

PEABODY

R E F L E C T O R

The Peabody- Vanderbilt Merger

Twenty-six years after the events
of 1979 both institutions thrive.

WILLIAM LOW



PEABODY COLLEGE Homecoming Celebration

Friday, October 14, 2005

Join us back on campus this fall!

Reminisce with former classmates and faculty and celebrate the College's distinct history. Take advantage of these Peabody events, happening in conjunction with Vanderbilt's Homecoming weekend.

Schedule of Events at Peabody

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Peabody Pioneer's High Tea

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. "History of Presidential Libraries," presented by Robert Bohanan (MLS'77), Deputy Director, Jimmy Carter Library and Museum

Peabody Campus Tour

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Dean Arthur Cook Plaque Dedication & Reception

To learn more about these Peabody College events, contact the Peabody Development and Alumni Relations office by phone at (615) 322-8500 or by email at peabodyalumni@vanderbilt.edu.

To learn more about Vanderbilt Homecoming events, go online to: www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/homecoming.



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Visit Peabody College's Web site at <http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>

ABOVE: The merger between Vanderbilt University and Peabody College resulted in protests at the time of initial talks in spring 1979, as shown in this photo taken by then-freshman Stephen D'Andrea. However, 26 years later, Peabody and Vanderbilt continue to thrive together.

The cover art is by William Low, who has illustrated eight books for children by authors Eve Bunting and Abigail Thomas among others. *Chinatown*, which he wrote as well as illustrated, was published by Henry Holt and Co. in 1997. To see more of William Low's work, visit his Web site at www.williamlow.com.

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PEABODY REFLECTOR

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THE PEABODY REFLECTOR is published biannually by Peabody College of Education and Human Development of Vanderbilt University, Peabody Box 161, 230 Appleton Place, Nashville, TN 37203-5701, in cooperation with the Vanderbilt Office of Advancement Communications. The magazine is mailed free of charge to all Peabody alumni, parents of current Peabody students, and to friends of Peabody who make an annual gift of \$25 or more to the College. Gifts should be mailed to the address above. Other correspondence, including letters to the editor and Class Notes submissions, should be mailed to: THE PEABODY REFLECTOR, Office of Advancement Communications, VU Station B 357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703. Comments about the magazine in the form of e-mail are welcome by writing the editor at reflector@vanderbilt.edu.

Peabody ranked fifth, special education remains first

U.S. News & World Report again has ranked Peabody College among the top five graduate schools of education in the nation. The magazine has consistently ranked Peabody in the top 10 in the 11 years that it has published rankings. The College has been among the top five for the last three years. Peabody's program in special education was ranked first in the nation for the third consecutive year.

Numerous Peabody programs advanced in the magazine's specialty rankings. In addition to special education's number one ranking, Peabody was ranked second in administration/supervision (up from fourth), sixth in education policy (up from seventh), sixth in elementary education (up from seventh), eighth in curriculum/instruction (up from ninth), 10th in higher education administration (first time), and 10th in secondary education (first time).

Among the top 10 schools of education, Peabody was the most selective, with a doctoral acceptance rate for 2004 of only 9 percent.

Released on April 1, 2005, the 2006 "Best Graduate Schools" issue is published to provide prospective graduate and professional students with information to help them make important decisions about pursuing advanced degrees. The education rankings are based on data on student scores, admissions selectivity, faculty resources, research activity, and on assessments of program quality by education school deans and selected school superintendents.

College Halls begin construction at Peabody

The undergraduate experience at Vanderbilt University will undergo its most significant transformation in a generation as construction begins on College Halls at Vanderbilt, a residential college system designed to create the most vibrant living and learning environment in higher education.

College Halls at Vanderbilt will bring together students, faculty and staff in smaller, community settings within the larger university. Select faculty will live in apartments located in the college halls where students will live in a more intimate

residential setting than the traditional college dormitory. Each college hall will feature student-driven programming designed to promote intellectual exchange and leadership development. Areas for dining, study and informal gathering will enhance the living-learning atmosphere.

"Vanderbilt is already a stellar place for undergraduates. Our students have unparalleled opportunities in the classroom and through their social lives. Our challenge now is to stitch together this rich tapestry to meet the needs of the students of the future. College Halls at Vanderbilt will do that," said Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee. "The evolving nature of Vanderbilt students — each entering class has increasingly higher levels of academic achievement and is more racially, culturally and socio-economically diverse than ever before — demands that we provide them with a sense of belonging and community."

The first phase of College Halls at Vanderbilt, which will be known as The Commons, will bring together all first-year students in a community of 10 residence halls to be known as "houses" located on the Peabody College campus. Five existing residence halls will be converted to houses and five new houses will be built. A tenured faculty member will serve as dean of The Commons and each house will be managed by a faculty member or student life professional in residence.

Construction of The Commons began this spring. Renovations to the existing buildings are scheduled to be finished by fall 2007. The Commons is expected to be complete by fall 2008.

The Commons represents a \$150 million investment by the University with the funds coming primarily from bond proceeds, philanthropy and internal sources. Currently, Vanderbilt's first-year students live

in three areas across campus. University officials believe The Commons' neighborhood atmosphere will foster closer ties among first-year students.

"First-year students are trying to figure out where they fit in a university community. We believe the active engagement with their peers, early informal interactions with faculty, their partnerships with student life professionals and social and academic programs offered at The Commons will go a long way in establishing friendships and a foundation for learning that will last during their time here at Vanderbilt and throughout their lives," said David Williams, vice chancellor for student life and university affairs.

Once The Commons is complete, University officials will develop plans to build up to seven college halls for upperclassmen. Each college hall will house approximately 400 students representing a cross-section from each of Vanderbilt's four undergraduate schools — Blair School of Music,



Construction started this spring on The Commons, the first phase of College Halls at Vanderbilt. Five new residence halls will be built on the Peabody Campus where Garrison Apartments, Married Student Apartments and the Peabody Student Center previously stood. The other five existing dormitories will undergo renovations. The ten residence halls, to be known as "houses," will house all first-year students at the University and are scheduled to open fall 2008.

College of Arts and Science, School of Engineering and Peabody College.

The Commons also represents Vanderbilt's largest construction project on the Peabody campus since the university merged with Peabody in 1979. Officials hope that the initial investment of \$150 million in housing, dining and support

Founder's Medal awarded to Annie Menees



Ann "Annie" Menees of St. Louis, Mo., was awarded the Founder's Medal for first honors at Commencement on May 13. Menees earned a bachelor of science degree with a double major in child development and cognitive studies. She was on the Dean's List for most of her Vanderbilt career and was named the University's 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year and the SEC Co-Scholar Athlete of the Year.

In addition to her academic achievements, Menees is a nationally ranked tennis player, winning the SEC Fall Championships Flight B singles match and helping to lead the Vanderbilt women's tennis team to the NCAA Final Four in 2004. The team finished the season ranked No. 2 in the nation. Menees served as team captain in her senior year and won the Vanderbilt athletic department's Jim Robbins Award for All-Around Athletic and Academic Excellence.

Menees is also an active volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and Kid's Zone, which involves taking underprivileged children to Vanderbilt football games.

services will improve services and spur private development on the far eastern edge of the campus, which adjoins the Edgehill and Music Row neighborhoods.

There are three network cameras covering and archiving the construction of The Commons. The link for the Webcam pages can be found directly at <http://webcams.vanderbilt.edu/thecommons/>. In addition to providing "live" feeds of the construction, there will also be time-lapsed movies of the daily images.

Benson named Peabody's 2005 Distinguished Alumnus

Peabody presented its Distinguished Alumnus Award to Arthur Jerry Benson, dean of James Madison University's College of Integrated Science and Technology (CISAT), during commencement, Friday,

May 13.

The annual award recognizes significant career and community achievements, as well as a reputation of excellent character and a respected and ethical work record.

Benson was appointed dean of CISAT in 2001 after an interim appointment beginning in 1999. He previously served as dean of JMU's College of Education from 1992 to 1999. The university is located in Harrisonburg, Va.

Benson was appointed to the JMU faculty in 1980 as assistant professor of psychology and director of the university's Human Development Center and Shenandoah Valley Child Development



Benson

Clinic. He was promoted to associate professor in 1986 and was named professor in 1991.

CISAT was established in 1992 to explore the growing number of ways that technology and scientific discovery are impacting a variety of professions. Academic units include communications science, computer science, information science and technology, geographic science, kinesiology and recreation, nursing, psychology and social work. There are 17 undergraduate programs, 22 graduate programs and over 4,200 students.

"Jerry Benson's ability to integrate many different strands of academic work, to listen to faculty or students with often disparate points of view, and to reconcile competing ideas in visionary and innovative ways makes him an outstanding recipient of this award," said Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody.

Benson is also known for a high level of scholarly contributions in the fields of school psychology, child development, assessment and curriculum development and reform.

Benson earned his master's and doctoral degrees in psychology from Peabody in 1973 and 1976. He is a 1972 graduate of Concord College, where he was valedictorian and graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor of arts in psychology.

A former president of the Virginia Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Benson has served in various capacities with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County (Va.) and the National Association of School Psychologists, among other organizations.

He also is a recipient of the Commander's Award for Public Service from the U.S.

Department of the Army for his work with the JMU Army ROTC and military science program.

Previous Distinguished Alumnus Award recipients include Tipper Gore, wife of former Vice President Al Gore and mental health adviser to President Bill Clinton; Edward Boling, former president of the University of Tennessee; Bruce Heilman, former president of the University of Richmond;

Nation's first public meetings on IDEA held at Peabody



Nashville was the first stop on a seven-city tour that brought together on the Peabody campus officials from the U.S. Department of Education with those concerned by changes to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

More than 100 people met June 17 with U.S. Department of Education officials on the Peabody campus at Vanderbilt University to talk about how laws governing special education should be implemented.

Last year, the federal government updated its Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which spells out what steps public schools must take to educate children with disabilities and what rights parents have to make sure their children's education needs are being met.

Federal officials are writing guidelines for how the revised law will be implemented. Proposed guidelines were released in June, and the officials currently are traveling the country to get feedback on the proposed regulations.

Nashville was their first stop on a seven-city tour.

"The No. 1 special education department in the country is at Peabody. They do a lot of good research here," said Troy Justesen, Ed.D.'01, of the decision to come to Nashville. Justesen is deputy assistant secretary with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Justesen said his department is required by law to take public comment for 75 days on how the law should be implemented. After that, his office will group comments together by category and take them into consideration when they revise the more than 600-page document.

Everyone from parents to a child to people representing national organizations took to the mike to give their thoughts on implementing the new law. Topics addressed ranged from discipline guidelines to qualifications of special education teachers.

"It's a healthy process, very inclusive," said John Hager, another federal education official who sat on the panel.

"Our great desire is to be responsive to input, but we do have restrictions. ... We aren't making law, we are making regulations."

Alycia Rogers, a parent present at the meeting, said she hopes the panel takes her comments into consideration.

"How much of it is face time, and how much of it are they actually going to listen to," said Rogers, who is a SunTrust executive from Nashville and has a 7-year-old with a learning disability. "But I was impressed that we were selected as a city. I think it says something about how highly we regard special education here."

—Evan Mayor, copyrighted The Tennessean, June 18, 2005

Harold Dean Propst, former chancellor of the University System of Georgia; Imogene Cherry Forte, president of Incentive Publications; and Susan Gray, whose research on early childhood led to the founding of Head Start and for whom Peabody's Susan Gray School for Children is named.

"Peer Buddies" program is released nationwide

An innovative program for special education students started 10 years ago by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and Nashville Metro Public Schools has now gone nationwide through the publication of a new book, "Success for All Students: Promoting Inclusion in Secondary Schools through Peer Buddy Programs."

Carolyn Hughes, professor of special education and human and organizational development and Kennedy Center investigator, and her former graduate student, Erik Carter, M.Ed.'98, Ph.D.'04, developed the Peer Buddy program with their colleagues from Vanderbilt and Metro Schools and authored the book. Hughes and Carter were spurred to write the book by the hundreds of e-mails they received asking for more information about the program.

"We were getting requests all the time from across the nation for more information, and we realized, 'it has to be a book,'" Hughes said.

In the Peer Buddy program, general education high school students support, mentor and befriend special education students. These students, particularly those with more severe disabilities, are often isolated in separate classrooms and are not integrated in the social, academic or athletic life of the school. Their general education peer buddies provide that often missing link with the rest of the school.

The Peer Buddy program started in one Metro high school and eventually spread to all comprehensive high schools in the district. More than 1,000 special education students have participated in the program, with some years seeing every special education student in the district having access to a buddy.

To help the general education students find time to participate in the program, Hughes, Carter and colleagues worked to have a Peer Buddy elective class established.

"We worked with the school board, the principals and the administration to estab-

lish Peer Buddies as a for-credit class," Hughes said. "That way, the students could devote at least one class period per day to interacting with the students from the special education classes."

In addition to spending time in their buddies' classes, the pairs also eat together in the lunchroom and participate in activities outside of school together — in short, they become friends.

"The students with severe disabilities often have limited social skills and in some cases, it's just because they haven't had the practice. So this is an opportunity for them to come out and be with people who do have social skills," Hughes said.

Hughes said general education students believe they benefit from the program just as much as the special education students.

"It really touches your heart because of the things the general education students say. They realize the special education students are really no different from them," she said. "They say, 'We are really the same; we have the same fears, the same dreams.'"

Hughes expanded the program this year to include Vanderbilt undergraduates, who are serving as mentors to general education high school students in high poverty schools as part of a service learning class.

The new book contains detailed instructions, checklists and worksheets that individual teachers and schools can use to kick off the Peer Buddies program at their school.

For more information on Peer Buddies, contact Carolyn Hughes at carolyn.hughes@vanderbilt.edu.

Porter receives Alumni Achievement Award

Andrew C. Porter, professor of public policy and education and holder of the Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy, is among alumni of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education who have been named as a recipient of the Alumni Achievement Award. He received the award during an Alumni Awards program May 7 in



Porter

the Margaret H'Doubler Performance Space of Lathrop Hall on the university campus in Madison. Porter is director of the Learning Sciences Institute at Vanderbilt University and former director, Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

Graham and Harris receive national CEC research award

Vanderbilt University special education researchers Steve Graham and Karen Harris were awarded the 2005 Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Research Award at that organization's national convention April 6-9 in Baltimore, Md.

The award recognizes an individual or research team whose research has made significant contributions to the body of knowledge about the education of exceptional children and youth leading to improvements in their education.

Harris and Graham came to Vanderbilt from the University of Maryland in January 2005 as Currey Ingram Professors of Special Education. Their work focuses on educational interventions for students with learning disabilities and other at-risk students. Graham is an investigator in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development.

Peabody professors receive AERA research awards

Professors Lynn Fuchs and Doug Fuchs are the recipients of the Special Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2005 Distinguished Research Award.

The award was presented to the husband-wife research team at the AERA annual meeting, April 11-15, in Montreal.

The Fuchs are professors of special education, hold the Nicholas Hobbs Chair in Special Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt's Peabody College, and are investigators in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development. The AERA award recognizes their career accomplishments in the field of special education. Members of the Vanderbilt faculty since 1985, the Fuchs have pioneered innovations in reading, math, assessment and learning disabilities. Their concept of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), which creates pairs of

students in the classroom for peer tutoring, has been widely disseminated.

"Lynn and Doug Fuchs have made critical contributions to special education that have benefited students in classrooms across the country, most notably in peer-assisted learning and in literacy," said Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College. "Their work is a prominent part of why special education at Peabody is currently ranked No. 1 in the nation."

The Fuchs' research is dedicated to identifying assessment and instructional procedures that increase the school achievement of students with diverse learning needs. Their work revolves around teachers, allowing for researcher-teacher collaboration to help ensure that the practices that are developed and tested are both meaningful and feasible.

Donna Ford, professor of special education and Betts Chair of Education and



Doug and Lynn Fuchs

Human Development, was presented the AERA's Committee on Scholars of Color in Education Distinguished Career Contribution Award, recognizing a senior-level scholar, usually 20 to 30 or more years after receiving a doctoral degree. This award is one of three awards given by the Committee intended to recognize scholars at different stages in their careers who have made significant contributions to the understanding of issues which disproportionately affect minority populations, and to recognize minority scholars who have made a significant contribution to educational research and development.

AERA is an international professional organization with the primary goal of advancing educational research and its practical application. Its 22,000 members are educators; administrators; directors of research; persons working with testing or

evaluation in federal, state, and local agencies; counselors; evaluators; graduate students; and behavioral scientists.

Tennessee pre-kindergarten teachers converge at Vanderbilt

Pre-kindergarten teachers from across the state spent June 26-July 1 on the Peabody College campus learning the latest techniques to help children benefit as much as possible from pre-kindergarten.

The Tennessee Pre-K Summer Institute was the first of its kind in Tennessee and was funded with a \$143,000 grant from the state Department of Education.



Participants in the first ever Tennessee Pre-K Summer Institute met at Peabody's Wyatt Center June 26 through July 1 to learn the latest techniques for helping children benefit from pre-kindergarten education.

"Governor Bredesen would like to have momentum in the state to say, 'we're going to work together to provide high-quality programs for young children,'" institute co-director Dale Farran said. Farran is a professor of education and psychology and a member of Vanderbilt's John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development. "The governor wants to create a sense of cohesion and shared mission across the state, and he's to be applauded for that."

The institute focused on four different areas: observation and assessment, early literacy, appropriate classroom practices and guiding children's social and emotional development.

"Each session was led by national-level researchers and teachers who trained teachers in research-based practices that can be used in the classroom," institute

director and Assistant Clinical Professor of Early Childhood Education Tisha Bennett said. "The trainers also gave teachers tools to help meet the Tennessee Early Learning Standards, which are standards for very young children issued by the Tennessee Department of Education."

"The state Department of Education wanted us to provide immersion in a particular area for teachers," Farran said. "Groups of teachers were immersed in the equivalent of a graduate course in one area. We hope the institute will continue in future years and that teachers will come back and participate in one of the different areas."

The institute began with keynote speaker David Dickinson, a new faculty member in the Vanderbilt Department of Teaching and Learning. Dickinson's research includes the development of language and early literacy skills in children from low-income families, how preschool classrooms and families support children's literacy development, and approaches to enabling preschool programs to more effectively foster children's early literacy development.

Tennessee Department of Education Commissioner Lana Seviars also participated in the institute.

Learning Sciences Institute awarded \$1.5M grant

The Vanderbilt Learning Sciences Institute (LSI) has been awarded a prestigious \$1.5 million, three-year grant from The Wallace Foundation to develop a tool to assess the performance of education leaders in the nation's K-12 public schools.

"Leadership is an essential element of successful schools. The identification and development of effective leadership, however, has been significantly hindered by the lack of sound tools for assessing and monitoring it," Andy Porter, LSI director and Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy, said. "We will use this grant to develop an assessment system for measuring critical leadership skills of individual principals and groups of educators, especially in urban settings, with the goal of improving student achievement."

"Research tells us that leadership is second only to teaching in school-related factors in its impact on student achievement,

especially in schools with the greatest needs," M. Christine DeVita, president of The Wallace Foundation, said. "Nonetheless, we have no reliable means by which we can determine whether school principals and their teams are doing a good job to improve the quality of teaching and learning. With this grant, Vanderbilt will greatly advance the field by providing a valid and reliable approach to assessing and improving leadership effectiveness."

In addition to Porter, the team developing the leadership assessment system includes Joseph Murphy, professor of education and associate dean of Peabody College; Ellen Goldring, professor of educational policy and leadership; Stephen Elliott, professor of special education and holder of the Dunn Family Chair of Educational and Psychological Leadership; and Robert L. Linn, Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder and co-director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing.

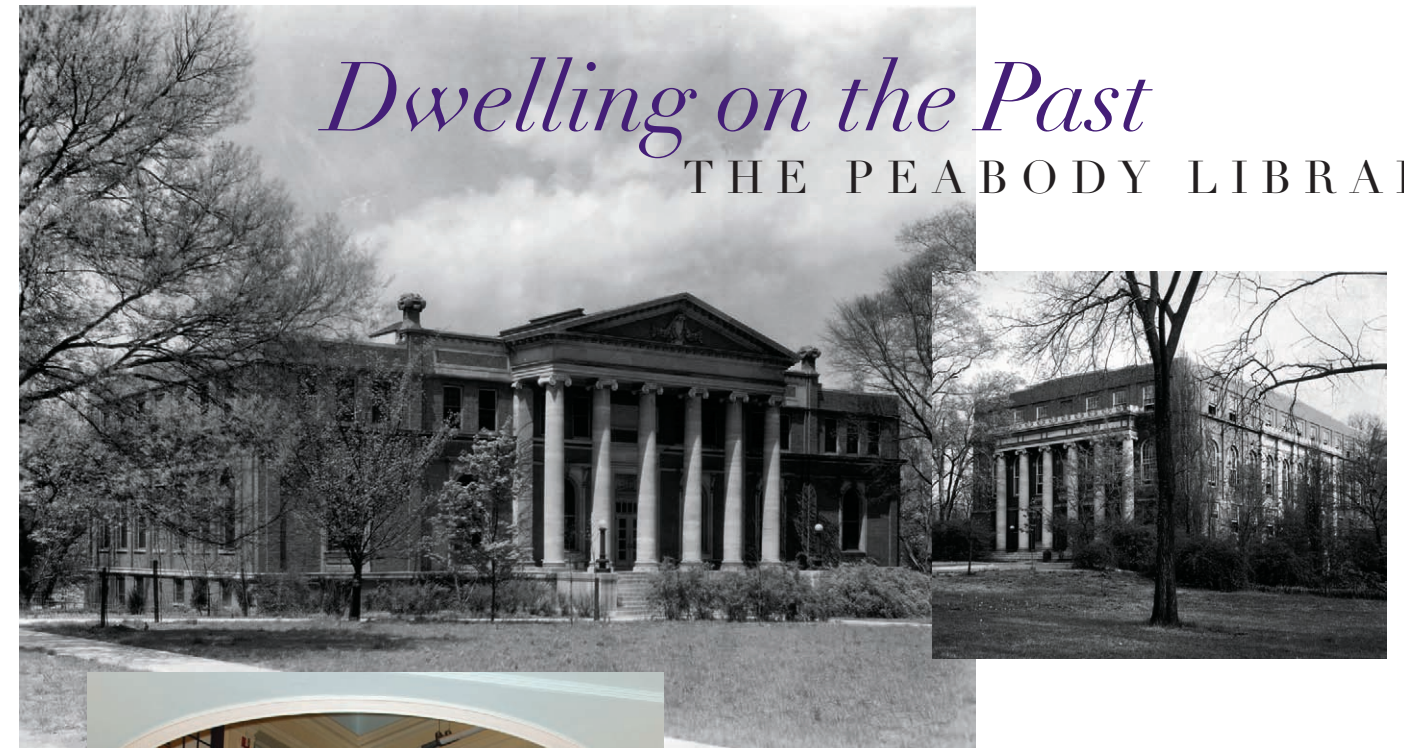
The team will develop procedures that school boards can use to assess leadership by principals and other educators as part of their job assessment. Though identified as a critical component in improving leadership in schools by the national Standards for School Leaders, which have been adopted by 40 states, no such assessments for measuring leadership currently exist.

Peabody Dean Receives Mensa Award

The Mensa Education and Research Foundation (MERF) has selected Camilla Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College, as the recipient of its 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award. MERF president Greg Timmers, Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordon Gee, and Vanderbilt Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Nicholas S. Zeppos made a surprise appearance at Peabody's first faculty meeting of the academic year to give Benbow—an unknowing recipient—the award, consisting of a showcase medal and \$1,000. An issue of *Mensa Research Journal* also will be dedicated to some of Benbow's selected research articles.

Dwelling on the Past

THE PEABODY LIBRARY



These photos from the Peabody Archives in Special Collections show the Peabody Library as it looked in 1919-20, from the front entrance, before mature trees shaded it, and from the northwest corner looking southeast (inset). Just inside the northwest entrance, one now finds the Iris Cafe. Other recent renovations have restored the main reading room and information desk on the first floor (below right).

In 1916, George Peabody College for Teachers had a library collection of around 45,000 volumes, some of them rare books from Davidson Academy, Cumberland College and the University of Nashville, all earlier incarnations of the school that became Peabody. The first library collection in Tennessee (and probably the South) to be cataloged using the Dewey system, Peabody's collection did not have, however, a building in which it could be housed. Books related to education were housed in the Home Economics Building; the rest were stored in the basement of the Industrial Arts Building, now known as Mayborn, next to the boilers.

Then-president Bruce Ryburn Payne knew that a library building was of first importance. In February 1917, he announced that the Carnegie Foundation, responsible for the building of libraries throughout the United States, had agreed to give Peabody \$180,000 to underwrite construction for a library on campus. Their only stipulation at the time was that the College should spend \$10,000 annually for maintenance of the building and the collection.

In two years Peabody had that library building, one that could hold four times the number of books in its collection. Designed by Edward Tilton, the New York architect who designed Ellis Island (see "25 Great Things About Peabody," p. 13), the library was built by local contractors Foster and Creighton, who used marble from Georgia and Tennessee in its rotunda, stairways and collection stacks. It opened its doors on May 30, 1919.

The building underwent extensive renovation in 2002, and future expansion is planned. Peabody's collection, now more than 200 years old, continues to serve the College, Vanderbilt University and educators throughout the world. Today's library offers an impressive array of electronic resources, more than 250,000 volumes, a Curriculum Materials Center, a Youth Collection and special collections such as the Bert Roller Collection (see next page), with its emphasis on items related to Louisa May Alcott.

—Sources: Peabody College: From a Frontier Academy to the Frontiers of Teaching and Learning by Paul Conkin, A Brief History of Peabody College by Sherman Dorn and "History of the Peabody Library" at <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/about/history.html>



Searching for LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Peabody's Bert Roller Collection preserves the life and times of an American icon

BY MICHELLE JONES



Jane Roller Sights, BS'41, was always happy at Peabody. Her father, Bert Anderson Roller, was a professor of children's literature at the College from 1922 until his death in 1934, and Sights attended Peabody Demonstration School. Before that the elder Roller met his future wife, Helen, when he took a psychology class at Peabody while enrolled as a part-time student at Vanderbilt. Given her family's long connection to the College, it is no surprise that Sights chose to entrust Peabody with her collection of early children's literature. Known as the Bert Roller Collection, the 200-plus books include works by such famed illustrators as Kate Greenaway and Randolph Caldecott. The true highlights of this collection, however, are the many books by respected children's author Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888) and the relationship that developed between the Roller and Alcott families over the years.

In 1927 Professor Roller moved his wife and three daughters to Cambridge, Mass., where he was to spend a year studying at Harvard. Not long after the family settled into their new quarters, Frederika Wendte, daughter of one of Louisa May Alcott's cousins, came to call. Sights describes her as "a proper Bostonian" and explains that her family's minister in Nashville, a native New Englander, had written ahead to friends, asking them to look in on the Rollers.

A bond quickly formed between the families, with Mrs. Roller and Miss Wendte attending plays together and the elderly Mrs. Wendte sharing stories about her famous relative. "She was so happy to have someone interested, who knew something about it," Sights explains. "So the dear old lady told my father a whole lot of things ... little things that nobody would have known about." Bert Roller incorporated those tidbits into a series of articles he wrote about Alcott.

While in New England, the Roller family frequented bookstores as Professor Roller indulged his passion for rare children's books. "Father was always darting into

Items from the Roller Collection include (clockwise from top) 19th century paper dolls, an autographed photo of Louisa May Alcott and children's books illustrated by eminent 19th century illustrators Kate Greenaway (bottom) and Randolph Caldecott.

bookstores," Sights says. Many of the purchases he made that year are now in the collection at Peabody. Most intriguing, however, are the books he didn't have to purchase—the Alcott books. "Mrs. Wendte's daughter continued writing to us after we came back to Nashville," Sights says. "She would send us little things for Christmas, and then she would send poems [by Alcott] that had never been published. It was such a good friendship because nobody up there at that time particularly cared about [collecting works by Alcott], and we were fresh to the thing and were just so excited about it."

These items—the books, some of the letters and the poems—will be incorporated into a new display in the recently renovated Peabody Library. There had been a display on the third floor of the library, but some changes were necessary. For one thing, the books hadn't been catalogued, explains Sharon Gray Weiner, director of the library, so the staff spent nearly two years entering the books into the Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) WorldCat database. "If anyone is searching for materials about Louisa May Alcott and they go into this database," says Weiner, "they will find the materials that we own here."

The next step is to install the books in one of the new archival-quality display cases—recent gifts from Charles Kurz II of Philadelphia, father of a current Peabody student—in Peabody Library's ground-floor reading room. Weiner stresses that the entire collection, all 200-plus books, will be kept together in the case. How is it possible to fit all those books in one case? "Some of the books are very tiny, only about one-inch square, so they don't take up that much space," Weiner explains. The display case also will hold paper dolls contemporary to Alcott's time and a bonnet-shaped pin cushion, one of the last items Alcott sent to her cousins. "She was confined to a nursing home for a long time before she died, and she sewed all the time," Sights says. "What a sweet thing."



First and early editions of Alcott's novels Little Women and Little Men are part of the Roller Collection as are miniature books and this five-cent U.S. postage stamp honoring Alcott.

Pride. & Prejudice

The Vanderbilt Peabody merger 26 years later

BY RAY WADDLE

Black and White photography by Stephen D'Andrea

To old-timers on the scene, it's still an unusual sight: Since 2002 a footbridge has spanned 21st Avenue South at the Edgehill intersection, connecting the Vanderbilt and Peabody campuses. This sturdy overpass structure does more than convey book-toting University students across a busy street.



IT CARRIES SOME HEAVY SYMBOLISM, TOO.

Today the bridge is the most physical, public declaration of the official merger of the two institutions. It happened in 1979—a decision that startled alumni on both sides, outraged many and caused a Nashville sensation.

For nearly a century the very idea of a bridge linking the two institutions had been unthinkable. Twenty-first Avenue served as a necessary divide, a political frontier separating two worlds that defied each other—Vanderbilt University and George Peabody College for Teachers. Both were proudly private institutions with national reputations, but their missions, styles of learning and institutional loyalties were never quite in sync.

When they finally overcame their mutual reluctance, the merger launched the University, along with the new Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, on an adventure in national identity and ambition.

THE MERGER OF VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY AND PEABODY was ambitious, contentious and risky. Some said it was inevitable and long overdue; others complained it was a hostile takeover by Vanderbilt made possible by Peabody's poor and declining financial health. Either way, it posed a culture clash—the ancient tensions between liberal arts and education—that still lingers today.

Some veterans of the merger still find it too emotional to

talk about on the record: “We at Peabody struggled to be accepted,” says a former Peabody student who now teaches at Vanderbilt, speaking anonymously. “Peabody always rejected elitism, and still does. Twenty-first Avenue is still a big gulf.”

Nevertheless, a little more than a quarter century later, by common consent the merger has strengthened both institutions remarkably. Vanderbilt saved Peabody from financial doom. Peabody gave Vanderbilt an added dimension of public service and renown—Peabody's passion for improving public education and solving problems of human development and community

Strong emotions among older alumni still flare: Did Peabody and Vanderbilt have to merge at all?

life. Each institution has enhanced the prestige of the other.

The vast merger project began amid anxieties and hard feelings, especially on the Peabody side. Some 40 Peabody professors (a third of the faculty) were laid off. Some well regarded Peabody departments were shut down to avoid duplication with Vanderbilt's. And Peabody students had to deal with Vanderbilt's



Earl T. Hutchinson, a professor of English at Peabody at the time of the merger, was president of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors and a passionate advocate of faculty rights.

higher tuition costs.

Eventually, though, a changing world took the new relationship in surprising new directions. By the 1980s, education had become a national priority again, and Vanderbilt-Peabody was positioned to join the national conversation and lead it. The turbulent first years of merger soon yielded to a clearer focus and division of labor. Vanderbilt administrators and opinion-makers—on both sides of the street—now call Peabody, with its top-ranking programs in education and its research-driven faculty, a crown jewel of the University.

“Its value to Vanderbilt is immeasurable—the quality of the faculty, the quality of students, the national visibility it gives to us, the leadership it gives to issues of public education,” says Chancellor Gordon Gee. “Peabody is at the center of our life.”

IN 1979 FEW DARED TO HOPE this much for Peabody’s new relationship with Vanderbilt. It wasn’t clear at the time of merger that Vanderbilt-Peabody was a match made in academic heaven. But circumstances pushed the two suitors into marriage, ready or not.

For decades their destinies had been very different. Vanderbilt, much the larger and richer, was a preeminent Southern enclave of liberal arts and conservative instincts, aiming to join the elite universities of the nation. Peabody, meanwhile, as Nashville’s oldest educational institution, had had a spectacu-

larly complex history of transformations going back to 1785. Since 1914, when the College moved from its original downtown site and reopened at its current location, it had solidified an identity of community service, earning national acclaim for its commitment to public school teaching, social betterment, pragmatic education philosophies, improving the lives of people with mental disabilities—an egalitarian spirit of collegiality and mutual support housed in its orderly, dramatically pillared quad.

If Vanderbilt was classical and traditional in its philosophy, looking back to European models of rigorous learning, Peabody was entrepreneurial, empirical, people-oriented, service-minded and “applied,” springing from pragmatic, reformist American thinkers like John Dewey.

When it finally and suddenly happened, the Vanderbilt-Peabody merger was an exercise in mutual discovery, an institutional gamble, a kind of cultural exchange, a bold lunge into the future. For years after, both parties worked hard on the necessary details of consolidation. They also eyed each other warily. The past’s emotional baggage weighed heavily.

“At the time of the merger, we weren’t for it,” says Peabody alumna Melody Engle, BS, who graduated in 1980. For 25 years she has been a special education teacher, now teaching in the Wilson County, Tenn., school system. “Vanderbilt students tended to snub their noses at Peabody students. It was painful. So we did little things to protest. We boycotted the Vanderbilt yearbook, for instance. But we knew the merger was the only way to save Peabody. Vanderbilt has tried really hard to make the merger a success. And Peabody still has its good name.”



Peabody sophomore Lynn Albritton took this snapshot of President John Dunworth looking at the signs planted by protesters on the Peabody mall.

Why did Peabody and Vanderbilt merge? What’s the verdict 25 years later?

Last fall the ironic twists and turns of merger were rehashed by a panel of Peabody faculty who witnessed the tumult of ’79. Two emotions rang clear as they spoke to a roomful of Peabody alums: pride in Peabody’s post-merger achievements, and relief that Peabody managed to keep an identity intact through the last 25 years of quickened evolution.

“People were afraid we’d become ‘just like Vanderbilt,’” says Robert Innes, Peabody associate professor of psychology, who was a Peabody teacher at the time of merger and stayed on to become one of the shapers of the new Peabody. “We’ve benefited enormously from Vanderbilt. Yet somehow we maintained our character. It’s a real feat to have moved Peabody to its current intellectual level and dramatically change the intellectual climate, and still keep the soul of the place.”

Others recalled the dread and grief of the time—also the disdain of Vanderbilt loyalists who perceived a school of education’s curricula to be less rigorous than other academic disciplines.

Peabody protesters of the merger draped black crepe paper across their beloved buildings. Forty tombstones were planted on the Peabody lawn to honor the faculty who lost their jobs (23 had tenure). Bitterness was palpable; Vanderbilt, after all, suffered no job losses in the bargain.

“I remember the merger vividly,” says Janet Eyler, Peabody professor of the practice of education. She was teaching at Peabody but survived the merger. “When they start putting little numbers on the furniture, it’s time to dust off the résumé.”

Peabodians mourned. Their school could claim a unique heritage as the nation’s only private, independent college devoted to teaching. Now, they feared, it would be swallowed up and vanish.

“There was an assumption that Peabody would become a small institution like VIPPS [the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies],” Eyler recalls, “and the rest of the buildings would be taken over by Vanderbilt.”

Merger came, but such doomsday scenarios did not arrive with it.



25 Notable Things About Peabody

- Susan Gray’s Early Training Project led to the founding of the national Head Start program.
- The John F. Kennedy Center was, from its beginnings in 1965, a transinstitutional center for research on education and human development.
- First program nationally in visual impairments
- Peabody faculty helped build the Korean education system following the Korean War.
- Former and current Peabody professors Ray Norris and Leona Schauble both helped shape Sesame Street.
- Research leading to the promotion of mainstreaming or inclusion was conducted at the Susan Gray School.
- Peabody is home to the first national research center on school choice.
- First school in the South to offer graduate degrees to women
- First school in the South to offer a Ph.D. in psychology
- First school in the country to have a building dedicated to the study of psychology
- Both Montgomery Bell Academy and the University School of Nashville trace their origins to Peabody.
- More than 50 current or former college or university presidents are Peabody alumni.
- Peabody’s innovative major in Human and Organizational Development features a practice-oriented philosophy and a strong emphasis on service-learning.
- Lloyd Dunn helped develop the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Peabody Language Development Kits, two standards of educational assessment.
- Nicholas Hobbs was a pioneer in the field of child psychology, developing new concepts for treating children with emotional problems and children with mental retardation.
- The Peabody purple iris, propagated by long-time grounds manager Roy Appleton, continues to be a symbol of Peabody and still thrives on the campus.
- “Peabody – 1968,” a mosaic located in the Hobbs Human Development Laboratory, was the last major work completed by the eminent American artist Ben Shahn.
- Sponsored research for FY’05 totaled \$38M—a Vanderbilt (non-medical) record!
- The Peabody Library is one of the original Carnegie libraries and was designed by Edward Tilton, the architect who designed Ellis Island.
- The Peabody campus, modeled on UVA, is known for its beauty; it’s also 100 percent wireless, including the lawn.
- Read 180, developed by former professor Ted Hasselbring, is Vanderbilt’s largest royalty-producing product.
- Peabody’s Mental Retardation Training Grant—the first doctoral level program of its kind—recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.
- Peabody has had nine incarnations over 219 years.
- Peabody-educated teachers continue teaching at a rate 50 percent above the national average.
- Peabody is home to the number one ranked special education program in the country.



The rally to protest the merger involved Peabody students, staff and faculty. Many students lost programs of study as entire departments were dissolved, many faculty lost jobs as a result, as did staff after Vanderbilt took over student services.

Peabody dipped into its own legacy of adaptability and changed with the times. Coordinating with Kirkland Hall, Peabody did a handful of things that won it a place as a glittering equal among the nine other colleges and schools of Vanderbilt University.

As a new college of an ambitious University aiming for world-class distinction, Peabody was mandated to maintain prestige in education instruction, attract new students, be intellectually rigorous, and operate in the black. For the first decade after merger, Vanderbilt committed \$750,000 annually to Peabody to help shore up the college and pursue these aims.

Under a new dean, Willis Hawley, Peabody aggressively recruited a more research-oriented faculty. It made tough decisions to delete departments that were not bringing in sufficient revenue—for instance, the small but prestigious library science program, an action in the 1980s that outraged many alumni. But the College received sympathetic nurture from pro-Peabody leaders at Vanderbilt early on, notably Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt.

Not least, Peabody created an undergraduate degree program that became a huge success—the human and organizational development (HOD) program, which generated needed tuition income and resurrected a Peabody spirit of hands-on, community-oriented study and focus.

Peabody had found momentum.

“A lot of colleagues went through distressing life changes, as I almost did,” says Elizabeth Goldman, whose mathematics education position at Peabody was reduced to half-time tenure after merger. She eventually returned to full-time teaching and administration, retiring in 1999.

“It was a difficult balance,” she explains. “Those of us who stayed were very much committed to Peabody and wanted it to thrive, but most felt Vanderbilt was acting from expediency. We very much wanted Vanderbilt to understand what a treasure

they had—beyond the real estate. And we needed to work hard to make that happen. Schools of education sometimes have a reputation as fluff, no substance. But Vanderbilt has always valued teaching. Once they understood that there’s truly an academic dimension to teaching, the relationship improved. We made a lot of progress on the ‘them-versus-us’ issue.”

Today Peabody has Vanderbilt’s highest-rated programs in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* magazine evaluation of America’s graduate schools: Peabody ranks fifth overall among the nation’s 189 doctorate-granting education schools. Peabody’s special education program is ranked first in the nation.

Peabody is now home to high-profile scholars whose research attracted some \$38 million in grants in fiscal 2005. The College carries on deeply rooted community work in Nashville and beyond through the transinstitutional Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development and the Learning Sciences Institute, and through the Susan Gray School, the Leadership Development Center, the National Research and Development Center on School Choice, and other entities. “We now have seven academic programs with top-10 status and strong indicators from several others that are right on the verge of breaking through,” says Peabody Dean Camilla Benbow.

DID PEABODY AND VANDERBILT HAVE TO MERGE AT ALL? Strong emotions among older alumni still flare. At the time, the merger picture was clouded by public speculation, misconceptions, secret initiatives, mutual coyness and frustration. Murmured rumors of alliance had been part of the landscape, part of the Vanderbilt-Peabody ecology, for nearly a hundred years. Events in 1979 conspired to make it a matter of urgency once and for all.

The whole unfolding drama—at least one authoritative ver-

sion of it, told with narrative verve and candor—is found in Paul Conkin’s 2002 book, *Peabody College: From a Frontier Academy to the Frontiers of Teaching and Learning* (Vanderbilt University Press). Conkin, Vanderbilt Distinguished Professor of History, emeritus, chronicles Peabody’s successive incarnations, starting in pre-statehood 1785, when Davidson Academy was established in Nashville by the North Carolina legislature.

Peabody protesters draped black crepe paper across buildings. Tombstones were planted on the lawn to honor faculty who lost jobs.

Conkin’s earlier history of *Vanderbilt, Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University* (University of Tennessee Press, 1984), includes much of Peabody’s story as well.

It’s plausible to say the merger of 1979 was set in motion some 80 years before, when Vanderbilt Chancellor James Kirkland started lobbying hard to get a new Peabody College built near Vanderbilt.

Kirkland wanted to create a great university center in a South still stricken by defeat in the Civil War. He saw Peabody’s commitment to public education as a vital component of that redemptive vision. As early as 1898, Kirkland was dreaming of somehow affiliating Vanderbilt with Peabody, Conkin reports. Vanderbilt was only two decades old, but Kirkland had ambitions to strengthen its work, broaden its influence, and attract support from national foundations. Drawing Peabody into the fold would help.

His model of affiliation was the Teacher’s College at Columbia University. But this would be no easy feat. A new Peabody was already on the drawing board, poised to replace its fore-runners to become a high-profile college in its own right, with its own dreams.

Peabody’s antecedents had started a century before—first as Davidson Academy, which became Cumberland College in 1806, then the University of Nashville in 1826. George Peabody, the Massachusetts-born financier, entered the picture in 1867, transforming the story. He made a \$1 million gift to improve education in the post-war South. As a result, in 1875 a State Normal College to train teachers was added to the University of Nashville, located near downtown. That normal

school unit was renamed Peabody Normal College in 1888.

By the turn of the century, trustees of the Peabody Education Fund, with a fresh infusion of Peabody money, were eager to start a full-fledged George Peabody College for Teachers to replace Peabody Normal. After much debate, the trustees voted in 1909 to build it near Vanderbilt. Kirkland had hoped for this; his lobbying had paid off, it seemed. The decision was mutually beneficial. Peabody could save money by drawing on some of Vanderbilt’s liberal arts departments, and Vanderbilt could draw on Peabody’s education emphasis. Nevertheless, this created no official connection with Vanderbilt. Peabody stressed its own independence. When it opened in 1914 on its present-day site, with 1,108 students and 78 teachers, it was in no mood to merge. It was a private college on its own. It had a mission to raise public education in the South.

Peabody’s first president, Bruce Payne, enacted this auton-



omy in all sorts of ways. Peabody even looked different. The new Peabody campus' Greek and Roman-inspired architecture paid homage to Payne's beloved University of Virginia, not Vanderbilt University. More crucially, Payne brought an enthusiasm for the procedures of education philosopher John Dewey, his former teacher. It caused strains with Kirkland.

"Payne's education philosophy, his concern for mass education and new teaching techniques, placed him at an opposite pole from the classical educational elitism of Kirkland," Conkin writes in *Gone with the Ivy*. "Payne's more egalitarian social outlook also contrasted with Kirkland's staunch advocacy of law and order and of highly nuanced southern racial and class relationships. Payne proved to be as much an educational entrepreneur as Kirkland, and for a time he seemed even more successful. ... Payne very much wanted to be his own man and Peabody to be a distinct and separate institution."

Vanderbilt-Peabody relations eventually thawed, and cooperatives emerged, involving course sharing, student exchanges and sports teams. By 1936 Peabody and Vanderbilt (along with Scarritt College) created the Joint University Libraries (JUL). In 1952 Vanderbilt and Peabody jointly created a master's degree program in teaching, though it only lasted three years as a joint entity.

In 1961 the idea of greater cooperation surfaced again, with more discussion of a formal affiliation but still short of merger. But talks eventually collapsed. The only result, Conkin notes, included a combined Vanderbilt-Peabody band and continued sharing of course work.

Then came electrifying news. Tennessee State University, the traditionally African-American public university, was interested in merging.

"It all came up at a very poor time," recalls Fields, who retired as Vanderbilt president in 1982. "We were in a period when we were trying to cut down on expenditures—it was a time of high inflation. It was bad timing." Under the circumstances, Vanderbilt balked at Peabody's faltering financial profile. "The board of trust decided to stop talking [about merger prospects]," Fields says.

Peabody started looking elsewhere. It had to move fast. Its reputation was large, but its deficits were growing and its endowment evaporating, along with its bargaining position. The school explored possible relationships with both Duke and George Washington universities, to no avail.

Then came electrifying news. Tennessee State University, the traditionally African-American public university based in Nashville, was interested in merging with Peabody. TSU hoped to start doctoral programs in education, and Peabody reportedly

THE 1970S CHANGED EVERYTHING. Peabody's enrollment started falling—and so did its fortunes, as Peabody's finances were tied heavily to tuition. The decade was a low ebb for schools of education nationally, says Conkin. The baby boom had ended; the number of children entering grade school was declining. The nation suddenly had a teacher surplus. Prospects and morale were dismal. "Teaching jobs were scarce, particularly in secondary schools, so fewer young people chose teaching as a career," Conkin writes in *Peabody College*. "This meant that education schools lost favor, often ran deficits, and were a financial burden in most of their host universities. The image of professional educators was never lower."

Following a lackluster fundraising campaign, the Peabody board decided in 1978 to take the big dreaded step: Seek a merger with Vanderbilt. Secret talks ensued between Peabody President John Dunworth and Vanderbilt officials, notably Chancellor Alexander Heard and President Emmett Fields. But negotiations faltered by early 1979.

was willing to oblige. A merger agreement was quickly and secretly outlined. But secrets ended when the story broke in the *Tennessean* newspaper on Feb. 13, 1979. The news distracted the whole campus and Nashville, too. The secrecy of the plan alienated Peabody faculty, but one poll nevertheless showed Peabody professors strongly favoring a merger with TSU if faculty could keep their jobs.

Influential Vanderbilt supporters were alarmed. Race likely played a role in the reactions of many, but Conkin says a more emotional issue took the fore: football. Since the early 1970s the NCAA had allowed Peabody students to play on Vanderbilt's football team and other athletic squads. A TSU merger with Peabody would likely kill Vanderbilt's athletic cooperation with Peabody. Some 50 Peabody students played on the football team in 1979. They would no longer be allowed if a TSU-Peabody merger carried the day. The immediate result would be disaster at Dudley Field:

"Vanderbilt might have difficulty fielding football and basketball teams in the fall of 1979, for most of the Peabody athletes could not meet Vanderbilt's admission requirements, were majoring in subjects not taught at Vanderbilt (primarily physical education), and cost Vanderbilt \$1,000 less than if they were Vanderbilt students," Conkin writes. "If any prospect stunned the local Vanderbilt board members, this was it." Fields disputes this assessment about the urgency of athletics. "I never heard even one board member mention the subject," Fields says.

Nevertheless, the TSU wrinkle did galvanize Vanderbilt and "get us to look at the merger possibilities again," he says. "I

can't say it made the difference. We decided we'd better swallow the financial numbers and do it," Fields says. "It was a risky thing to do, but I think it was mandated by history. ... I always thought fate was written into the land assignment of Peabody settling near Vanderbilt."

Vanderbilt officials now made new entreaties to Peabody. The sudden prospect of losing Peabody altogether threatened other existing, durable Vanderbilt-Peabody arrangements—the JUL library agreement, Vanderbilt's rental use of two Peabody dorms, the enrollment of hundreds of Vanderbilt students in Peabody courses, and scores of joint scholarly projects.

By April a firm offer from Vanderbilt was on the table. Peabody would be a professional school at Vanderbilt comparable with others at the University. A number of Peabody trustees would join the Vanderbilt board. Peabody would keep its endowment for support of the College. Vanderbilt would get the 50-plus-acre campus.

The TSU proposal was left behind. In any case, would a TSU-Peabody merger actually have been accomplished? Not likely in 1979, Conkin speculates. The state legislature would have had to approve it, and opposition was already mounting, especially from Murfreesboro, home of rival Middle Tennessee State University. It faced resistance on the Peabody board as well.

So the Vanderbilt-Peabody marriage was done by July 1, 1979: George Peabody College for Teachers became the Peabody College of Education and Human Development of Vanderbilt University.



The protest rally started at the Hill Student Center and continued to the Peabody Administration Building, where student and faculty speakers spoke against the coming merger with Vanderbilt.



A Snapshot of Today's Peabody College

A quarter century after the stormy events of '79, Vanderbilt administrators can check off a long list of Peabody accomplishments and initiatives:

- Peabody now has its largest post-merger faculty ever—over 130.
- Peabody ranks No. 5 among the nation's 189 graduate schools of education by *U.S. News & World Report*, just behind Harvard, Stanford, UCLA and Teachers College, Columbia. Peabody's program in special education ranks No. 1.
- Enrollment is about 1,200 undergraduates; in 1979 it was 600. In graduate studies, 459 are pursuing master's and professional degrees; another 200 are enrolled in Ph.D. work.
- The fall 2004 freshman class at Peabody had mean SAT scores exceeding 1300 for the first time. Mean GRE scores for graduate students currently rank third highest among the nation's graduate schools of education.
- The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, involving many Peabody faculty researchers and still housed on the Peabody campus, thrives now as a transinstitutional entity with University-wide support. It is one of 14 national research centers devoted to understanding mental retardation and human development, preventing or solving developmental problems, and helping individuals with developmental disabilities lead fuller lives.
- The Learning Sciences Institute, another transinstitutional Vanderbilt unit led by Peabody, focuses on new K–12 teaching methods, curriculum development, assessment and other learning tools.
- The Leadership Development Center is a Peabody-led partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, the State of Tennessee and other agencies that aims to better prepare school leaders in areas of learning theory, leadership skills, organizational development, and the political context of public school life.
- Peabody's Principals Leadership Academy of Nashville (PLAN) is a joint undertaking between Peabody, the Nashville Public Education Foundation, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and develops educational leaders for the Nashville school system who improve preparation and results.
- Peabody's Susan Gray School for Children carries on its long-standing education program for young children (with and without disabilities). The School's mission is to provide services to children and their families; train students who want to be teachers, health-care providers, therapists and researchers; demonstrate education practices; and assist in education research.
- Peabody researchers working with 36 preschool classrooms in seven Tennessee school districts are part of a landmark national study that, for the first time, will help determine which preschool programs work best for which children.
- A \$10 million federal grant awarded to Peabody's Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations established the National Research and Development Center on School Choice.
- A \$5 million grant from the Institute for Education Science was awarded recently to Professor David Cordray in Peabody's Department of Psychology and Human Development to fund pre-doctoral training for a new cadre of education scientists charged with determining which kinds of K–12 programs work and which ones don't.
- Professor Douglas Perkins in Peabody's Department of Human and Organizational Development has been selected to facilitate the Nashville Mayor's Taskforce to End Chronic Homelessness, a panel working on a 10-year plan to put an end to chronic homelessness in the city.

There was excitement and giddiness, but also pain and anger—the layoffs of beloved professors (severance packages for the older ones), the nixing of entire departments (art, liberal arts and music, which, through another interesting succession of events, would eventually become Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music), and the annexation of the College to Vanderbilt after nearly two centuries of tradition as an independent institution. “We hoped there could be another way,” recalls Elizabeth Goldman. “But Vanderbilt made things possible that Peabody didn't have. To survive, any institution must evolve.”

Looking back on the event in a 1999 interview, Chancellor Alexander Heard, who was deeply involved in the negotiations, said he was grateful it succeeded. “A great many people over there understood the potential for all this,” he recalled. “They loved Peabody and were trying to save it for its own sake, but also the functions of Peabody, the education functions. They thought they would be enormously enhanced, and they thought they would improve Vanderbilt in the course of it. A lot of us shared that. I think there were a lot of common feelings, common beliefs, common attitudes and values, on both sides of campus.

“Not everybody was happy, but there was enough bedrock view to make the thing. I didn't even think it was a risk. There were inevitable problems, and frankly there were fewer than I was prepared to say that we should address.”

Current Peabody Dean Camilla Benbow says a knack for adaptation is a Peabody quality that has been pivotal to the school's survival. “Peabody has always been here to help humankind and build human capital,” she says. “And those values are still here. But we're entrepreneurial. We keep redefining ourselves to fit the time, and we've survived. That's very Peabodian, and it's been the key to our success.”

One of the most visible signs of this entrepreneurial success is the human and organizational development curriculum (the HOD degree program), which currently enrolls some 700 undergraduates—one in nine Vanderbilt students. (It's the most popular undergraduate major on campus. Next is biomedical engineering, with 392 students; then economics, 346 students; then mechanical engineering, 238.)

HOD is not always easy to describe, as some of its own supporters admit. It's been called an applied social-sciences degree, an applied liberal-arts program. Its aim is to help students understand human behavior in groups and organizations, teaching them how to solve problems (managerial or interpersonal) in a business or nonprofit setting. Students encounter ideas and experiences through a battery of methods—seminars, role playing, case studies, group projects, field experience and interaction with professionals. It requires a semester-long internship in the corporate or nonprofit world. HOD values experiential learning, hoping to ready students for real-world problems, workplace dynamics, and interaction with co-workers, bosses and employees.

HOD has been a source of criticism and misunderstanding from the start. It was accused of having a lack of theoretical rigor and too much jargon. In the early post-merger days, HOD was known to some as the football degree because it attracted various University athletes. (It still does. In fall 2004, for example, 37 students on the 94-man Vanderbilt football roster were HOD majors). But administrators stress HOD's standards have been beefed up considerably under Dean Benbow, who arrived in 1998.

One undergraduate says the criticism is unfair. “It's different from other degrees, but that doesn't make it less valuable,” says Brittany Oakes of Ohio. “It's practical. It's teaching you how to work with people in a business setting. You can't say HOD is an easy major. We have to take Arts and Science courses to be in HOD. But the culture here [at Peabody] is more relaxed, more welcoming, less stressful.”

BY NOW, PEABODIANS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO GOING AGAINST THE CURRENT IN THE NAME OF PUBLIC SERVICE—and accustomed to scrutiny and misapprehensions. And Vanderbilt officials say the lingering emotions of the merger are overshadowed by a larger and more important drama, the forward trajectory of Vanderbilt-Peabody into an anxious world that needs education, compassion, and humane solutions to its problems.

“The world in which we live is recognizing with increasing urgency that education is central to political, economic and social success,” says Provost Nicholas Zeppos. “The integration of Peabody into Vanderbilt, and Vanderbilt into Peabody, has been a tremendous success. Peabody certainly has made Vanderbilt greater, and Vanderbilt, I believe, has made Peabody greater.”

The connection between two erstwhile rivals tightens. The Peabody campus will be the site for phase one of Vanderbilt's historic new residential colleges concept for undergraduate life—“The Commons”—where the entire freshman class will live together, starting in 2008. The goal is to promote a strong intellectual and social experience and sense of community among Vanderbilt's newcomers. A massive construction project accompanies the plan, and groundbreaking has already occurred.

These plans call for a practical detail that deepens the symbolic link: A second bridge will one day be built across 21st Avenue South, probably south of the current bridge, to carry freshmen back and forth across this one University called Vanderbilt.

Imagine 1,500 kids walking across the bridge to Blair, to physics, to English, and walking back to Peabody,” Zeppos says. “In that traffic pattern there's no greater symbol and witness to the fusing of the University.”

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