expression in a style developed by another modern dance



"Dance brings us back to what's essential, to what it is to be human." —Louis Kavouras

pioneer, Erick Hawkins, whose technique calls for free-flowing movement. The style influenced Kavouras' understanding of how the body should move in dance.

"In the Hawkins technique, we talk about integration," he says. "The body is naturally integrated. It is naturally held together. The weights of the body fall back into the center of the body."

Despite its focus on the natural movement of the body, it's a technique that takes years of training to master, he says.



When Kavouras discovered modern dance in college, it gave him "a context with which to view the world."

Kavouras was first introduced to the Hawkins approach at Case Western. After coming to UNLV, he invited members of the Erick Hawkins Dance Company to conduct workshops in Las Vegas. At one of those workshops the Hawkins dancers identified Kavouras as one of their own and invited him to become a member of their New York company.

He was reluctant at first because of his UNLV responsibilities; in addition to teaching, he chairs the dance department. But he realized that he didn't want to miss the wonderful opportunity to work with a major New York company. Fortunately, he says, he was able to work out a schedule that has allowed him to meet his responsibilities to his students and to the department while pursuing the opportunity.

He has been a principal dancer and soloist with the company since 1996 and spends approximately one month in New York during the course of the company's season. Sometimes, when he is dancing a familiar role that requires little rehearsal, he flies across country just for a weekend's worth of performances.

"It's an incredible opportunity for me to be dancing in New York while I'm teaching students," he says. "I feel I am right in the middle of what dance is — in both the professional and academic worlds."

To say he has been well received on the dance scene is to put it mildly. In addition to the praise lavished on him by New York critics — who named him the "Best Soloist in New York" and one of the top 10



New York critics have lavished praise on Kavouras, naming him the "Best Soloist in New York" and one of the top 10 performers in that city.

performers in New York — he has gained numerous accolades locally; he won UNLV's Charles Vanda Award for Excellence in the Arts last year.

To Kavouras, the drive and passion that have helped him reach new heights in creative expression are critical to his success.

"I tell all my students that anyone with drive finds a place for themselves. There's always room for talent, always room for drive, no matter what the field," he says.

But for Kavouras, the drive must be directed toward the aesthetic.

"We're here to train artists. It's not about putting your leg here or there, or doing so many turns. That's craft, and, yes, that's part of it; we're going to work on that, drive our students crazy with it. But the other part is teaching our students what it is to be artists.

"Artists change things. I hope my students go out there and take dance where it needs to go. Change it. Move it around. Make it new. Make us look at it in a whole other way."



Las Vegas Metropolitan Police
Department Sheriff Jerry Keller

METROPOLITAN

Man

BY DIANE RUSSELL

LAW ENFORCEMENT WASN'T PART of young Jerry Keller's life plan. Frankly, it wasn't even something he considered at the time he entered college. Instead, Keller began his young adulthood with aspirations quite different than most would think.

When he enrolled in Nevada Southern University in 1964, the native Las Vegas was much more interested in discovering a new species of plant or animal in the Mojave Desert than in arresting criminals.

The fact is that Keller, who has served on the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department for the past 30 years and as sheriff for the last five, had decided to become a biologist when he began taking courses at the small university that would soon be known as UNLV.

Throughout his early college years, Keller continued pursuing his goal, refining it as he went along. He had enjoyed accompanying his science professors Jim Deacon, Glenn Bradley, and Chad Murvosh on off-road exploring trips in the area; he could envision himself tramping through the Nevada wilderness in the years to come, observing the plants and animals of the Mojave Desert. He had decided to become a field biologist.

But as graduation grew nearer, reality set in for Keller. He was

newly married and needed a steady paycheck. Becoming a teacher seemed to him a safer bet for that than becoming a field biologist. So he changed his major, completed his studies, and graduated in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in education; he hoped to become a teacher at Valley High School, where he had done his student teaching.

He spent the summer after graduation working for the National Park Service while he waited to hear from the school district. During that time he received contract offers from schools in other states, but nothing in Southern Nevada.

Committed to remaining in Las Vegas and still mindful of that need for a steady income, Keller took the advice of a friend who had suggested he sign up for the police academy. When the Clark County School District finally did offer him a job as a general science teacher a couple of days before the start of school, Keller felt a sense of obligation about joining the police academy that led him to turn down the teaching post.

"I had no interest in being a police officer. I was married and needed work," he recalls of his very practical decision at the time. He adds that he thought he might stay on as a police officer for a while and then switch to another job. At

Twice-elected sheriff Jerry Keller started out with a couple of different career ideas, but law enforcement wasn't one of them. After 30 years on the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, the UNLV alumnus reflects on how and why he became the top cop in the fastest-growing city in the nation.



Keller, top, received training in rappelling, rock climbing, and rope ascension while he was a sergeant in Metro's SWAT unit in the early 1980s.

least while working for the sheriff's department, he reasoned, he might be able to use his science background by working in the police lab.

So, on Sept. 8, 1969, Jerry Keller entered the police academy, setting the course for the rest of his professional life.

Now, with more than three decades of law enforcement experience behind him, it's difficult for Keller to imagine his life turning out differently.

Because while he thoroughly enjoyed biology — and can still rattle off the scientific names of most of the flora and fauna in Southern Nevada — he loves police work.

Exactly what is it he finds attractive about a career that often puts its practitioner's life at risk? What appeal does he see in a job that even on good days can mean dealing with unpleasant situations?

It's the people, he says. "I love people, and I like fixing things," Keller says during an interview in his eighth-floor office at Las Vegas City Hall. "All cops by their very natures are rescuers, and I like finding solutions to problems and rescuing people."

Keller says he enjoys analyzing situations to determine how they can be made better and then taking the steps necessary to achieve that goal. "And that's what a lot of police work is about," he adds.

On his way to the top post at Metro, Keller has held a variety of positions. He began his law enforcement career as a deputy sheriff on patrol; he went on to work in the planning and research office of the Clark County Sheriff's Department

before it merged with the Las Vegas Police Department to form Metro. He then took an assignment in the crime lab where he was promoted to sergeant in 1975. After that, he served as a patrol sergeant, a SWAT sergeant, and then did a stint in internal affairs from 1983 to 1984, during which time he was promoted to lieutenant.

In 1984, he and fellow officer Ed Jensen began the Police Employees Assistance Program (PEAP) that still ranks among the proudest accomplishments of his career.

Keller says that both he and Jensen had been involved in a couple of shootings during their careers and knew both from their personal experiences and the experiences of their colleagues that the department was not doing what it might to help officers deal with problems related to traumatic incidents such as

duty-related shootings.

The circumstances that usually surround police-involved shootings are unique, according to Keller. Often, they require officers to run toward a dangerous situation from which anyone else would flee, he says. Once on the scene, officers too often find a civilian — someone's father, brother, or daughter — pointing a gun at them and have no choice but to shoot, he says.

And in many cases, once the shooting ends, the officers find themselves giving CPR to the person they just shot because once that person is no longer a threat, it is the officers' duty to try to keep that person alive until medical help arrives, he adds.

That unique combination of factors can make shootings particularly traumatic for the officers involved, Keller says. In the old days, he says, fellow officers used to "take the officers out and get them drunk after a shooting and then take them home" instead of helping them deal with the issues. He adds that he, Jensen, and others



Keller talks with D.A.R.E. participant Blake Hill in 1994 at a culmination ceremony for the drug abuse prevention program.

knew there must be a better way to handle those situations.

So, with the blessing of then-Sheriff John Moran, in September 1984 Keller and Jensen launched PEAP, a program designed to help all Metro employees — officers and civilians — deal with any personal problems that make it difficult for them to concentrate on their jobs.

"We knew we had cops out there who were foundering, who were good people," he says. "But they didn't want to go to the yellow pages to look for help."

Through PEAP, Metro employees and their family members can get confidential, professional help with a wide variety of problems. While post-traumatic-event counseling may be the most dramatic, people can and do seek help in dealing with everything from domestic abuse and alcoholism to troublesome teen-agers. Grief counseling is also a major component of PEAP.

"We said that with the assistance program in place we could reduce the use of force by officers — and we did by 70 percent the first year — by dealing with the root causes of an officer's use of force rather than just the force itself. The program focused on what was causing normally good officers to change their behaviors and become more forceful, less subtle, and less tactful," he says.

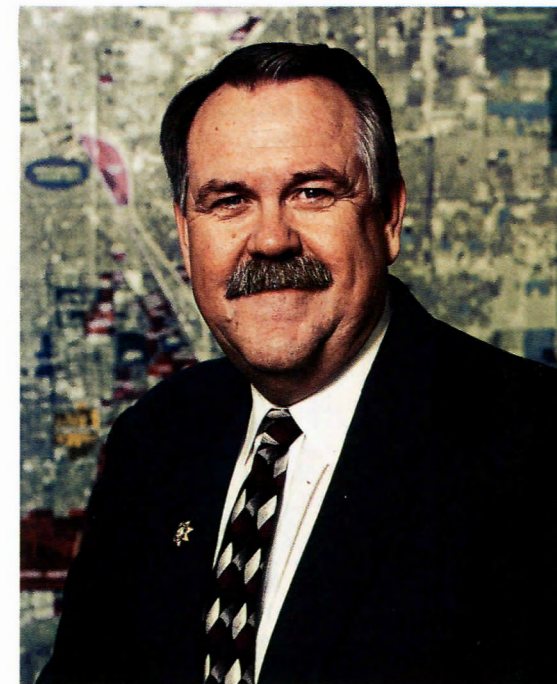
Jensen stayed with PEAP, serving as its director until his retirement last December, but Keller went back to the SWAT unit in 1986, this time as a lieutenant. While there he formed the street narcotics unit.

In 1987 he was promoted to captain and with that promotion came a transfer back to the crime lab. He next served in a couple of patrol captain assignments before being promoted by Moran to the position of deputy chief in charge of administrative services in 1993. In that job he oversaw Metro's fleet, facilities, training, personnel, and recruitment. Then, with Moran set to retire, Keller ran for sheriff in 1994. He won, assuming the job in January 1995; he was re-elected in 1998.

Keller likes being sheriff, but then he says he has liked each and every assignment he's had as a police officer.

"I've loved every day I've been a cop — every single day."

Keller demurs when asked about his



Today, Keller counts serving 30 years on the department as one of his greatest accomplishments.

accomplishments as sheriff.

"As sheriff I have no single accomplishment that is mine and mine alone," he says. "My accomplishments are all the product of the hard work of the 3,700 men and women of Metro. I'm the guy who gets to be out front leading the parade with the baton. I'm the guy who gets to ride the wave of everybody else's work."

"My greatest accomplishment is just knowing that I'm still a member of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, that I have been for 30 years, and that I've had the chance to work with some outstanding individuals, civilian and commissioned. It's a job that has the highest standards in America. I'm very proud of the men and women and what they do."

Ed Jensen, the recently retired PEAP

lieutenant who has been Keller's friend and colleague for 25 years (and who also happens to be a UNLV alumnus), says that two of the reasons Keller makes a good sheriff are that he has a big heart and is a good listener. Additionally, Jensen says, Keller trusts his people to do their jobs.

"He allows us to have our education and training and then use them to make our own decisions," Jensen says.

When Keller is asked if he will run for a third term in 2002, he replies, "You know, I'm having a great time. If I still have challenges in front of me, if I'm still having fun coming to work every single day, I don't see why I wouldn't."

But does he ever wish he had used his education degree to become a teacher?

Knowing what he knows now about his love of police work, he says he's glad he chose it over a career in education. But he points out that he's had his chance to teach over the years, sometimes as a part-time instructor for UNLV's criminal justice department and sometimes as a guest lecturer at both UNLV and the Community College of Southern Nevada. He says he's greatly enjoyed those opportunities.

Also, he says he feels he often has filled the role of teacher when, as a police officer or as sheriff, he's had the opportunity to educate the public about various issues.

And, even if he had never taught a course, Keller says the education he received at UNLV wouldn't have been wasted.

"I got an excellent education at UNLV. From the academic side to the mentoring I received to the perspective I gained on the environment, I truly had an outstanding education. What I learned at UNLV was how to communicate. I learned the process of communication, what it takes to be clear, concise, and complete," he says. "No one ever leaves my office without knowing what we discussed."

Most of his friends who attended Western High School with him went to out-

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CALENDAR

March 2000

1 University Forum: "The Straight Skinny on Fats: Where Are We?" 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

1-4 Art Department: MFA Exhibit - Jeffrey Fulmer. Call for times. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

2 Concert: Sierra Winds and "All That Jazz" with Stefan Karlsson. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

3 Master Series: St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Andre Watts soloist. 8pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

3-12 Theatre: *Our Town*. Call for times. JBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

4 Continuing Education: Non-Traditional Youth Service Consortia. 6pm. BEH 103. 895-3394.

Men's Basketball: UNLV vs. New Mexico. Noon. TMC. 895-3900.

Concert: Invitational Choral Festival. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-3008.

5 Concert: UNLV Symphony Orchestra. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

7 University Forum: "Sanctioning Speech That Harms: An Immodest Proposal." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

8-11 Basketball: Men's and Women's Mountain West Conference Championships. Call for times. TMC. 895-3900.

8-25 Art Department: MFA Exhibit - Andy Wallace. Call for times. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

9-11 Baseball: UNLV vs. Brigham Young. March 9 & 10, 3pm; March 11, 1pm. WS. 895-3207.

10-12 Men's Golf: UNLV Invitational. All Day. Desert Inn Country Club. 895-3207.

11 & 12 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Illinois State - March 11. Pennsylvania - March 12. 10am both days. FTC. 895-3207.

14 & 17 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Oklahoma State - March 14. Bowling Green - March 17. 10am both days. FTC. 895-3207.

18 Track & Field: UNLV Open. All Day. PS. 895-3207.

18 & 19 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Tulsa - March 18. Boston College - March 19. 10am both days. FTC. 895-3207.

22 & 23 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Oregon - March 22. Kansas State - March 23. 2pm both days. FTC. 895-3207.

23 University Forum: "The Life and Work of J.R.R. Tolkien: Professor, Linguist, Writer, Creator of Fantasy." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

24-25 Dance: Dance Arts Company Concert. Call for times. JBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

24 & 26 Men's Tennis: UNLV vs. Utah - March 24, 1:30pm. San Diego State - March 26, noon. FTC. 895-3207.

24-26 Baseball: UNLV vs. New Mexico. March 24, 7pm; March 25 & 26, 1pm. WS. 895-3207.

25 Performing Arts Center: World Stage Series. British Rock Symphony and Choir. 8pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

26 Concert: UNLV Jazz Ensemble. 2pm. JBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

Performing Arts Center: World Stage Series. Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. 7pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

28 University Forum: "The Politics of Chicanos and Latinos: Then, Now, and Mañana." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

29-31 Art Department: MFA Exhibit - Jacqueline Ehlis. Through April 8. Call for times. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

29 & 31 Softball: UNLV vs. Cal State Fullerton - March 29. Brigham Young - March 31. Noon DH both days. RD. 895-3207.

30 University Forum: "Women's Lives in Western History: Tanners, Gardeners, Churners, Homesteaders." Elizabeth Jameson. 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

30-31 Opera Theatre: "Desert Song." Through April 1. Call for times. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

31 Men's Tennis: UNLV vs. Brigham Young. 1:30pm. FTC. 895-3207.

CALENDAR

April 2000

1 Continuing Education: "Ten Ways to Sabotage Your Career and Your Life and How to Avoid Them." 9:30am. FDH 105. 895-3394.

2 Performing Arts Center: Best of the New York Stage. Acting Company performing *Macbeth*. 7pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

Men's Tennis: UNLV vs. New Mexico. Noon. FTC. 895-3207.

2 & 6 Softball: UNLV vs. Utah - April 2, noon. New Mexico State - April 6, 1pm. DH both days. RD. 895-3207.

3 Concert: UNLV Symphony Orchestra, featuring Charlie Castleman. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

University Forum: "The Jazz Piano Trio and the Role of Communication Among the Musicians." 7:30 pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

6 Barbara Greenspun Lecture: Wolf Blitzer. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

7 Master Series: Moscow Virtuosi. 8pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

7-8 Track & Field: UNLV Invitational. Call for times. PS. 895-3207.

7-9 Baseball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. April 7, 7pm. April 8 & 9, 1pm. WS. 895-3207.

Theatre: *IceSpeak* and *Angels Fight Dirty*. Plays also run April 14-16. Call for times. BBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

12-22 Art Department: MFA Exhibit - Kevin Bays and Gajin Fujita. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

13 UNLV Honors Convocation: 10am. AHCH. 895-1267.

14 University Forum: "American Cruelty and Public Child Welfare." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

14 & 16 Softball: UNLV vs. Colorado State - April 14, TBA. New Mexico - April 16, noon. DH both days. RD. 895-3207.

15 Concert: UNLV Symphonic Band. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-3733.

16 Performing Arts Center: Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. 7pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

17 Concert: Jazz Combos. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-0862.

18-19 Baseball: UNLV vs. Southern Colorado. 7pm both days. WS. 895-3207.

19 Concert: UNLV Jazz Ensemble. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-0862.

20 Concert: Bill Bernatis in recital. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-3713.

Concert: UNLV Wind Orchestra. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

University Forum: "After the Discovery: Lewis and Clark and the Fate of Western Indians." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

20-22 Baseball: UNLV vs. Utah. April 20 & 21, 7pm; April 22, 1pm. WS. 895-3207.

23 Concert: UNLV Symphony Orchestra. 3pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

25 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Wyoming. 2pm. FTC. 895-3207.

26-29 Art Department: Annual Juried Student Exhibit. Through May 5. Call for times. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

27 University Forum: "Medical Ethics: A Historical Perspective." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

27-29 Women's Tennis: Mountain West Conference Championship. Call for times. FTC. 895-3207.

28 Concert: UNLV Choral Ensembles. 6:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

Softball: UNLV vs. San Diego State. 1pm. DH. RD. 895-3207.

28-29 Continuing Education: Eating Disorders Seminar. Call for time and location. 895-3394.

Dance: Spring Concert. Call for times. BBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

28-30 Theatre: *Crazy for You*. Also runs May 5-7. Call for times. JBT. 895-ARTS (2787).

May 2000

4 Concert: UNLV Wind Orchestra. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-ARTS (2787).

5-7 Baseball: UNLV vs. Air Force. May 5, 7pm; May 6 & 7, 1pm. WS. 895-3207.

11-31 Art Department: BFA Exhibit. Through June 10. Call for times. DBFA Gallery. 895-3649.

14 Commencement: UNLV Graduation Ceremonies. 9am & 1:30pm. TMC. 895-3229.

17-20 Baseball: MWC Championship. Call for times. WS. 895-3207.



Elizabeth Jameson
University Forum Lecture
March 30

For more information
on UNLV events and
publications, visit UNLV's
World Wide Web
home page at
<http://www.unlv.edu>

Building Abbreviation Guide

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| AHCH: | Artemus Ham Concert Hall |
| BBT: | Black Box Theatre |
| CBC: | Classroom Building Complex |
| DBFA: | Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery |
| FTC: | Fertitta Tennis Complex |
| JBT: | Judy Bayley Theatre |
| JF: | Johann Field |
| LG: | Lied Gymnasium |
| MBMA: | Marjorie Barrick Museum Auditorium |
| MSU: | Moyer Student Union |
| PS: | Myron Partridge Stadium |
| RD: | Rebel Diamond |
| RTAC: | Richard Tam Alumni Center |
| SBS: | Sam Boyd Stadium |
| TMC: | Thomas & Mack Center |
| WS: | Earl E. Wilson Stadium |

* Events are subject to changelcancellation.

UNLV Golf

Les Ballets Trockadero
de Monte Carlo
March 26

Cancer Institute

continued from page 9



Chemistry professor Steve Carper: "In the future I would hope that my research would change the way physicians treat patients with breast cancer."

Steve Carper

A substance called heat shock protein 27 is at the heart of the research of Steve Carper.

The chemistry professor knows that when this protein is produced at high quantities in breast cancer tumors, patients have an 80 percent chance of having their tumor recur. When it is produced at low levels, the rate of recurrence is only 30 percent.

"I study how hsp27 protects breast cancer cells from agents designed to kill them, thus allowing the tumors to recur," says Carper, who serves as director of the UNLV Cancer Institute.

To conduct his research, Carper grows human breast cancer cells in his laboratory. Using genetic engineering techniques, he has constructed cell lines that make high or low levels of hsp27.

"I then try and kill these cell lines with chemotherapeutic drugs to determine how hsp27 protects these cells," he says. "I examine whole cells, as well as DNA, RNA, and proteins removed from these human breast cancer cells. I also do some experiments in test tubes in which I mix together hsp27 and other proteins to see how they interact with each other."

Carper hopes that his research might one day enable physicians to treat patients with breast cancer more effectively.

"After surgical removal, the tumor would be evaluated for the presence of hsp27," he says. "If hsp27 was elevated, then a specific therapy — developed in my laboratory — would be given to kill any remaining tumor cells that had high levels of hsp27. This would decrease the rate of tumor recurrence and potentially improve the survival of breast cancer patients."

J. Abiodun Elegbede

If J. Abiodun Elegbede is right, certain substances found in plants that we eat may hold the key to preventing and treating cancer.

Elegbede, a UNLV chemistry professor since 1998, has discovered that a plant product called d-limonene, found in the skins of oranges, seems to have a powerful cancer-fighting ability in laboratory animals. But understanding just how this and other natural agents fight cancer again requires a lesson on how cancer begins, he says.

"Cells grow by dividing according to their DNA message at certain times in the life cycle," Elegbede says. "When something happens to change the message that is carried by the DNA in new cells — a mutation — the cells usually have an internal mechanism that prevents the incorrect message from resulting in a change to the cell. That mechanism causes the cell to commit suicide, which we call 'apoptosis.'"



Biochemist J. Abiodun Elegbede: "One of the goals of my research is to understand how we can harness the resources of nature in the form of plant compounds, especially those that are present in our foods."

"We have found that in most cancer cells, something has gone wrong with the DNA that causes them to carry and maintain one of these incorrect messages. As a result, the cancer cells do not obey the internal signal to self-destruct and do not obey any of the control signals regulating their growth. Consequently, cancer cells grow out of control."

Elegbede notes that researchers have found that just as some foods have cancer-causing properties, others have the potential to halt cancer growth or prevent it altogether.

"Some of these components selectively cause the cancer cells to commit suicide while not having any deleterious effect on normal cells," he says. "My research is involved in understanding which of these food components have potential to cause or, more accurately, to remind cancer cells to self-destruct. Understanding how they are able to do this will help us in determining which of the compounds can be used for preventing and/or

treating cancers in humans."

D-limonene is one of those compounds, he says, noting that clinical trials designed to evaluate the substance's effect on humans are underway in several countries.

Lydia McKinstry

Chemistry professor Lydia McKinstry, like several of her colleagues, hopes to stop cancer cells from growing or stop normal cells from becoming cancerous. And like her colleagues, she is beginning this research effort at the cellular level.

"Enzymes are molecules contained in our cells that help control biological processes like cell regeneration," says McKinstry. "In one of my research projects we are synthesizing molecules called 'enzyme blockers' that will regulate abnormal enzyme activity that is associated with specific biological disorders such as cancer."

"Another focus of my research is on combining molecules that will damage the



Chemist Lydia McKinstry: "I build molecules that will either stop cancer cells from growing or stop normal cells from becoming cancerous."

DNA in cancer cells and stop them from reproducing," she says. "We take the basic molecular structure of a naturally occurring cancer-causing substance and then chemically alter it in order to develop new compounds that will be effective drugs for cancer therapy."

Her research is conducted in a laboratory where the substances she studies are exposed to both very low and very high temperatures, as well as to the absence of oxygen and moisture.

McKinstry's goals are straightforward: She wants to develop new drugs for treating cancer and then develop molecules that will stop cancer.

"If we could stop cancer cells from growing or stop normal cells from becoming cancerous, cancer would become nonexistent," she says.

Bryan Spangelo

Biochemist Bryan Spangelo is looking to the body itself for ways to cure leukemia.

"The thymus gland, which is found in the body near the heart, produces proteins that help the immune system to work properly so that we do not become sick," he explains. "So we are using those proteins to develop substances that kill leukemia cells."

The good news is that early results of his research show that these substances from the thymus gland can stop human leukemia cells from dividing, which limits their ability to spread throughout the body.

"If we are correct in our central



Chemistry professor Bryan Spangelo: "If we are correct about our central hypothesis that the thymus gland secretes hormones that prevent the occurrence or spread of cancer, then we will be able to isolate a thymic hormone and use it for the treatment of certain forms of cancer."

hypothesis that the thymus gland secretes hormones that prevent the occurrence or spread of cancer, then we will be able to isolate a thymic hormone and use it for the treatment of certain forms of cancer. Specifically, we have a thymic peptide that stops leukemia cells from growing in the laboratory. We hope that this thymic peptide will prevent leukemia cells from growing and spreading in the human body."

In his laboratory, Spangelo, who also chairs the chemistry department, uses cancer cells taken from a leukemia patient to create cell lines for testing of various combinations of the thymic peptides.

"It's our hope that these substances will act the same in the human body as they do in the lab," he says.

Joining the UNLV Cancer Institute this year is nursing professor Susan Meacham, who is the director of the university's new nutrition sciences program. Meacham's research focuses on cancer-preventing foods. ☐

CLASS NOTES

'60s

Janet Lowe, '68 BS Business Administration, has been elected president of the San Diego Press Club for the year 2000. The organization has nearly 500 members representing the news media and the public relations community. She is the former financial editor of the *San Diego Tribune* and is the author of 14 books.

'70s

Brenda D. Mason, '74 BA Sociology, '77 MS Educational Foundations and Counseling, graduated from Thomas Jefferson Law School in San Diego. She has worked for the U.S. Attorney's Office since 1980. Currently, she is a staff specialist for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force for Imperial and San Diego counties. She acts as a liaison between the U.S. Attorney's Office and a number of federal agencies. From 1974 until 1979 she was a member of the Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada. She lives in San Diego.



Brenda Mason '74

Richard Darder, '77 BS Hotel Administration, '91 MS Hotel Administration, is the chief executive

officer of Sac & Fox Casino. He began his casino career as a pit clerk at the MGM Grand in 1975 while attending UNLV and credits much of his success to the master's degree program in hotel administration. He lives in Holton, Kan.

Christie Phillips Enzinna, '77 BA Psychology, is a behavior analyst working for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. She assists families in keeping mentally retarded family members from being institutionalized. She is married and has one daughter, Ashton, who is 9. She lives in Richmond.

Michael Lantz, '78 BS Business Administration, is a partner in the certified public accounting/consulting firm of Stewart, Archibald & Barney. He is chairman of the board of directors of the Nevada Federal Credit Union, a member of the UNLV President's Associates, and a member of the Southern Nevada Estate Planning Council. He is also active in the Boy Scouts.

'80s

Jim Luce, '80 BS Hotel Administration, is vice president of retail sales and national accounts for Bergen Brunswig Drug Co. He spent the previous 18 years with Marriott Lodging; his last assignment there was as vice president of sales for the western region. He lives in Coto de Caza, Calif.

L. Laura Fritz, '81 MS Educational Foundations and Counseling, is vice president of development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas. In that role she is involved in the design, development, and implementation of a planned giving program. She previously served as executive director of development for the CCSN Founda-

tion at the Community College of Southern Nevada and as director of athletic development at UNLV. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist. She has taught at the elementary level and also has taught continuing education courses at both UNLV and CCSN.



L. Laura Fritz '81

Jann Butler, '82 BS Hotel Administration, has been promoted to senior human resources manager for Microsoft Corp. She oversees human resources issues for the 4,000-person Windows division. She has achieved her lifetime certification in human resources. She lives in Redmond, Wash.

Will Case, '88 BS Management, has been promoted to general manager of IntelliMark, a global information technology solutions provider. He previously worked for the company as a senior technical recruiter.

Patricia Gene Greene, '88 MBA, has been appointed to the Ewing Marion Kauffman/Missouri Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership in the Henry W. Bock School of Business and Public Administration at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Before going to UMKC, she served as a scholar-in-residence at the Kauffman Foundation. Previously, she held the State of New Jersey Small Business and Entrepreneurship Chair at Rutgers University. While at Rutgers, she was honored for her teaching excellence. She earned a doctoral degree in sociology from the University of Texas, Austin.

Dale R. Sarver, '88 BS Finance, is corporate director of purchasing at

S. Schwab, a children's clothing manufacturer. Previously, he worked in inventory management for Sunrise Medical Corp. in Somerset, Penn. He received an MBA from Frostburg State University in Maryland in 1989. He is married and has three sons, Joshua, Caleb, and Andrew. He lives in Meyersdale, Penn.

'90s

Paul Elder, '90 BS Business Administration, is general manager of a moving and storage company in Sacramento, Calif. He earned his MBA in finance from St. Mary's College in Moraga, Calif. He and his wife, Chamaine, are the parents of a son, Austin Clark, born Aug. 9, 1999. They live in Martinez.

Eric M. Aanes, '92 BS Marketing, is vice president of the Security Benefit Group of Companies. Previously, he worked for three years for GE Capital as director of sales. He and his wife, Shelley, live in Kentfield, Calif.



F. Travis Buchanan '92

F. Travis Buchanan, '92 BS Business Administration, earned his law degree from Western State School of Law in 1997 and was admitted to the California Bar that same year. As a law student, he served as president of the Black Law Student Association and won a distinguished student award for his academic achievement and community service involvement. He now

works as deputy city attorney for the city of Los Angeles. He prosecutes domestic violence, drug, theft, hit-and-run, and prostitution cases, among others. His wife, **Carla Gibson-Buchanan**, '95 BA Psychology, recently earned a master's degree in psychology from Pepperdine University. She teaches kindergarten for the Downey Unified School District. They live in Wilmington.

Vicky Burnette McCullough, '93 BA Art, and her husband, **Steven McCullough**, '91 BS Civil Engineering, had their first child, Ian Earl, on Oct. 3, 1998. They live in San Diego.

John T. Santana, '95 BA Communication Studies, is editor of the *Kent Reporter* and the *Auburn Reporter*, two community newspapers serving Seattle's southern suburbs. He lives in Seattle.

Ralph Tropf, '95 MFA Theatre Arts, is currently writing scripts for television. He produced his play, *Shadow Hour*, at the Stella Adler Theatre. He lives in Los Angeles.

Rachel Ego, '96 BS Hotel Administration, is an assistant manager at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass. The Country Club was host to golf's 1999 Ryder Cup Tournament.

Erik R. Boal, '97 BA English, is the sports editor of a weekly community newspaper, the *La Canada Outlook*. He also works as a substitute teacher at La Canada High School. He lives in Glendale, Calif.



Mari Nakashima '97

Mari Nakashima, '97 BA Communication Studies, was hired by the Shonkwiler-Marcoux advertising agency after completing a student internship at the company. She began

her professional career there as a media assistant, but she has since been promoted to the position of media buyer.

Stephanie Rushia, '97 BA Communication Studies and English, is co-publisher of *thePaper*, an upscale Las Vegas city magazine that includes articles on lifestyle, food, and good living. It is distributed throughout Southern Nevada.

Jill Reinhardt Duque, '98 BA Communication Studies, joined KSR Advertising in 1998. She worked as an account coordinator before being promoted to the position of account executive. Her responsibilities include managing the agency's largest single account.

Jacqueline Hooper, '98 BS Elementary Education, teaches first grade at Thorpe Elementary School in Henderson. She and her husband, John, had a son, John Mason, on March 14, 1999. They also have a daughter, Shaylynn, who turns 4 this month. They live in Henderson.

DEATHS

Linda Kim Todd, '88 MA Psychology, on July 8, 1998. She was participating in a bike-a-thon to raise money to combat sexual abuse of children when she was hit and killed by a car while she was stopped to change the tire of one of the youngsters participating in the bike-a-thon. A clinical psychologist who lived in Cottage Grove, Ore., she is survived by her partner, Tracy Durfee; daughter, Kacie Kim Todd-Durfee; parents, Max and Marie Todd; and brother, Gregg Todd.

Lori Elizabeth Wheatley, '90 BS Education, on July 21, 1998. A teacher, she is survived by her sister, Natalie Holder, and her niece, Aja Holder.

Attention Alumni — The UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of activities. For more information, call the Alumni Relations Office at 895-3621.

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We would like to invite all UNLV alumni to submit information about themselves to *UNLV Magazine* for inclusion in the Class Notes section. Please fill out the form below completely, type or print clearly, and avoid abbreviations. Also, please supply home and office telephone numbers so we can reach you if there is a question about your entry. We encourage you to submit a head-and-shoulders photograph of yourself to accompany your Class Notes entry.

Name _____

Year Graduated _____ Major _____ Type of Degree(s) _____
(e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science)

Address _____

Phone Numbers: Home _____ Office _____

Career or Personal Information _____

Entries should be mailed to: Diane Russell, UNLV News and Public Information, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451012, Las Vegas, NV 89154-1012

Foster Care

continued from page 13

research will have a positive effect on the way in which foster parents are recruited and trained in the future. But she questions whether foster care can ever live up to its ideal when it is so desperately under-funded and under-valued by the population at large.

"The joke is that social workers do this research for other social workers," Denby says. "It's unfortunate that the rest of society doesn't pay as much attention to the results of this kind of research. But the reality is that these are the children of the most disenfranchised groups in our society — the poor, the minority, and the drug addicted. Most of our society doesn't value these populations, so why should we expect that children of these populations would be valued?"

If Denby had her way, she would have more resources allocated to programs that would identify and

intervene in families at risk — those burdened by poverty, substance abuse, or other factors that lead to child abuse and neglect.

"If we could intervene then, we wouldn't have to talk about recruiting all these foster parents," Denby says.

She may get at least part of her wish. Denby was recently awarded a small grant from the state to evaluate the effectiveness of family preservation services in Nevada — services that provide one-on-one intervention to a small percentage of families, selected on the basis of key risk factors.


For the fortunate families that are selected, the state provides what Denby calls "the Cadillac of services" — counseling, money, education, and support delivered right in the home. Families typically receive services for three months, with follow-ups scheduled for three, six, and nine months later to assess family functioning, parental skills, and depression levels.

"My role will be to assess the progress the families are making and to project the number of children saved

from foster care," she says.

Denby says this work is critical because, unlike foster care, family preservation services are not federally mandated, and they're relatively expensive given their intensive nature. Although she is just beginning to collect data now, Denby is optimistic that her research will someday persuade legislators to allocate more resources to family preservation efforts.

Denby is also optimistic about the future of foster care in this country, in spite of its many problems. She says she recently had a student approach her at the end of one of her classes to disclose that she had been a foster child.

"This student told me that she and her brother had been taken from their mother when she was in kindergarten. So she literally grew up in the system," Denby says. "But she reports that she's doing well. She's in college; her brother is in high school. They're making it, and that makes me feel good. So maybe we *are* making a difference." 

Keller

continued from page 21

of-state colleges. But Keller says he can't imagine getting a better education than he did at UNLV.

"It was like going to a private college," he says. "It was so small that you could go find the professors in their offices, and they would take the time to sit with you and explain very complex concepts."

Professors such as Deacon and Murvosh took personal interest in their students and became mentors and role models, Keller says.

Deacon remembers Keller clearly. "He was one of the most enthusiastic students I've ever had," Deacon says. "He participated in much of the biology field work we were doing in those days. He was

friendly and gregarious, a real pleasure to teach."

And Keller hasn't forgotten his alma mater over the years. He often accepts requests to serve as a guest lecturer in government and leadership classes. Additionally, for the past several years he has served as a speaker at the UNLV Alumni Association's Career Day events.

In 1999, the Alumni Association showed its appreciation by naming him *Alumnus of the Year*, the highest honor awarded to a graduate by the association.

"I was astounded when I was selected from among the thousands of UNLV alumni," he says. "It is a great honor for me and a very humbling experience to be recognized by my peers."


As for his future, Keller says he still has one very specific career-related goal

ahead of him.

"I want to work myself out of work," he says. "I fully intend to be part of the team that wrestles crime to the ground so that we no longer need the police. I don't know that that ever will be accomplished, but that's my goal."

It's more than just professional pride that drives him to attain that goal, he says. It's something that's even more important to Keller than his law enforcement career — his family.

In addition to Charlotte, his wife of 10 years, Keller's son and two of his three daughters live in Southern Nevada, as well as three of his four grandchildren.

"I want my grandchildren to enjoy the very same quality of life I had as a young child in this town," he says. "They are the reason I still work every day to make this a better city." 



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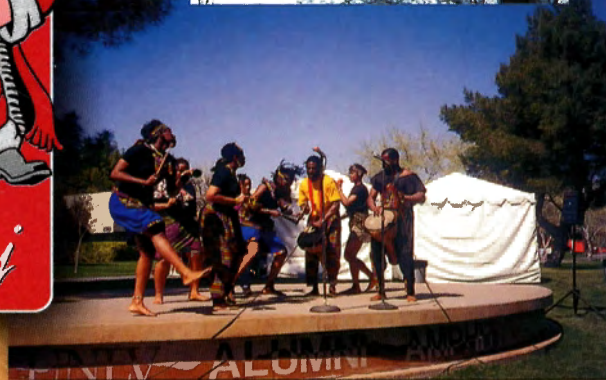
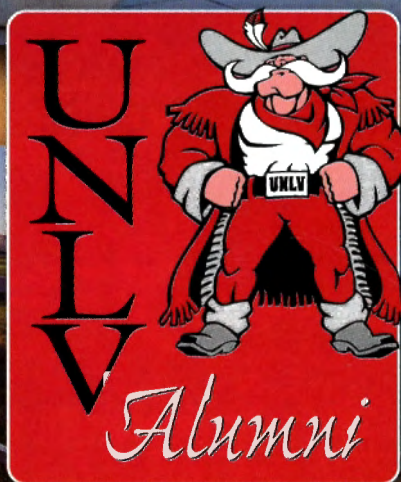
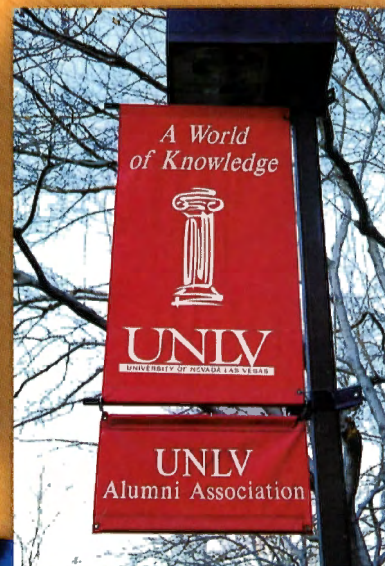
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