PEABODY

reflector

After Newtown

A conversation with Peabody faculty on protecting our schools in an age of violence

SUMMER 2013 VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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PEABODY reflector

JOHN RUSSELL

The shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School shook the nation. Those of us who work in education were affected in particular ways. After all, the principal, counselor and teachers of Sandy Hook represent our peers. The young students who died represent the children whom parents, families and communities entrust to our care. Their deaths demand not only our grief but our reflection on how to prevent such tragedies from ever happening again. Thus, school safety finds its way into this issue of the *Reflector* as a necessary subject for renewed consideration. I am pleased that members of the Peabody faculty are, in fact, working every day to make schools safe environments in which all children can thrive.

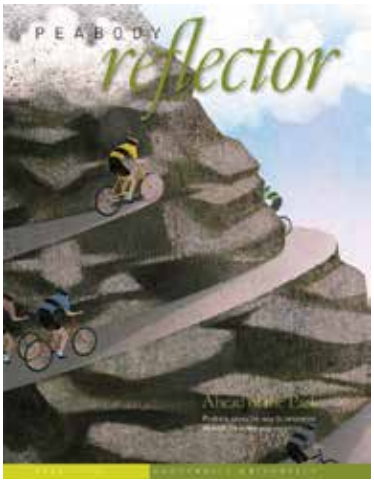
Other students meriting our concern, although not for reasons of violence, are children with autism spectrum disorders. Faculty members and Peabody alumni are trying to understand better and to ameliorate the learning challenges that a growing number of diagnosed children face. One Peabody alumna, Helen Leonard, BS'91, was moved by her personal experience with autism to found a school dedicated to serving and educating students with autism or Asperger's syndrome. Her inspiring story is included here.

Finally, the close of each academic year brings departures of faculty members as well as graduating students. This year yielded a larger group of retiring faculty than usual. We are sad to say goodbye to Leonard Bickman, Vera Stevens Chatman, David Cordray, Paul Dokecki, Carolyn Hughes, Linda Isaacs, Howard Sandler and Mark Wolery. We asked another of these "graduating" faculty members, Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey, to share her insights about how teaching and Peabody College have evolved during her 40 years of service.

Forty years! That's amazing to me, but Kathy and others—including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and even Peabody parents—share a common trait: a deep commitment to the wellbeing of others.

If Sandy Hook reminded us just how fragile life can be, the work that Peabody people do offers an affirming counter narrative. I'm grateful for that.

Camilla P. Benbow
Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development



Peabody Makes a Difference

I AM PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE *REFLECTOR* and read the cover article, "Ahead of the Pack," with personal interest. I began studies in 1978 and earned my Ed.D. in 1984. My diploma reads "From George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University." I believe it was the first year of the merger. Some time in 1977 three of us in East Maine District 63, located in suburban Chicago, began meeting in the school district with Art Silverman, dean and professor of policy study and educational leadership at Peabody, to establish the first cohort group to begin doctoral studies in the Chicago area (off-campus, but with an "on-campus" degree). This may possibly have been the first program of this kind for Peabody. Initiators included Lenore Page (now deceased) and me, and our superintendent Alan Gogo. Lenore and I began our studies with about 30 others in the fall of 1978 at the District 63 Administration Center.

I am thankful and grateful for the confluence of people and events that gave me the opportunity to work with consummate professionals who were highly prepared in their field, dedicated to students, and kind, supportive and generous with their time despite having to travel back and forth between Nashville and Chicago.

I am pleased to say that my time and experiences with the people at Peabody made a difference in my life and hopefully by extension, the lives of many others during my time as superintendent of schools in four systems during the '80s and '90s.

I am proud of Peabody's commitment to innovation and continued development of our professional practice along with the politics involved in educational leadership.

Cesare Caldarelli, EdD'84
Peoria, Arizona

Veterans Village Memories

AS I THUMBED THROUGH THE *PEABODY REFLECTOR* Fall 2012 issue I stopped on page 21. The picture of Veterans Village brought back a multitude of memories. My parents and I lived in one of those "prefabricated apartments" when I was 4 to 6 years of age. I attended the nursery/kindergarten mentioned in the photo caption and then attended first grade at Peabody Demonstration School.

As I turned to page 22 and saw the interior view picture I was overcome by the memory of my father sitting on a couch just as the man in the picture is, but what was lacking in the picture was the little blond girl who sat in his lap and listened as he read his assignments out loud to me. The GI Bill supported my father's graduate studies in geography. He then taught in higher education in seven states, including 26 years at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Upon my return to the Peabody Campus in 1969, I recall taking a "memory walk" across campus and thinking of those Veterans Village days—the movies and concerts on the lawn of the Social Religious Building, playing on the playground at the nursery/kindergarten and learning what the iris means to Peabody.


SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Veterans Village

Thank you for the memories of my days on the Peabody campus and of the man who introduced me to life in higher education—it is a wonderful life.

Annelle R. Huggins, MLS'70
Memphis, Tenn.

Letters are always welcome in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style or clarity. Send signed letters to: Editor, *Peabody Reflector,* PMB 357737, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7737, or email reflector@vanderbilt.edu. You may also comment on articles in the online version of the magazine at vanderbilt.edu/magazines/peabody-reflector.

JOHN RUSSELL

A sculpture, Water and Sun, *was donated to Vanderbilt by Frank Garrison Jr. (BA'76, JD'79) and his wife Amy P. Garrison (BA'79) and installed on the Peabody campus. It was given in honor of Frank's grandfather Sidney Clarence Garrison, who was president of Peabody from 1938 until his death in 1945.*

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Association of Black Sociologists, partnering with Peabody, launched its official journal, *Issues in Race & Society: An Interdisciplinary Global Journal*. As the official journal of ABS, it will be produced biannually, with **Sandra L. Barnes**, professor of human and organizational development serving as editor.

Erik Carter, associate professor of special education, has received the Patricia L. Sitlington Research in Transition Award from the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition. Carter also received the Young Professional Award of the Association of University Centers for Disabilities.

Bruce Compas, Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Psychology and Human Development and professor of pediatrics, was interviewed by Nashville Public Television for its series *NPT Reports: Children's Health Crisis*. Compas spoke about his studies on stress and its impact on both child and family health.

David K. Dickinson, professor of education, is serving on the Early Literacy Expert panel for the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. The group is formulating policy guidance for eight states.

Stella Flores, assistant professor of public policy and higher education, was recognized by *The Review of Higher Education* for having its most downloaded article for the 2011 and 2012 academic years with "State Dream Acts: The Effect of In-State Resident Tuition Policies and Undocumented Latino Students." In addition, she was a featured panelist at a Nashville screening of *NPT Reports: Translating the Dream*, a documentary about the troubling graduation rates of Tennessee immigrants and English language learners.

Stella Flores

Peabody College was named the top graduate school of education in the country for the fifth consecutive year by *U.S. News & World Report*. Peabody bested programs at Johns Hopkins University (No. 2) and Harvard (No. 3) for the top spot, in addition to having its programs in administration/supervision and special education named No. 1 by education school deans.

Donna Ford, professor of special education, is one of 14 university professors recognized by the Southeastern Conference for achievement in research and scholarship with a 2013 Faculty Achievement Award. These annual awards honor professors from the SEC's 14 member universities who have meritorious records in teaching and scholarship and who serve as role models for other faculty and students.

Lynn Fuchs and **Douglas Fuchs**, holders of the Nicholas Hobbs Chair and professors of special education, have won the 2013 Kauffman-Hallahan Distinguished Researcher Award of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Research. The award recognizes individuals or research teams whose research has resulted in more effective services or education for exceptional individuals.

Ellen Goldring, Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Education Policy and Leadership, and chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations, was awarded a $590,000 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to examine how school administrators are navigating an ever-growing stream of teacher effectiveness data and how they are applying that data to their human capital decision making. Her study, which is being conducted in eight school districts across six states through February 2014, will include observations, in-person interviews and focus groups with administrators, front office staff and teachers. The research team includes Assistant Professor of Leadership, Policy and Organizations **Jason Grissom**, Senior Research Associate **Marisa Cannata**, Research Assistant Professor **Patrick Schuermann** and graduate student **Timothy Drake**.

Ellen Goldring

Brian Heuser, MTS'00, EdD'07, assistant professor of the practice of public policy and education, has been selected by the Institute for International Education for the third straight year to be a panelist for its Boren Fellowships Program, which focuses on regions and languages deemed important for U.S. security.

Christopher Loss, assistant professor of public policy and higher education, has won the 2013 AERA Outstanding Book Award for *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century*.

Velma McBride Murry, Lois Autrey Betts Professor of Education and Humanities, is the recipient of the Society for Research in Child Development's 2013 Distinguished Contributions to Cultural and Contextual Factors in Child Development Award. Her research-based intervention program, Strong African American Families, targeted to the prevention of early onset sexual behavior and substance abuse, was inspired by the actions of the supportive community where she grew up in rural West Tennessee.

Kristopher Preacher, assistant professor of psychology, will be presented with an Early Career Award by the American Psychological Association.

STEVE GREEN

Claire Smrekar (center), associate professor of leadership, policy and organizations, and Ron Zimmer, associate professor of public policy and education (left), took part in "Options in Education: School Vouchers—What Research Shows," a panel discussion on campus that included Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools' Office of Innovation Executive Director Alan Coverstone and Debby Gould, president of the Nashville chapter of the League of Women Voters.

Joseph Rodgers, professor of psychology, was named an American Association for the Advancement of Science fellow, an honor bestowed on members by their peers to acknowledge meritorious efforts to propel scientific achievement. Rodgers and the other new fellows were recognized for their contributions to science and technology at the AAAS annual meeting in Boston.

COURTESY OF ANN NEELY

Ann Neely, associate professor of the practice of teaching and learning, and **Georgene Troseth**, associate professor of psychology, led a Harry Potter-themed first-year writing seminar in psychology in England over spring break. The class included discussion of such topics as temperament, real orphans and psychopathology. They took in a performance of *Matilda: The Musical* in London's West End and toured the Harry Potter movie sets at Warner Bros. Studios, Leavesden.

Georgene Troseth, associate professor of psychology, was a key source in the *Atlantic Monthly*'s cover story, "The Touch Screen Generation." She was quoted on her research, which examines young children's cognitive processing of information presented through video. Troseth, graduate student **Kate O'Doherty** and former student **Gabrielle Strouse** were published in *Zero to Three,* and their paper on dialogic video will be published in *Developmental Psychology*.

Paul Yoder, professor of special education and research professor of hearing and speech sciences, has been selected as the recipient of the 2013 Research Award by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Ron Zimmer, associate professor of public policy and education, has released the findings of a new study that compares student achievement on state-authorized and district-authorized charter schools. The results of his study will be published in a forthcoming issue of the journal *Education, Finance and Policy*.

Ron Zimmer

STUDENT NEWS

Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein, MS'11, a community research and action graduate student, is the recipient of a $20,000 award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Law Research Institute to fund her dissertation fieldwork. Her research looks at the health effect of drug laws and welfare reform on people who are HIV-positive.

Paul Morphy, a graduate student in special education, was chosen to present his paper, "Writing to Read and Relate," as part of the Asa G. Hilliard III and Barbara

Humphrey Fellows bring the world to Peabody

The **Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program** honored the 2013 Fellows and their network of supporters during a ceremony in the Wyatt Rotunda in April. The 10 educational leaders from nine developing nations and emerging democracies have engaged in intensive academic coursework and professional development while sharing their knowledge, expertise and culture with the campus and Nashville community. The program was initiated in 1978 to honor the late senator and vice president and his lifelong commitment to international cooperation and public service.

Pictured on the front steps of Wyatt are (left): Nana Bilali Ka (Niger), Ali Alshehabi (Bahrain), Hiral Adhyaru (India), Roseline Sherman (Liberia), Mar Mar Thwin (Myanmar), Iyke Chukwu (Nigeria), Bushra Jamal (Pakistan), Mohamed Yunus (Myanmar) and Aamaal Ali (Maldives).

BRIAN SMOKLER

A. Sizemore Research Institute on African Americans and Education at the AERA annual meeting in San Francisco. The Bonsal Education Research Entrepreneurship Award funded his research.

Four students in psychological sciences, including Peabody graduate students **Colleen Russo** and **Lewis Baker**, have won prestigious National Science Foundation fellowships. Russo's $90,000 fellowship will support her research of how verbal bullying in children's television influences young viewers. Her faculty adviser is Associate Professor of Psychology **Georgene Troseth**. Baker's $90,000 fellowship will support his study of the "change blindness" phenomenon, the inability to perceive relatively large changes in the environment. His adviser is **Dan Levin**, professor of psychology and human development.

STAFF NEWS

Longtime Peabody staff member **Chris LaFevor**, BS'69, has retired. She made her mark as a student, and then as assistant to the graduate dean, a dissertation editor, an administrator, and since 1991, director of the Office of Teacher Licensure. She has been affiliated with Peabody for 48 years, except for a year teaching high school in Sacramento, Calif., and a year and a half serving in the Peace Corps in Nicaragua. **Michael W. Jackson**, former senior director of institutional research and assessment at Oklahoma City University, serves as the new director of licensure, effectiveness and accreditation.

Chris LaFevor

The documentary *Paying the Debt: A History of Vanderbilt Peabody College* received a Telly Award for scriptwritng. **Lyle Jackson**, media content producer in the Peabody Research Office, produced the documentary. In addition, Jackson earned three bronze Telly Awards for his video work for Peabody.

RESEARCH NEWS

Do popular education reforms demoralize teachers?

Three widely implemented practices intended to strengthen teaching actually do more to undermine professionalism and demoralize teachers, according to **Richard Milner**, associate professor of education. In a policy brief, Milner pinpoints evaluations of teachers based on annual gains in students' standardized test scores, fast-track teacher preparation and licensure programs, and use of narrowly focused curricula as contributing to an ongoing drop in teacher dissatisfaction. Moreover, schools that reduce professional development and collaboration opportunities have the most dissatisfied teachers. The brief, *Policy Reforms and De-professionalization of Teaching*, was published by the National Education Policy Center.

What do children already know when they get to kindergarten?

Kindergarten teachers spend much of their math instructional time teaching students basic counting skills and how to recognize geometric shapes. But most students have already mastered these skills before ever setting foot in the kindergarten classroom, according to a new study by **Mimi Engel**, assistant professor of public policy and education. The study showed that the vast majority of students had mastered basic counting and shapes by the fall of kindergarten. In contrast, very few had mastered simple addition and subtraction. Engel and her collaborators reported their findings online in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis.*

Twelve Vanderbilt faculty members were named in the **Edu-Scholar Public Presence Rankings**, which recognize university-based academics who are contributing substantially to public debates about K-12 and higher education. Vanderbilt had the third most faculty included on the list, behind Stanford and Harvard, which had 17 each. Notably, two Vanderbilt faculty were ranked in the top 50: **Lynn Fuchs**, Nicholas Hobbs Professor of Special Education (39); and **Camilla Benbow**, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development and professor of psychology (tied at 45).

Lynn Fuchs

ANNA VAN WINDEKENS

Students at Eakin Elementary, a K-4 International Baccalaureate World School near campus, were treated to Passport Day, an event hosted by the Humphrey Fellows. Students participated in interactive exhibits that included writing their name in a different alphabet as well as learning traditional dances, games and songs from other nations. At each station they received stamps for their homemade passports. Pictured: Roseline Sherman of Liberia.

New handbook helps youth with disabilities transition to adult life

To ease high school students with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities transition into adult life, Associate Professor of Special Education **Erik Carter,** MEd'98, PhD'04, and Professor Emerita of Special Education and professor of human and organizational development **Carolyn Hughes** have developed a transition model. It combines skill development with support, including strategies they outline in *The New Transition Handbook* (Brookes Publishing, 2012). The handbook is available for sale at online book retailers and at the Brookes Publishing Co. website.

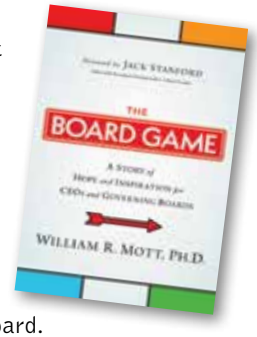
New report offers road map to improve Nashville public schools

Claire Smrekar, associate professor of leadership, policy and organizations, senior **Hilary Knudson** and **Candice McQueen**, dean of education at David Lipscomb University, produced a background report recommending demographic shifts, revamping school governance and improving public communication to improve the state of Metro Nashville Public Schools. It was prepared for the NashvilleNext initiative, a collaboration of Metro Nashville government, local businesses, service organizations and community members to create a countywide plan to guide the city through 2040.

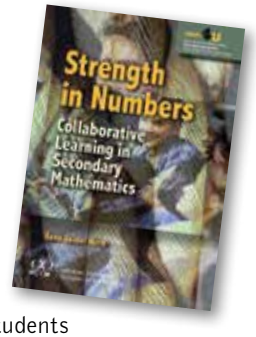
Read About It

So Much More than the ABCs: The Early Phases of Reading and Writing (NAEYC Books, 2013), co-authored by **Molly Collins**, BS'92, and Judith A. Schickedanz, is a book supporting children's early literacy. Collins examines what children need to learn in their early years and the strategies that teachers can use to help children acquire these foundations. The book is useful in helping parents and early childhood professionals support young children as they embark on their journey into reading and writing.

The Board Game: A Story of Hope and Inspiration for CEOs and Governing Boards (Visualink Creative, 2013), by **William R. Mott**, MLS'78, PhD'80, is focused on helping nonprofit organizations achieve higher levels of success by elevating the effectiveness and functionality of its CEO and governing board. The book reads as an engaging, fictional story that illustrates how behaviors and governing styles affect an organization and offers solutions to troublesome practices that are disruptive or worse.



Strength in Numbers: Collaborative Learning in Secondary Mathematics (NCTM, 2012), by **Ilana Horn**, associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, supports teachers in developing tools for effective group work in their secondary mathematics classrooms. It examines how students experience learning mathematics in collaborative settings and offers ways to develop tasks, concepts, strategies and tools that create successful group work and reach students of all abilities.



by Lisa Kelley

After NEWTOWN

A conversation with Peabody faculty on protecting our schools in an age of violence

In the immediate aftermath of the December 2012 murders at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., the public's horror over the violence escalated into a contentious debate on school safety, bullying, parenting and gun laws. Little is known about why Adam Lanza killed his mother, six educators and 20 first-graders before killing himself. The media replayed the few details that were known, but the traumatic incident left many questions in its wake.

Did parents, teachers and the community overlook warning signs? Is the mental health system to blame? Are more guns needed? Should access to assault weapons be restricted? What can be done to keep this from happening again?

Peabody faculty and alumni share research insights into possible causes of these mass shootings that happen with increasing frequency and how future incidents might be prevented.

"The principle objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect and emotional support within educational institutions."

—Threat Assessment in Schools Report released by U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service

ILLUSTRATION BY TANG YAU HOONG

Missing the signs

History shows us that parents often miss warning signs that their child could be at risk for committing a violent act. The mother of Dylan Klebold, one of the Columbine shooters, wrote years after the 1999 killings that she thought of her son as a "gentle, sensible kid," even though he'd shown signs of "impulsive and unscrupulous" behavior. Similarly, the father of Andy Williams, the high-schooler who used a family gun to kill two students and wound 13 others in 2001 at Santana High School in California, says he was "shocked" when he learned what his son had done.

Depression may be part of the complex make-up of these perpetrators, according to Psychology Professor Judy Garber, who researches depression in at-risk adolescents with emphasis on the parent-child relationship and on how the mental health of one may affect the other. She is currently studying ways to help parents of children with behavioral and emotional problems.

"One-half to a third of these parents are facing stress and not dealing well with it," she says. "In at least 30 to 40 percent of those cases, they're not getting the help they need because they're distressed themselves. Parents may know a lot about their child and have the child's best interest in mind, but they might not have the wherewithal or resources to know what to do."

Associate Professor of Special Education Joseph Wehby, whose work focuses on students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders, agrees it is very difficult for the parents of troubled children to cope on their own.

"There are parents who give their best effort, but they aren't trained for this. I've got a doctorate in this area, and I couldn't do it alone," Wehby says. "It becomes overwhelming. Just think from the standpoint of how we view parents whose children are troubled. Parents are stigmatized. They become isolated themselves."

Like parents, schools struggle to manage children with severe emotional and behavioral problems. But they are constrained by time, logistics and resources. It can be especially difficult for schools to deal with individuals whose behavioral needs are what Wehby describes as "low frequency but highly intense."

ANNE RAYNER

Finch

"One day they're okay, the next day explosive. That kind of inconsistency makes it difficult for schools to develop services that are appropriate," he says. "We're smart about identifying children who show significant signs of later problem behav-

ior—like those who torture animals. But children who might be showing some mild depression early on are hard to identify, because they might not be standing out."

Strong peer-to-peer relationships are an important part of reaching at-risk students, according to Associate Professor of the Practice of Human and Organizational Development Andrew Finch. He also coordinates the school counseling program, which is part of HOD's human development counseling program.

"Developmentally, teenagers are coming to understand themselves through peer affiliation. There are numerous studies affirming the importance of peer relationships during adolescence," he says.

Finch says he has met with many students who struggled in typical school environments but thrived in smaller learning environments with like-minded peers.

"Positive peer supports are a vital element, whether those exist in a traditional school or a specialized program," Finch says. "The goal is the least restrictive environment possible. This gives all children the opportunity to be with peers not like themselves, and this can be a very positive thing."

Wehby says students with severe emotional and behavioral problems can regress when they don't have ongoing support.

Security experts point to the identification of at-risk students as a safety priority. In 2002, spurred by a series of targeted school attacks, including Columbine, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service released the Threat Assessment in Schools Report. It found that there was no useful shooter profile based on demographics or other traits to effectively identify dangerous students in advance. Rather, behavior and communications were better tools for recognizing a student who may be planning an attack.

In its conclusion, the report called targeted violence "arguably only the tip of the iceberg of pain, loneliness, desperation and despair that many students in this nation's schools deal with on a daily basis.

"The threat assessment process by itself is unlikely to have a lasting effect on the problem of targeted school violence unless that process is implemented in the larger context … The principle objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect and emotional support within educational institutions."

Building safe places

Schools in recent years have embraced anti-bullying campaigns but that's only a start, says Maury Nation, associate professor of human and organizational development. He researches bullying and violence with an emphasis on school climate and community contexts. Nation has received a $600,000 grant to fund the Tennessee Center for Safe and Supportive Schools at Vanderbilt University, affiliated with the state's Safe and Supportive Schools program. The program focuses on implementing good practices in youth development and social and emotional learning.

The threat assessment study found that there was no useful shooter profile based on demographics or other traits to effectively identify dangerous students in advance.

"The program reflects a change in strategy by the Department of Education," Nation says. "Bullying is definitely an aspect of the school climate. But we've also had to think about other things that contribute to school environment, many related to bullying, such as alcohol and drug use, whether students are showing up for school, their level of engagement, academic performance—things that are all symptoms of something broader going on."

Vanderbilt's new center will help schools collect information on school climates and then provide feedback and technical assistance based on that data. It will take a systemic approach, going beyond adding programs to actually impacting the ways in which teachers and administrators think about and interact with students, Nation says.

"A big part of what we're looking at is how to help people understand the concept of school violence, so that attention and resources go toward more

systemic types of problems," he says. For example, he explains, many mistakenly believe bullying only happens between two people.

"It's clearly a system in which there are supportive and neutral bystanders, including teachers," Nation says. "Almost always someone is witnessing what is going on, so prevention means working with those observing, setting expectations around behavior, around what is okay and what's not. When teachers and students change those norms, bullying goes down."

JOHN RUSSELL

Nation

The federal government's 2002 threat assessment report found that while not all school shooters had been bullied, many reported "behaviors that, if they occurred in the workplace, likely would meet legal definitions of harassment and/or assault."

Nation also is in the process of pulling together data on school gun fatalities nationally. He cautions against allocating resources in reaction to the most extreme, but rare, violent events like the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary. Research indicates that security measures such as cameras, metal detectors and armed guards may have the unintended consequence of making students feel less safe by promoting a siege mentality.

The practices that have a more productive impact on overall school safety, he says, are related to adult-to-student relationships, changing student and teacher attitudes about acceptable behavior, and supportive relationships among peers.

"The best deterrent to violent types of events is teachers having strong relationships with students, so that when students hear something, they go to the teacher and give a heads up that something might be going on," Nation says.

"The best deterrent to violent types of events is teachers having strong relationships with students, so that when they hear something, they go to the teacher and give a heads up that something might be going on."

—Maury Nation

The blame game

The motivation of the 20-year-old Sandy Hook shooter, Adam Lanza, is still unclear. Unconfirmed media reports that he had been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome—a mild form of autism char-

acterized by poor social and communication skills, repetitive behaviors and fixated interests—may have worsened public understanding of autism.

Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele, a pediatric psychiatrist and researcher at Vanderbilt, hopes to clear up public misperception on autism spectrum disorder.

"Autism spectrum disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder, not a mental illness," he said. "There's no evidence whatsoever that people with ASD are more likely to engage in planned violence. Most of the time, people with ASD are gentle and have no desire to harm others. If someone with ASD is aggressive, it is typically in reaction to something making him upset in the moment."

LAUREN HOLLAND

Veenstra-VanderWeele

It has been reported that Nancy Lanza moved her son from school to school. At the time of his death, he had a limited social life. Veenstra-VanderWeele says that children with ASD have varying needs for social interaction that should not be ignored.

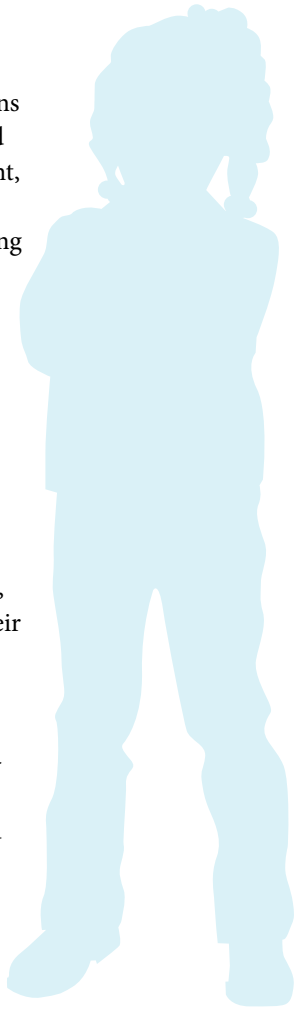
"Individuals with ASD, like most of us, have a range of desires for social interaction," he says. "Some do well with just immediate family. Others may deeply desire interaction with other people, but they have a difficult time establishing the sorts of friendships they desire. Beyond someone's desire for social interaction, other goals may only be possible with more social experience. For example, if someone has the cognitive ability to work outside the home, you would want that person to have the social exposure that would allow them to do well in a work setting."

Peer-focused inclusive education can help students with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities build the social skills and relationships they need for fulfilling lives, according to Erik Carter, associate professor of special education at Peabody. Carter researches peer-mediated support and social interventions for students with ASD who also have an intellectual disability. He focuses on fostering social connections among students during middle and high school, where relationships and friendships for all students become more challenging as peer affiliations become more important and complex. In this environment, students with disabilities are especially at risk for becoming even more isolated.

"Research shows that students with autism have much to gain from working alongside their peers, both socially and in terms of what they learn," Carter says.

Carter's work has found that the traditional one-to-one, adult-to-student model, in which students typically receive most or all of their support from paraprofessionals (rather than working collaboratively with peers), can unintentionally hinder both academic and social development.

"Academics and social inclusion are not competing priorities," Carter says. "Our work finds the opposite. When students have individually assigned adult support, they are actually less likely to do well academically or to develop relationships with their



peers. When they're in inclusive classrooms working within cooperative learning groups and peer-supported arrangements, academic and social growth go together.

Classmates of students with autism can benefit from the interaction as well, Carter says. "There is a lot of reciprocity. Over and over, peers tell us about how they're growing and what they're learning about themselves. They become advocates for students with disabilities in their schools, and they talk about a deeper understanding of their own strengths."

Hope for the future

The public's post–Sandy Hook focus on implementing safety measures in schools is understandable, says Carol Nixon, associate director for the Tennessee Center for Safe and Supportive Schools and research associate for the Department of Human and Organizational Development. "But let's redefine what safety means. Students need to be engaged academically, emotionally and socially."

Positive steps include implementing structures and practices in schools such as advisory programs, project-based learning, integration of social and emotional learning into core curricula and strategies promoting youth voice and leadership, she says.

Nixon believes that since Columbine, much progress has been made. Planned attacks have been thwarted when students have reported their suspicions to staff.

"Now it's become more of a threat from the outside," she says, as was the case with Lanza.

Research is clear that student and school outcomes are better when there are positive student-teacher and student-peer relationships.

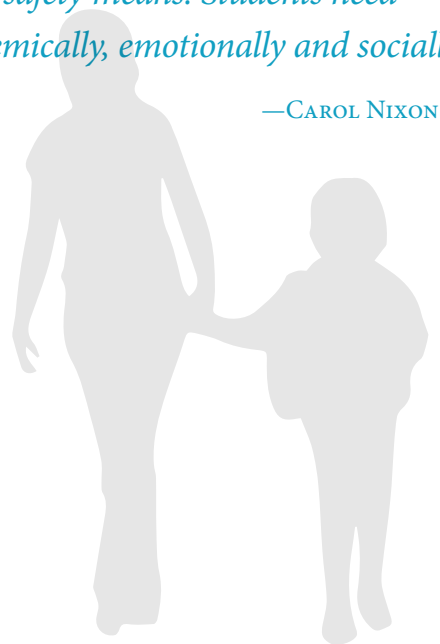
"If we promote caring and trusting relationships in the school environment, we can help prevent these things," Nixon says. "Children are much more interested in relationships with adults than we give them credit. We don't think that they do, but they crave them."

JOHN RUSSEL

Nixon

"Let's redefine what safety means. Students need to be engaged academically, emotionally and socially."

—Carol Nixon



Up in Arms

Since the Sandy Hook shootings, politicians in states from Oregon to Florida have announced their support for arming teachers. In March, South Dakota became the first state to enact a law specifically granting gun-carrying rights to school employees, subject to district approval. In many states, including Tennessee, similar bills have been introduced. Meanwhile, general gun laws in more than a dozen states already make it possible for teachers to carry weapons if they have permission from their principals or districts.

Woods

Yet those advocating arming teachers seem unaware of the complexities of using guns in an emergency situation.

Teachers, explains Laurie Woods (MLAS'00, MA'02, PhD'08), do not have the mindset it takes to use lethal force during an attack. She speaks from experience, having spent 21 years as a police officer and narcotics agent in California before joining academia.

"I think I'm one of the few college professors who's had to shoot at another person," says Woods, who lectures in the Department of Sociology at Vanderbilt and runs the Criminal Justice Degree Completion Program for police officers at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, Tenn. "I shot at a suspect who was trying to kill my partner and me. The suspect missed. I did not."

Woods says that as an on-duty cop, she was able to fire almost without thinking. But she notes that even trained officers, who must regularly qualify on the shooting range, hit their human targets only about 17 percent of the time.

"It's hard enough when you're trained to do it," Woods says, noting that she believes most police chiefs and sheriffs oppose arming teachers. "My actions resulted from years of training and a state of mind that put me on alert. Teachers don't have that mindset. It isn't pounded into them to be on guard and I don't think it should be. We ask teachers to enrich children's minds and help them find their way in the world.

"My experience convinces me that most Americans prefer to give teachers the freedom to teach without having to worry about being ready to kill."

Introducing weapons into schools and classrooms also creates risk for unintended consequences, such as accidental discharges and stolen weapons that are used in violent acts.

"These shootings are very rare," Woods says. "You have less than a 1 percent chance of being a victim of a violent crime in a year, and it's more likely to come from someone you know."

Christian Sawyer, MEd'02, EdD'11, believes trust, not guns, will build safer schools. He is executive principal at Bailey STEM Magnet Middle School in Nashville.

"Schools share the time-honored and most sacred mission of creating a safe and nurturing learning environment for young people to grow," he says. "But I think safety in a school community comes from building a deeply held sense of trust, among faculty, parents, and ultimately, the children we serve. If we can get trust right in schools, we will win the major part of the ongoing effort to keep our children safe."

Legislation to arm teachers is a "slippery slope," says Seth Swihart, MEd'03, who teaches IB history and AP government to 12th graders at Nashville's Hillsboro High School.

"There are students at my school who have been personally impacted by gun violence, and I can't imagine they would be comfortable with more guns in such close proximity to them every day," he says. "And if the argument is 'more guns equals more safety,' I am concerned that once teachers have the right to carry in school then there will be a push to arm other school personnel. Eighteen-year-olds can get permits to carry hunting rifles. What's to stop a student from asking to carry?"

"There are students at my school who have been personally impacted by gun violence and I can't imagine they would be comfortable with more guns in such close proximity to them every day."

—Seth Swihart

A Mother's Mission

Frustrated with school options for her son with autism, Helen Leonard, BS'91, created a school of her own

by Kara Furlong

LEAH MARSHALL

Helen Leonard, working with Paragon students, including her son Tony (right).

Within the light-filled classrooms of The Paragon School in Orlando, Fla., students receive individualized instruction in a small-group setting. They take regular music classes and socialize through team sports and extracurricular clubs. In addition to traditional academics, they participate in vocational activities and community-based internships designed to prepare them for life beyond school. The teaching staff is warm and nurturing, the atmosphere inclusive.

It's everything that Helen Leonard, BS'91, ever hoped for in an academic environment for her son Tony, 16, a Paragon student. That's because she created it.

The Paragon School, which serves children with autism spectrum disorder or Asperger's syndrome, is Leonard's response as a mother and educator to autism. With the disorders now affecting one in 88 children according to the Centers for Disease Control—up from one in 110 in 2009—the call to action is more vital than ever. She joins an army of fellow parents, educators and researchers working diligently to improve the lives of children with autism and those of their families.

When her son was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder before age 2, Leonard and her husband Tony, BE'90, pursued every early intervention available. They eventually enrolled their son in a local charter school for children with autism, where he thrived. But between Tony's fourth and fifth year at the school, his development began to outpace what the program could offer. The curriculum was designed for children with moderate to severe autism and offered only a special diploma, whereas Tony was high-functioning and better suited for a more academic track.

The Leonards investigated public schools and special-needs private schools as a next step for Tony, but couldn't find a good fit.

"After visiting the public school and meeting with the principal, I felt pretty good about it. But when we returned with our son, I could tell how uncomfortable he was there," Helen Leonard remembered. "As we were walking back to the car, I said to my husband, 'He'll get by.'"

Almost immediately, she had an "aha" moment.

"I realized 'getting by' was not good enough," Leonard says. "Just getting by is not a goal in life, and we would never want that for our other son. Tony had worked so hard, and so many people had invested their time and resources to get him this far, that getting

by was not acceptable. We had to find a program that would continue his progress while giving him the best educational experience possible."

Leonard shared the dilemma with the director of Tony's charter school, herself the mother of a child with autism, who struck a bargain. Tony could remain at the school another year if Leonard would start a new program to serve him and other high-functioning students with autism.

"She said to me, 'Helen, if the mothers don't do it, who will?'"

Leonard, who earned an elementary education degree at Peabody and a master's in education at New York's Bank Street College, accepted the challenge. Armed with 15 years' experience teaching elementary and middle school students, she spent the next year teaching in the charter school's K-1 classroom and learning the ropes of how the school was run. In 2007, she opened The Paragon School with her son, a dozen of his charter school classmates and five other children from the community as students.

Now in its sixth year, The Paragon School serves 65 students from kindergarten through high school. The teaching staff of 21 combines research-based methods and innovative strategies to help these high-functioning students maximize their potential. The Paragon School is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools and the Florida Kindergarten Council.

Hallmarks of the Paragon learning experience include strong emphases on behavioral expectations, self-discipline, organizational skills and independence. Students receive daily instruction in reading, math, social studies and science, while setting individual education goals to target deficit skills. Occupational, speech, music and other therapies are integrated into the curriculum.

Paragon has grown slowly but deliberately, trying to meet demand for its services while keeping pace with teacher training and maintaining instructional quality, says Leonard, who serves as the school's director. And demand for these services is high. Families have moved from out of state to enroll their children, and the school has received interest from parents of children with autism in other countries. The Paragon School's accrediting body has even inquired about opening more locations elsewhere in Florida.

The Paragon School is filling a niche within Central Florida's autism community. "What I've heard from parents is that programs for higher-functioning children with autism are few and far between," Leonard says. "I think this is because many people believe the best setting for these children would be in the mainstream. But our students thrive by being in an environment where autism is the common denominator and they are not viewed for it at all.

"We don't mention 'autism' much," she says. "We're just here as a regular school community, with the exception that the children have therapies built into their day. But they also get the components of education that children look forward to at school."

Students strengthen their social skills through team sports, school clubs, field trips and parties. Paragon's high school program offers either a standard high school diploma or a special diploma with vocational training. The latter speaks to a distinct school mission.

"The goal of our program is for each child to become a contributing member of society," Leonard says. "The first step toward this is helping them to be able to meet their own needs."

COURTESY OF HELEN LEONARD

Leonard poses with famed autism advocate Temple Grandin (left) at an autism conference in Denver.

The school's vocational training focuses on building up independent functioning and organizational skills so that students can follow a schedule and hold down a job. They get practice at this through Paragon's school-run car wash, by caring for horses at the therapeutic riding program with which the school partners, and through work placements in the community. Students shelve books at a local library, fold towels at the YMCA, bus tables at a pizza res-

taurant and sort cans at a church food bank, among other tasks—jobs very much like those any high school student might have.

It's about building experience, Leonard says, adding, "The purpose is for us to be able to track a series of skills a student is performing so that over time, we can show that he or she is employable." The goal is for students to get additional vocational training following graduation through a county-sponsored program or transition directly into jobs.

"One of the things we often go back to in children with autism is that they tend to thrive with structure," she says. "So we're trying to train our students up in a structured way for independent living and a vocational future."

In a meeting several years ago with Temple Grandin, the noted autism activist, Leonard asked for one piece of advice for running her school. "She said to focus on the vocational, because children with autism simply are not getting employed," says Leonard, who took the advice to heart.

Something else she takes to heart is helping families like her own. "We worked so hard to pull together on our own all of the different therapies and tutoring and help that he needed," Leonard remembers.

It's a reminder that autism affects the whole family, she says.

"One of the greatest challenges for parents of children with autism is trying to piece together all of the components a child will need to be successful, which can be completely exhausting in terms of one's physical and emotional energy." Schools like Paragon are designed to help.

Despite the daunting statistics surrounding autism, Leonard is hopeful for the future.

"I often tell people that this is the best time in history to have autism because of the level of awareness surrounding it," she says. "The better known autism is, the more resources will be devoted to helping these individuals. And that is very exciting."

Grants will fund efforts to find meaningful futures for young people with autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities

Erik Carter, MEd'98, PhD'04, associate professor of special education, is the primary Vanderbilt investigator on two new grants that highlight the university's growing role in the design and evaluation of transition services for youth and young adults with autism spectrum disorders or intellectual disability. In the first grant, Vanderbilt is serving as one of six research sites affiliated with the new Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders based at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The center is being established through a five-year, $10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Eric Carter

Ann Kaiser

Paul Yoder

The second grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is providing $1.7 million to reshape policies and practices in Tennessee to ensure that students with intellectual disabilities leave high school equipped for meaningful work—meaning competitive pay, employment in the community and supportive relationships with co-workers. Carter, along with **Elise McMillan**, co-director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, has launched the Tennessee Collaborative on Meaningful Work, which is comprised of 28 different state agencies or organizations which will develop initiatives aimed at employers, schools, families and youth, community members, and agencies and policy-makers.

Paul Yoder, professor of special education, and **Ann Kaiser**, Susan W. Gray Professor of Education and Human Development, have received grants from the National Institutes of Health Autism Centers of Excellence research program to study early language interventions for young children with autism. Last year, NIH announced grant awards of $100 million over five years, expanding inquiries into new areas such as children and adults with autism who have limited or no speech. Yoder leads the Nashville-based ACE treatment network site. Kaiser is involved in a four-city, five-year study that will compare two types of intensive, daily instruction for children with ASD who use only limited verbal communication.

Change and Continuity

Kathy Hoover-Dempsey looks back over 40 years at Peabody

by Kathy Hoover-Dempsey

The invitation from *Reflector* editor Joan Brasher was cordial and intriguing: "We'd love to have you write an article about how undergraduate teaching has changed over the years during your tenure."

"Yes!" I thought, "This could be really interesting!"

I have very much enjoyed these years at Peabody, especially when teaching my undergraduate and graduate students, conducting research and working with colleagues from Peabody and across the university.

Much has changed in my 40 years of undergraduate teaching. A small sample includes: notable advances in theoretical and empirical work at the foundation of teaching; developments in the techniques and tools we use to enhance and enrich teaching; the increasing diversity that undergraduates have brought to their work with us; our students' growing participation in local and international service learning; and more undergraduate participation in faculty research.

Just as important is what has not changed—the core values within Peabody College that have played a consistent and critical role in enabling excellent teaching and engaged student learning.

So on to the question, "What has changed?"

I joined Peabody in 1973, delighted to be part of a college with nearly two centuries of history, a home to undergraduate and graduate programs in education, special education and liberal arts and sciences, as well as an undergraduate population, many of whom were focused on preparing for careers in education.

A few years after my arrival, rumors that Peabody was experiencing financial difficulties were confirmed when it was announced that Peabody would merge with its larger neighbor, Vanderbilt University. We faced at least two new realities: we would become one of Vanderbilt's (somewhat) independent constituent schools, and Peabody's academic departments that "duplicated" departments in Vanderbilt's College of Arts & Science would be disbanded. In short order, Peabody was reduced from 14 to just four academic departments. My department, Psychology, was required to drop its undergraduate major but allowed to continue its graduate programs.

The closing of undergraduate majors created concerns, primary among them worries about the financial viability of the college given the likelihood of reduced enrollment and the coming (significant) increase in Peabody undergraduates' tuition rate. Vanderbilt's financial structure at the time was grounded in the assumption that each school would generate, largely through tuition, revenue sufficient to cover most of its expenses. Creating new and attractive programs and majors focused on education and human development would be essential for Peabody to sustain itself.

One of the first new programs, a major in Human Development (soon renamed Human and Organizational Development), quickly became so successful that a new department was created to house it. Several HOD classes were filling our largest Peabody classroom (seating about 115 students).

ANNE RAYNER

"I have seen many wonderful changes at Peabody during my tenure, but thankfully there are key core values that have not changed."

—Kathy Hoover-Dempsey

Faculty across departments also developed new undergraduate majors in Child Development and Cognitive Studies. Peabody's relatively swift success in adding excellent new programs for undergraduate, professional and

graduate students, as well as the college's emphasis on excellent undergraduate teaching, contributed to a resurgence in Peabody's undergraduate student population.

The faculty had long prized offering relatively small classes, within which professors could come to know students, and students could ask questions, offer observations, and address important issues. To retain the learning benefits of small classes, faculty members reaffirmed team teaching as an optional strategy for use in large courses. The presenting professor handled lecture material and questions; the other team member also answered questions and offered observations, while using "unoccupied" class time to focus on learning students' names. The students benefitted greatly from having two different (and generally engaging!) professors, with ready access to each of them as well as the teaching assistants.

NELSON BRYAN/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Hoover-Dempsey leads an informal class discussion circa 1988.

Another great benefit of HOD—one that in many ways set a model for the college and university as a whole—was the emergence of The Posse Program, a scholarship program for highly capable students from generally lower-income neighborhoods in New York City.

The first group of these diverse and talented students came to Peabody in the late 1980s. I remember leaving our lecture hall one fall morning soon after our first five Posse students' arrival. We watched as they stepped up on a concrete bench outside of Hobbs to respond to many friendly and excited questions about New York (New Yorkers were still far from common on campus), the Posse Program itself, and, perhaps inevitably, urban fashions.

One of those first Posse students, Shirley Collado, recently returned to Nashville for a short visit. Since graduating from Vanderbilt, she has earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Duke University and is now dean of the college at Middlebury College, Vermont—home to one of the many Posse Program groups now in many universities across the country. Over subsequent years, the university, with the aid of generous donors, established similar undergraduate scholarship programs.

Rapid demographic changes across the country and resulting changes in education and social policy called our attention to the impact of impoverished neighborhood and community conditions on the learning and "life chances" of children growing up in these settings. We integrated emerging theory and research related to many of these developments into several of our undergraduate courses and in practicum experiences in community settings.

Another change is that advances in theoretical, empirical and applied knowledge in many of the scholarly disciplines influenced the adaptation of course content and methods. Peabody courses were strongly influenced by new knowledge and research about human development; community conditions that support more optimal human development; new strategies for teaching; and the conditions and circumstances that contribute to varied aspects of atypical child development. The result is that courses gained an increasingly rich and diverse base of information on which to draw as we continue to support effective learning and development for all.

Advances in technology, of course, have played a key role in altering and supporting education for our undergraduate students. Forty years ago, we relied for much of our teaching on textbooks, blackboards and chalk, typewriters, dittoed handouts, and periodic forays into the library's repository of other information. The advent of copy machines allowed us to duplicate an expanded range of scholarly materials for class.

The emergence of the computer as an essential element of academic life continues to have often remarkable influence on teaching and learning. When students write papers, they can now access large storehouses of scholarly literature and research online. Assignments in many Peabody majors now access a huge volume of potentially pertinent research and are much more solidly grounded in careful analyses of that research.

PowerPoint has enabled many faculty to lay out concise and detailed outlines of important materials in the classroom. These can be posted on university instructional support systems, offering students 24/7 access to course materials as well opportunities to post and receive

responses from the instructor and other students in the course.

In addition, faculty can integrate video examples of varied concepts being studied and discussed and offer students similar benefits as they present the results of their own individual or group learning projects.

Another significant change technology has brought is that undergraduate students now may apply their learning in a remarkably expanded range of settings focused on working with children, adolescents and families in educational, developmental and other support settings, across the Nashville community, the nation (such as Alternative Spring Break) and in varied international settings.

PEYTON HOGE/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Kathy Hoover-Dempsey circa 1997.

One last and very important change, though there are certainly others, is that undergraduates increasingly can apply for and participate in faculty research labs and projects. Two-year honors research opportunities give juniors and seniors direct experience in developing research studies, and experience with research procedures and conducting hands-on research. The honors program also offers excellent opportunities for students to present their own research findings to departmental and university audiences and, in some circumstances, to regional or national scholarly conferences.

I have seen many wonderful changes at Peabody during my tenure, but thankfully there are key core values that have not changed. What are the continuities that foster the effectiveness and success of undergraduate teaching at Peabody?

First is the value Peabody faculty members place on offering knowledge that is grounded in strong research and theory, and relevant to the schools, communities, and other settings where children grow and learn. This blend of the theoretical, the practical and the beneficial lies at the heart of the Peabody ethos.

Second, Peabody remains committed to knowing and responding to our students as individuals, even as we encourage them to develop the collaborative skills that will ensure their future success.

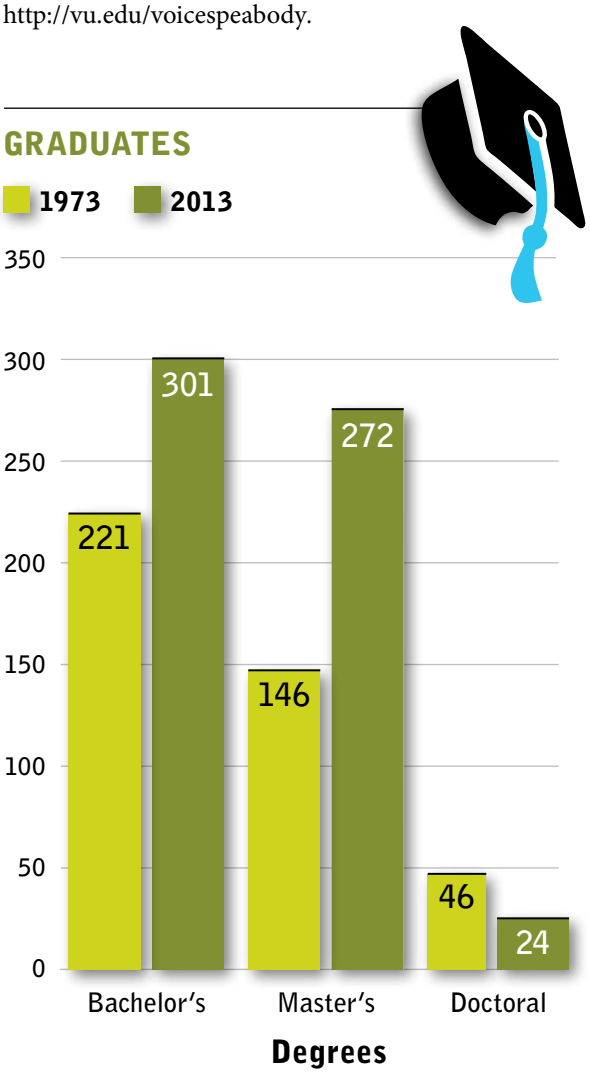
Third, Peabody continues to keep learning settings (classes, research labs, community engagement programs) relatively small so that students have ample opportunity to ask questions, ponder, experiment and learn.

Fourth, Peabody students and faculty share an altruistic desire to use knowledge and learning to make a positive difference in the lives of children, adolescents, families, schools and communities—locally, nationally and internationally.

These continuities that undergird our teaching enable Peabody faculty to transmit critically important knowledge regarding human development and effective education within the many and varied communities we serve.

The past 40 years have seen remarkable change. No doubt there is much more change to come. My strong hope is that taken together—the inevitable changes and the continuities that have served us so well for so long—will continue to nourish our graduates' ongoing learning and work so that they may continue to use it for good in their communities and around the world.

To Listen to Voices of Peabody, the Peabody Oral History Project, which features Hoover-Dempsey and other retiring professors, visit http://vu.edu/voicespeabody.



Building on a Strong Foundation

Christopher T. Lai, BS'98

Chris Lai sees life as a journey—not one destination, but many, and so much to discover and share along the way.

Christopher, his wife Shaunna, a nurse, and 1 ½ -year-old son William, in their Massachusetts home. (Photo by Cynthia Abbott)

Lai began Vanderbilt as an undergraduate in engineering, but soon switched to Peabody, where he completed the Human and Organizational Development program in hopes of pursuing a career in athletics training.

"Peabody was the perfect fit for me," said the Wisconsin native, who participated in the rugby and rowing teams, in addition to working as a student athletic trainer. Building on his Peabody experience, he earned a master's degree in health, physical education and recreation at Murray State University, followed by a job as an intern trainer for the New York Jets.

"It was a great experience, but I couldn't see a future in it—it felt too limiting," Lai says. But that realization didn't concern Lai.

"HOD gave me the opportunity to explore my strengths and weaknesses and develop my skills to go in any direction I wanted to," he explains. "I used those skills to evaluate where I was and where I wanted to go, and realized that the next step was getting an MBA."

He did just that at the University of New Hampshire and then quickly climbed the ranks at State Street, a financial services provider. He now oversees an internal software platform and credits his formative years at Peabody for his rewarding career in finance.

"The program prepared me for a solid future—it really transformed me into who I am today," he says. "That's what's really great about HOD—it gives you the skills to succeed in life, no matter where it takes you."

Lai has served as president of the Vanderbilt alumni chapter in Boston in hopes of giving back to the place where his career path began. "My time at Vanderbilt was meaningful," he says. "And I wanted to share in the camaraderie and reach out to those coming along after me."

The desire to give back was instilled in Lai by his parents, Helen and Joseph, who established the Lai Family Foundation Scholarship in 2002 to benefit Peabody undergraduates with a proven financial need.

"My parents taught my brother and me that education is the one thing that no one can take away from you. You can lose all your money but no one can take away what you have learned," he says.

"We want others to have the opportunity we had: to get a quality education."

—Joan Brasher

Small Investments Yield Big Rewards

Virginia Perry Johnson, BS'49

Smiles of Girl Scouts with a governor captured in a photo. Handmade dolls. Paintings of flags from an educational television show. Images like these make up the international teaching career of Virginia "Ginny" (Perry) Johnson.

Ginny Johnson

Third-graders to adults in classrooms spanning Tennessee, California and Japan have benefited from the 1949 Peabody graduate's teaching. And she doesn't forget that her college education came to her as a gift.

Johnson was named after her mother's friend, Virgie Wolfe. "When I was named Virginia, it was my lucky day," she says. Johnson lived with the Wolfes during her middle school years, and when it came time for college, the Wolfes paid her way.

Johnson has returned that favor with decades of support for student scholarships through the Peabody Roundtable donor society and now as a member of the Oak Leaf Society donor loyalty program at the Capstone, or highest, level. Annual gifts like hers provide the foundation for excellence at Peabody College and Vanderbilt University.

When Johnson enrolled in Peabody, World War II was just ending and teachers were needed. Her first real job was teaching fourth-graders and she also led a Girl Scout troop. One Scout project was making cloth dolls with ceramic heads, arms and feet. Johnson still has hers, named Jenny Lind. The troop was also honored to present then-Gov. Frank Clement with a new Scout government badge on the steps of the Capitol, an event memorialized in a newspaper clipping. At Glendale School, she led a project about flags in American history that was then featured in a program on educational TV.

Johnson's career took her to California, where she taught school, married and raised three boys. Then came a move with her husband, Dick, who worked for IBM, to Tokyo, where she taught ESL and cooking to Japanese women. "I still hear from a few of those women 30 years later," she says.

After Japan, the Johnsons settled in the San Jose, Calif., area. Johnson earned her ESL certificate and taught adult education five mornings a week for a decade. Now 85, Johnson is studying creative writing.

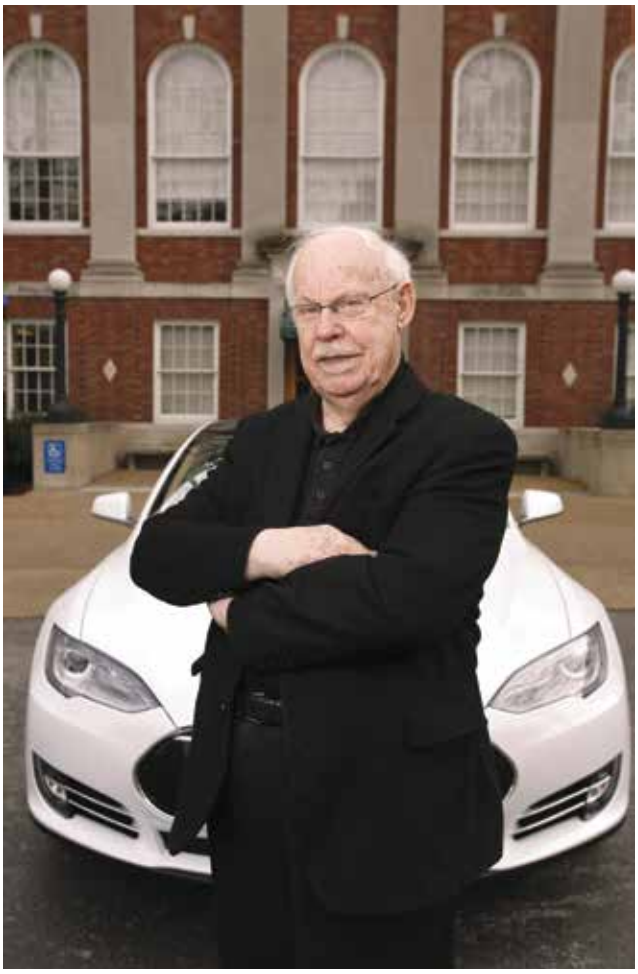
"I like to feel accomplishment," she says.

—Jan Read

COURTESY VIRGINIA PERRY JOHNSON

Virginia Johnson, standing next to Gov. Clement with her Girl Scout troop.

Into the Future
Willard Brown, BA'49



STEVE GREEN

In January, Willard Brown visited campus in his new Tesla Model S.

> *"If I had ever met Steve Jobs, I was going to tell him I'm so happy I lived long enough to see him develop this. And the same thing is true of Elon Musk and this Tesla. He's a technological genius."*
>
> —Willard Brown

Willard Brown claims not to be a technological genius. However, the 1949 graduate, who is on his second iPad and often video-chats with his brother in Atlanta, is clearly savvy enough to appreciate what technology can accomplish in today's world.

Case in point: He is one of the first in America to own the new Tesla model S electric car, a high performance vehicle equipped with a state-of-the-art battery-powered engine, a 17-inch touch-screen and the ability to reach speeds of up to 125 mph. He marvels at how much has changed since his time at Peabody.

"We didn't have enough technology—we couldn't even make a soundtrack," he says when describing a film project he and one of his roommates created for a class taught by Professor Susan B. Riley. "To present our project, my roommate brought in his portable record player and records, and I did the narration. Today, any teenager with a Macintosh can do this."

Brown, who created United Subscription Service in 1972, has a history of embracing what technology can do for the consumer and the business owner. When the personal computer was popularized by Apple in the late '80s, he quickly got on board.

"I saw the Macintosh and it looked so simple and intuitive. So, I got a Mac, and now with the iPad, it's a natural progression," he says. "If I had ever met Steve Jobs, I was going to tell him I'm so happy I lived long enough to see him develop this. And the same thing is true of Elon Musk and this Tesla. He's a technological genius."

According to the Tesla color chart, Brown's Tesla is pearl, so he named it Pearlie Mae, after his mother. Mapping out charging stations every 250 miles, he drove it to campus from his home in Atlanta for a visit in January, and back again, before heading to Florida.

"People stop me on the street and want to know about it," he said. "Every place I go, people are thrilled to see the car."

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

DAN LOFTIN/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Archive photo of Newbrough conferring with colleagues.

HOD pioneer Bob Newbrough leaves legacy of service and dialogue

Bob Newbrough, professor emeritus, died Jan. 2, 2013, after a battle with Parkinson's disease. He was 78.

Newbrough was born May 30, 1934, in Wendell, Idaho. He earned a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from the College of Idaho and a doctorate in psychology from the University of Utah before joining Peabody College's psychology faculty in 1966. He retired in 2002.

Over the decades, he received numerous fellowships and awards for his contributions to the field, including service as president of the *American Psychological Association A Division of Community Psychology* and editor of the *Journal of Community Psychology*.

He founded the Center for Community Studies, an interdisciplinary research entity focused on social issues. In addition, he co-founded the Transactional Ecological Psychology program and later the doctoral program in Community Research and Action. He also helped establish the department of Human and Organizational Development. He was a beloved figure at Peabody, known for his intellectual passion and leadership.

"Although Bob became an emeritus professor in 2002, he continued to be a force within the department, advising doctoral students until the present," Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development wrote in a letter to faculty. "We will miss him greatly."

Newbrough remained active in the Nashville community, where he recently had begun organizing a local initiative to promote civil discourse across the political spectrum.

Newbrough

"Bob was tireless in his efforts to help our fledgling efforts get off the ground, and throughout the years was a constant presence, ready with sage advice and a helping hand," Paul Dokecki, professor of psychology and a longtime friend, remarked at Newbrough's memorial service.

Newbrough is survived by his wife of 30 years, Lynn Walker, professor of pediatrics and psychiatry in the School of Medicine; professor of psychology in the College of Arts and Science and professor of psychology at Peabody; daughters Jennifer Speer and Suzanne Diaz of Nashville and Andrea Simmons of Crossville, Tenn.; their mother Loneta Behrens; 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Remarkable Journey

PHOTO BY John Russell

Founder's Medalist Jesse Neugebauer, who graduated in May with a bachelor of science in early childhood education and special education, led the Peabody Commencement processional behind Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, and banner bearer Sarah Perlman. Neugebauer, a Nebraska native who is a two-time cancer survivor, is a Peabody Scholar and Carell Family Scholarship recipient. He plans to pursue a teaching career focused on serving younger children in high-risk communities. To learn more about Neugebauer's inspiring story, visit http://vu.edu/jesse-n.

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