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*"A triumph!"*

*spring 2010*

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WRITTEN BY CINDY THOMSEN DIRECTED BY GAYNELLE DOLL

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# Opportunity Vanderbilt



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*Justin Barisich  
Peabody College, Class of 2011  
Berger Family Scholarship*

## **Ability, achievement and hard work define Justin Barisich.**

He grew up working summers on his dad’s shrimp boat, and after Hurricane Katrina destroyed his home and his high school, that work ethic spurred him to move in with his grandparents, change schools and move forward. Now he’s at Vanderbilt, studying to be a high-school teacher.

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*Spring 2010, Volume 91, Number 1*



## **A Wing and a Prayer**

What looks like a scene of peace and serenity actually held potential dangers for John Guider, BE'72, who photographed this image while canoeing from his backyard creek up the Harpeth, Cumberland and Ohio rivers and down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. As he approached the Ohio River, this small island in the middle of Lake Barkley near Land Between the Lakes taught him a few things about how to navigate wing dikes built by the Army Corps of Engineers. For more, see page 56.



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## Jonathan Marx



A FORMER JOURNALIST with 20 years' combined experience as an editor, critic and reporter for the *Nashville Scene* and *The Tennessean*, Jonathan Marx is now publications manager for the Nashville Symphony. A Nashville native, Marx has maintained a side career as a musician and has recorded a dozen albums and toured widely with the group Lambchop, performing on woodwinds, trumpet and electronics. He also is a member of the group Hands Off Cuba and has appeared on recordings by Yo La Tengo, Portastatic, Butterglory, Forrest Bride, and the late Vic Chesnutt.

## Glen Stewart

BORN AND RAISED in Lorain, Ohio, Glen Stewart, MDiv'74, DMin'75, earned a B.A. at the University of Toledo. He is an ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Stewart has been the pastor of three congregations, served as an associate regional minister in Kansas City, Mo., and for the past 16 years has been the regional minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee. He and his wife, Joyce, have one grown son. During free time he loves to fish and travel.



## Lisa Robbins



LISA ROBBINS EARNED a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia and worked as a reporter in Jerusalem and Chicago. When a newspaper editor instructed her to stop conducting interviews in person and to do all her reporting from behind a desk, she decided to give freelancing a try. Though she has dabbled in other work since, she always finds herself back at a keyboard. She lives in Massachusetts and has written for the Travel Channel, *Nashville Scene* and the *Peabody Reflector*.

## Paul K. Conkin

PAUL K. CONKIN, MA'53, PhD'57, distinguished professor of history, emeritus, and former chair of the Department of History, first came to Vanderbilt more than 55 years ago as a graduate student. He is author or co-author of 23 books, including the recently published *The Revolution Down on the Farm*, as well as the definitive 1985 work *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*. An East Tennessee native, he served as president of the Southern Historical Association for 1996-97.



## Linda Schlesinger Mabry



LINDA SCHLESINGER MABRY, BSN'66, lives in Tallahassee, Fla., with her husband, Dr. R. James Mabry, BA'66, MD'70, and her mother. She is retired from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. She and Jim have two grown daughters and four grandchildren.

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# DoreWays

A forum for exchanging ideas

## From the Editor

### *Ready for Their Close-Up*

**I**F YOU EVER NEED TO PHOTOGRAPH a hairless dog, Dick Dickerson is a good man to know. He will keep you entertained and even bring along a spare hairless dog. When we decided to create a *Vanderbilt Magazine* cover with a movie-poster look to promote our story about the Vanderbilt-in-Hollywood program, Art Director Donna Pritchett and I became fixated on including a Chinese crested dog in our photo shoot. But where to find one that we could borrow?

A search of Vanderbilt's website led us to S.M. "Dick" Dickerson, BA'63, who had been profiled in the Summer 2004 issue of the *Peabody Reflector*. On a Friday afternoon in late February, Mr. Dickerson arrived in an old pickup truck with a Chinese crested as well as a larger dog that he said was a Xoloitzcuintli—a Mexican hairless. Both dogs, he said, were national champions.

Word spread throughout the Creative Services division, where we were shooting the photo, that two hairless dogs wearing sweaters were on the premises. While a parade of designers and photographers came through, the unflappable Mr. Dickerson talked.

I have never wished more fervently that I had brought along a tape recorder.

I sat on the floor cuddling April, our cover dog, who was nervous and flatulent from all the attention. Dick told me his family began raising Chihuahuas in the 1800s and supplied them to Haile Selassie for 40 years. Dick met the Ethiopian emperor twice.

As a boy, Dick became interested in Chinese crested dogs, and one day as a 14-year-old he received a phone call from striptease artist Gypsy Rose Lee, who founded one of the first Chinese crested kennels. Dick got to know not only Gypsy Rose Lee but also some of her coterie of exotic dancers. "A naked dog for a naked woman," she told him. Dick's father always enjoyed telling about his son's acquaintance at his club.

Dick lives in Springfield, Tenn., but his backyard is in Kentucky—a good thing, because he has enough stories to keep two states entertained. He hosts a radio show and writes a newspaper column.

He knows descendants of the James Gang and descendants of Aaron Burr, who fled to Kentucky after killing Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He raises exotic chickens and sends eggs to Martha Stewart. He wrote education speeches for President Jimmy Carter. And he is a second cousin of Al Gore, of whom he speaks with great admiration.

"This guy is like Forrest Gump," Associate Editor Phillip Tucker whispered to me at one point during our photo shoot. "He seems to be connected to everybody."

If you've never held a hairless dog, here's what to expect: They are dense little dogs that feel very warm to the touch. Their skin feels soft, except for the raised spots.

In this issue, coincidentally, we also included a dog in our photo of Blair Professor Jim Lovensheimer on page 27. And you can see some of the livestock on Peabody's historic Knapp Farm on page 20.

As they would say in Hollywood, no animals were harmed in the production of this magazine.

—GayNelle Doll



Dick Dickerson

## From the Reader

### Alexander Heard's Legacy

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING the article [Fall 2009, "Bridge Over Troubled Waters"] about this man for all seasons whom only a small (and now shrinking) portion of the Vanderbilt family experienced directly.

I was a beneficiary of the leadership of the late G. Alexander Heard as a student from 1968 to 1972 and Student Government Association president during 1971–72.

Publishing this material helps ensure that a broader audience realizes the Heard legacy that benefits them as not only Vanderbilt people but as citizens of the world. Heard's contributions to civilization are much deeper and wider than Vanderbilt.

LARRY WALLACE, BE'72

*New York City*

### Best All-Around Girl

I READ WITH INTEREST AND PRIDE Michael Sims' article about Dinah Shore [Fall 2009]. Dinah's mother and my grandmother were sisters. I, as well as my other cousins, have inherited and amassed a sizable collection of information and memorabilia regarding Dinah; nevertheless, Mr. Sims' composition included a couple of facts that I did not know. It will go in my collection.

I would like to point out that Dinah's sorority was Alpha Epsilon Phi. Also, Dinah and George Montgomery's son's name is John David (called "Jody") and was adopted as an infant, to become Melissa's little brother; he was not George's son from a previous marriage, as stated.

PHYLLIS LEFKOVITZ GORDON, BA'62

*Nashville*

WE VERY MUCH ENJOYED reading Michael Sims' article about Dinah Shore. You might be interested to know that both the "best all-around girl" and the "best all-around boy" in the Hume-Fogg High School class

of 1934 went on to Vanderbilt. That boy was our father and grandfather, John Lawton Shapiro, who earned both his undergraduate and medical degrees there. He then returned after service in the war and a residency at Western Reserve University to spend his entire career teaching at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, serving 15 years as head of the pathology department. Several Vanderbilt scholarships and awards are in his name, as well as an endowed chair. Shortly before your article was published, our whole family was in Nashville for a reception honoring Agnes Fogo as the second John L. Shapiro Professor of Pathology.

Fanny Rose Shore may have achieved more fame, but he didn't do so badly for himself—or for Vanderbilt, either!

ELIZABETH SHAPIRO SILVERMAN, BA'75  
*Cranbury, N.J.*

SUSANNAH LAWTON SILVERMAN, BS'07  
*New York City*

I READ WITH INTEREST the “Best All-Around Girl” article about Dinah Shore in the Fall 2009 Collective Memory section. I feel compelled to correct Michael Sims’ statement that “Fanny also felt like an outsider as a child of the only Jewish family in a small Protestant town.”

There was a small but well-defined Jewish community in Winchester, Tenn., at that time. My own family had moved to Winchester three years before Dinah’s birth, and my older sister was one of her playmates.



The attached photograph from Dinah’s fourth birthday party in 1920 (actually her first birthday, as she was born on Leap Day in 1916) shows Dinah in the center and my sister Charlotte in the right front.

A brief history of the Jews of Winchester, including the Shores, may be found at [www.isjl.org/history/archive/tn/winchester.html](http://www.isjl.org/history/archive/tn/winchester.html).

DR. SAMUEL H. PAPLANUS, BA'50, MD'54  
*Tucson, Ariz.*

## Ladies and Gents, Here's Randy

AS A MEMBER OF THE Men of Note Barbershop Chorus who graduated from Hillsboro High School in Nashville, it was a particular pleasure to read “All I Want for Christmas Is Another ‘Grandma’” [Fall 2009, *Southern Journal*] by Randy Brooks. We have had the pleasure of having him as master of ceremonies for our last two Christmas shows with his quirky sense of humor and his intimate personality. He continues to be a cheerful giver.

MAX BEASLEY

*Plano, Texas*

## The Universal Language of Suds

I THOUGHT THAT SANDY Besser, BA'58, made some good points in his letter [in response to “Jewish Rush in the Bible Belt,” Summer 2009]. When I was a student at Vanderbilt at the same time as Sandy, I could not help but wonder what being Jewish had to do with joining a fraternity. I was not, and am still not, aware that Jewish boys drink beer any differently than Christian boys.

JOE WHALEN, BA'60

*North Little Rock, Ark.*

## In Praise of Midwives

“REBIRTH OF THE MIDWIFE” [Fall 2009] is a great article. We have known these points since the 1970s—probably we have always known them. Isn't it about time we use these standards to give women and children the care they deserve? Congratulations to the professionals at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing and many other schools across the country that con-

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*“Great magazine! Reading it reminds me of the thought-provoking political science and communications classes I took at Vanderbilt.”*

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tinue to stress the obvious.

Perhaps one day we will have this kind of health care for everyone in this country.

MARY REYNOLDS, BSN’83  
 Madison, Ala.

**Obituaries Read and Appreciated**

THANK YOU FOR RESUMING adequate obituaries of our departed alumni. It continues to be important and inspiring to read of their accomplishments at Vanderbilt and during their lifetimes. Also the mention of other Vanderbilt alumni and connections in the family is appreciated. It is gratifying to read what my classmates and others have done with their lives.

DR. MARIANNA M. LARUE, BA’54  
 Maitland, Fla.

THANK YOU FOR RETURNING the obituaries to the form they’d always had. Although it is saddening to read about classmates’ deaths, it is comforting to read about their lives.

MARY W. DAVIS, BA’50  
 Columbus, Ga.

**Letters are always welcome**

in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style and clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, *Vanderbilt Magazine*, PMB 407703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7703, or send email to [vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu).

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# 1,000 Words



## **Charge of the Lite Brigade**

In February, Vanderbilt students and other volunteers completed "Food Fight," a large mural in Rand Hall that depicts an epic battle between junk and healthy food. Photo by Steve Green.







# The Campus

“Medical standards might not trigger an alarm, but a mother’s instincts

## Rapid Response System Empowers Patient Families

A NEW SYSTEM at Vanderbilt gives families a powerful tool to call quickly for help if they suspect a patient’s condition is worsening or a serious new health concern is developing. The Family Initiated Rapid Response Team program is much like calling 911: When a family member dials 1111 from a Vanderbilt patient’s room, a LifeFlight operator dispatches a “rapid response team” of physicians and nurses. The program rolled out last fall in all non-intensive-care patient units for Vanderbilt University Hospital and the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt.

“There are situations when things may change so quickly that the family may pick up on it before the bedside nurse can,” says Dr. Brad Stroehler, MS’06, chair of the Rapid Response Committee at Children’s Hospital and assistant professor of pediatrics and anesthesiology.

Signs in every noncritical-care patient room tell families they can dial 1111 from their room to report life-threatening changes in a patient’s condition, or if they fear a situation is becoming a medical emergency.

But doesn’t such a system invite abuse, overtaxing the response team with nonemer-



ANNE RAYNER

**Anne Ussery, left, and her daughter, Elizabeth, took part in efforts to create Vanderbilt’s Family Initiated Rapid Response Team program.**

gency calls? “Rather than seeing abuse of the system, we found the vast majority of family members respect it like they do calling 911 at home,” says Brent Lemonds, administrative director of emergency services and specialty nursing at VUH. Lemonds headed up a pilot of the program at the hospital last spring.

Anne Ussery is a finance manager at VUH and a member of the Family Advisory Council at Children’s Hospital, which worked with hospital officials to craft language for educational materials to explain the program to parents. “The point is that medical standards might not trigger an alarm, but a mother’s instincts are pretty accurate when things are not right,” she says. “If you have that ‘gut feeling,’ this is another resource.”

## Vanderbilt Takes Lead in Transit Initiative

VANDERBILT IS THE primary sponsor of a new nonprofit corporation created to promote public transportation in Middle Tennessee. The university has committed \$100,000 per year for the next three years to help fund the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee.

“Mass transit is already an important part of the daily commute for many of Vanderbilt’s more than 23,000 employees,” says Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos. “This is an investment by Vanderbilt into the Nashville community and into the convenience and comfort of everyone who teaches,

researches, heals, studies and works at our campus every day.”

The corporation will work to galvanize community support for transit development, provide information about the benefits of mass transit, develop regional agreement on strategies for funding mass transit, and advocate for dedicated funding for regional and local transit.

“The Transit Alliance is a group of business leaders from across Middle Tennessee that has come together to lead a public education campaign about the need for development of a regional mass transit system,” says Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, JD’81. “Mass transit is critical for our region’s future economic growth, and the work of the Transit Alliance will be key to developing community support.”

To date, efforts to promote mass transit options for the Vanderbilt community include eligibility of all full-time employees to participate in the university’s vanpool/carpool “ride matching” program; free rides on city buses to and from



COURTESY METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY



# Spring 2010

*are pretty accurate when things are not right.* — ANNE USSERY, member, Children's Hospital Family Advisory Council

Vanderbilt for graduate students, employees and medical center volunteers; a 60 percent discount on commuter rail service available to eastern suburbs; and a Zipcar program, which offers vehicles available for rent during the workday for students, faculty and staff.

## Wanted: Urban Teachers

A PROGRAM AIMED at improving teaching in urban middle schools will begin enrolling students this summer. The result of a partnership between Peabody College of education and human development and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), it is geared toward students who want to teach in Nashville public schools.

Students will attend tuition-free but will agree to teach in MNPS schools for three years after graduation. The new Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools master's-degree program is open to recent college graduates as well as new and existing teachers.

Students will prepare to teach in upper elementary grades through eighth grade with a focus on one of three areas: literacy, mathematics or science. The program will focus on improving instruction, improving outcomes, changing assessment practices, and creating communities of reflective, committed



## QuoteUnquote

**“The duties of leadership at any level ... are to try and get the big ideas right, first and foremost.”**

— Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the U.S. Central Command, on the challenges of Afghanistan.

The International Legal Studies program and the College of Arts and Science sponsored his March 1 visit to Vanderbilt.

teachers dedicated to working with their MNPS colleagues to foster systemic improvement.

“This program will provide top training for our teachers, which will directly impact classroom instruction,” says MNPS Director of Schools Jesse Register, “and it will assist in our recruitment of the country’s most talented and promising young teachers.”

Students will enter the master’s program the summer before they begin teaching in a Metro school. All will be eligible for hire by Metro because they will have already received teacher certifica-

tion. The students will begin teaching in a project-affiliated MNPS school the first fall, and will complete 30 hours of course work in two years.

Peabody faculty will provide

on-site coaching and mentoring. Every semester students will participate in a seminar that addresses urban issues and classroom instruction.

“We believe this program will be sufficiently distinctive, indeed innovative, that it may become a lighthouse program of its kind nationally,” says Camilla Benbow, the Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody. Peabody researchers will track the progress of the program and document its creation and implementation so other universities and school districts may one day replicate it.

Find out more: [www.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/mnps.xml](http://www.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/mnps.xml)



**Camilla Benbow, the Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College, and Jesse Register, director of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools**

## Inquiring Minds

### 3-D Map Will Shed Light on Dark Matter

The most ambitious attempt yet to trace the history of the universe has seen “first light.” The Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey (BOSS), part of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey III (SDSS-III), took its first astronomical data last Sept. 14–15 at the Sloan Foundation telescope in New Mexico. The goal of the six-year project is to measure the spectra of 1.4 million galaxies and 160,000 quasars, extremely distant objects that shine more brightly than entire galaxies.

“This will give us a three-dimensional map of a large volume of the universe, which is exactly what we need to learn more about dark energy,” says assistant professor Andreas Berlind. He and colleagues in Vanderbilt’s physics and astronomy department—assistant professor Kelly Holley-Bockelmann, associate professor Keivan Stasun and professor David Weintraub—are participating in the survey along with 350 scientists from 41 other institutions.



Berlind

STEVE GREEN

### Politicians’ Deaths May Send Stock Values Southward

When a hometown politician dies suddenly, local companies show the loss of a valuable connection immediately in their share prices. In a study at the Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, stock prices for companies located where a politician lived or was born declined by an average of nearly 2 percent when the connection was abruptly severed—translating into millions of dollars in lost shareholder equity.

David Parsley, E. Bronson Ingram Professor of Economics and Finance, examined the sudden deaths of 122 politicians from around the world since 1973. He then analyzed the performance of more than 8,000 publicly traded companies based in those cities at the time of death. The study, “Sudden Deaths: Taking Stock of Geographic Ties,” appeared in the June issue of the *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*. It was written with professor Mara Faccio of Purdue University and was partially funded by the Owen School’s Financial Markets Research Center.



Parsley

STEVE GREEN

### Physician Work Hours Linked to Reduced Fees

Physicians have steadily decreased their work hours during the past several years as both commercial and government health-care payers have sharply reduced the fees they’ve offered for physician services. That’s the lead finding in a report published in February in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) by a three-author team that includes Vanderbilt’s Peter Buerhaus, Valere Potter Professor of Nursing and director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Health Workforce Studies at the Institute for Medicine and Public Health.

## Engineering Students Launch New Apps

FINDING OUT WHERE TO EAT, what’s happening, and how to get around are common questions on every college campus. At Vanderbilt the answers to these questions can be found quickly and easily using new applications developed by engineering students for iPhone and Android mobile devices.

The new free apps—Dining, Campus Map and Events—were recently released in the iPhone and Android app stores. Using a phone’s GPS, the information the apps present is targeted to where the user is located at the time and can be filtered based on their interests, giving them information that helps them immediately to navigate the campus and plan their day or night.

The applications were developed by the Vanderbilt Mobile Application Team, or VMAT, a group of computer science students working both in and outside of class with faculty members Douglas Schmidt and Jules White to conduct research on and develop mobile applications. White is teaching a class this semester about smart-phone programming, and both have been mentoring research projects as well.

“Mobile applications provide an amazing opportunity for undergraduates to have an impact on the future of computing,” says Schmidt, professor of computer science and associate chair of the department. “This is a whole new paradigm of software development and deployment. Students 18 to 22 years old can have a big impact while they are still in school.”



Through VMAT, led by students Hamilton Turner and Aaron Thompson, students mentor one another and apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to solve real-world challenges.

“VMAT is about two things: students teaching students by building relationships in the engineering community, and bringing mobile solutions to Vanderbilt,” says Turner. “I saw a need at Vanderbilt for a mobile solution space and had a little bit of ability to help with that, but I couldn’t accomplish a fraction of it on my own. With VMAT we have senior students training and mentoring junior students, with the goal of creating a lasting, cross-semester effort.”

The students’ application work also gives them significant research experience. “At least three of these students have been first authors on research papers—that’s really unusual for an undergraduate,” says White, research assistant professor of computer science. “Undergraduates are uniquely qualified to do new things in this field that no one else can do because they are so familiar with these devices and tools already.”

The VMAT code is all open-source, meaning it can be used and further built upon by other developers. VMAT students have at least five new apps in the works this spring, all driven



by their perspective of what would be most beneficial to university students.

**Find out more:**

[www.vanderbilt.edu/apps](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/apps)

## School of Nursing to Offer Nutrition Master's

BEGINNING FALL 2010, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing will offer its first non-nursing degree: a master of science in nutrition and dietetics.

"When we consider our nation's obesity epidemic, the complexity of health-care delivery, and the use of the Internet as a source of health information, we realize that we must make fundamental changes in the way we educate health-care professionals. This includes preparing advanced-practice registered dietitians who can expand their roles in the process and delivery of health care," says Linda Norman, professor of nursing and senior associate dean for academics.

The master's program offers two specialty tracks: Nutrition Informatics and Nutrition Management in Health-Care Systems. "The program is



LEON ZERNITSKY

designed to integrate the groundbreaking nutrition research being conducted by Vanderbilt faculty with theory-based course content and state-of-the-art clinical practice," explains Heidi Silver, program director and research assistant professor of medicine.

The new field of nutrition informatics involves retrieving, organizing, storing and using information and data to help

the electronic health record.

The Nutrition Management in Health-Care Systems track will prepare advanced-practice professionals for leadership, management or administrative roles. It builds on the strength of VUSN's Health Systems Management program for nurses. For dietitians, future positions could include chronic disease case managers, community and public-health agency

administrators, nutrition pharmaceutical and home-health agency managers, as well as private-practice entrepreneurs.

The program is offered in a modified distance-learning format with synchronous and asynchronous online teaching. The only campus requirement will be a two- to four-day visit at the beginning and end of each semester.

**Find out more:**

[www.nutrition.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.nutrition.vanderbilt.edu)

## Medical Students Get Taste of Budget Dining

JAMIE ROBINSON HAS always been a healthy eater, but she never had to work as hard to make a healthy trip to the grocery store as she did in January. "I wanted to get a big bag of grapes for snacking, but they were \$4, so no grape snacks," Robinson says.

The unbought grapes were lesson one for the second-year medical student. Robinson and her 100-plus Vanderbilt School of Medicine classmates were asked to participate in the SNAP challenge as part of a class. SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—the federal program formerly known as food stamps.

The challenge was to eat for five days on the amount of money the average person on SNAP receives—about \$3 a day, or \$1 per meal. To make things tougher, students were instructed to track their calories and nutrition on a government website ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)) to make sure they were still eating healthy.

That meant no midnight trips to stock up on all-you-can-eat tacos, and for healthy



## Virtual Vanderbilt

### All Things Commencement [www.vanderbilt.edu/commencement](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/commencement)

What happens if it rains? Where is the Wesley Place Garage? And what's up with all those tassel colors? Visitors can learn the words to the alma mater, find out where to stay, get the latest updates and much more at Vanderbilt's just-launched Commencement website.

## Top Picks

### Stallings Named Coach of the Year—Again

Vanderbilt Head Men's Basketball Coach Kevin Stallings has been honored by SEC coaches with the Coach of the Year Award, his second during his 11-year tenure with the Commodores. Stallings, who also claimed the honor in 2007, commandeered the 2009–10 team to his fifth 20-win season as Vanderbilt coach and led the team to 23 regular-season wins—which ties with the 1965 and 1974 teams for third-most wins in school history.



NEIL BRANKE

### Tarbert to Clerk for Chief Justice

Kate Komp Tarbert, JD'05, has accepted a clerkship with the Hon. John G. Roberts Jr., chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, for the October 2010 term. Tarbert is an associate in the appellate department of O'Melveny & Myers in Washington, D.C. At Vanderbilt, Tarbert was a Patrick Wilson Scholar, executive editor of the *Vanderbilt Law Review*, and winner of the 2005 Founder's Medal for Vanderbilt Law School.



### Doctoral Student Wins National Award

Woodrow "Woody" Lucas, a doctoral student at Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, was one of only two recipients of a Ph.D. Trailblazer Award for 2009 from the National Black MBA Association at its annual meeting in New Orleans. Lucas received a joint MBA and master of theological studies degree from Vanderbilt in 2007 before pursuing his Ph.D. in management at Owen. Lucas grew up in New Jersey, graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in mathematical methods and social sciences, and worked as a minister and math tutor with at-risk children through the Urban League after graduation.



STEVE GREEN

### Leading Anesthesiologist Retires

Dr. Joseph Gerald (Jerry) Reves, BA'65, steps down this spring as vice president for medical affairs and dean of the College of Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina. Reves' primary research interests have included attempts to better understand the nature of the risks of cardiac surgery in elderly patients. His retirement plans include a grand trip with his wife in their 41-foot boat from Charleston to the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Great Lakes, Nashville, Florida, and back to Charleston.



eaters like Robinson, it even meant eating foods she considered less healthy. At the end of her shopping trip, Robinson had white bread and bananas for lunchtime banana sandwiches, canned beans, frozen vegetables, eggs and no meat.

"The purpose of this experience is to help medical students better understand the patient's perspective on the challenges he/she faces to maintain a healthy lifestyle given certain financial restraints," says Lynn Webb, assistant vice chancellor for health affairs. "We want to put the students in the shoes of the patients so they can be better clinicians."

Webb coordinated the SNAP challenge for the School of Medicine's Patient, Profession and Society course. As part of a major curriculum revision in 2006, the course was added to integrate topics like ethics, economics, communication skills and prevention.

Many students commented about the lack of variety in their diet during the challenge. Second-year student David Marcovitz longed for a granola

bar and blueberries on his cereal, but couldn't afford them. Instead he located "day old" bread at Target so he could afford the whole-wheat variety for sandwiches at lunch, and ate a concoction of pasta mixed with egg and tomato sauce for dinner four nights straight.

"The lesson from this is that it's not really about hunger in the U.S., because anyone can take this amount of money and go to the dollar menu and get enough calories for the day," Marcovitz says. "But if you want to have good nutrition, it takes a lot of work, a lot of education, a lot of thought, and a lot of preparation."

For the estimated 600 SNAP recipients who come to Vanderbilt clinics every day, following the advice of practitioners about the importance of diet may not be easy.

Webb says that is the point. "Overall, the goal is to help our students maintain an appreciation for the human dimension of care: that the disease being treated is just one aspect of what's going on in a patient's life."



ANNE RAYNER

David Marcovitz spoons out a plate of pasta mixed with egg and tomato sauce, a meal he ate four nights in a row during the SNAP challenge.





Stacy Tolos, BS'06, MPP'07, in Ghana



Jimmy Mitchell, BS'08, in Honduras



Rohit Sahni, BS'01, in India



Jay Salato  
BA'07, MEd'09

# REMARKABLE PEOPLE

**Every day, every gift to Vanderbilt shapes the future for remarkable students.**

Supporting essential financial aid and scholarships, attracting and retaining great faculty and promoting pioneering research, every gift to the university provides students with first-class learning opportunities that empower them to change the world.

And they do. Recent alumnus Jay Salato notes the remarkable impact Vanderbilt alumni have on society.

“The friends I made at Vanderbilt are making a difference all over the world, defending human rights in Central and South America, supporting missions for international justice in Asia, and working with orphans in Africa infected with HIV or with AIDS,” he says. “I know that many of the students I’m supporting today will leave their own marks on the world, too.”

Invest in the future of a remarkable student. Make your gift today at [www.vanderbilt.edu/givenow](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/givenow) or contact Elizabeth K. Wilson at (866) 882-3863 or [elizabeth.k.wilson@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:elizabeth.k.wilson@vanderbilt.edu).



PHOTOS BY VANDERBILT CREATIVE SERVICES AND INGRAM SCHOLARS OFFICE

# Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

## Above and Beyond

*Alyson Hasty proves you can reach new heights even when you stay close to home.*

By NELSON BRYAN, BA'73

**B**Y THE TIME SHE GOT TO HIGH school, Alyson Hasty was nearly burned out on gymnastics. She had been training as a gymnast since she was a tyke, and when her sophomore year arrived, she'd had enough.

"I'd been a gymnast forever," Hasty says. "I quit my sophomore year and wanted to do something else. My coach said, 'You should try pole vaulting because gymnasts are usually good at it.'"

A year later she was winning championships in the pole vault for Brentwood Academy. During her junior year she cleared 11 feet 3 inches and set the regional record. She won the state championship that year in a jump off. She vaulted 11-4 her senior year, winning the state championship again.

During the summers she was trained by noted Nashville track and field coach Bill Ethridge. "A lot of kids from private schools would come to work with Bill," she says. "It was really fun to have a small group of people who weren't necessarily from my school to work out with."

Ethridge passed away before Hasty's high school career was over, but his network of coaches in the track and field community had become aware of Hasty and her rise to pole-vaulting prominence. One of those coaches was Clark Humphreys, an assistant track and field coach at Vanderbilt—just a hop, skip and jump from Hasty's hometown of Brentwood, Tenn.

As it turns out, Humphreys shared another connection with Hasty: He too had won state high school championships in the pole vault as a student at Brentwood Academy.

"When I first started thinking about her, I truly did not think of that connection," says Humphreys. "An old teammate of mine, who is an assistant coach at Brentwood Academy, was the one who brought it to my attention that the boys' school record holder could coach the girls' school record holder."

Convincing Hasty to stay close to home was a challenge. As with many young people, she was interested in putting some distance between herself and her hometown. "My junior year I thought this was the only place where I would *not* come," she says. "My parents always wanted me to come to Vanderbilt. Because they wanted me to come so much, I thought I didn't want to come. But things just worked out."

Hasty's mother, Alyssa Hasty, PhD'99, is an associate professor and researcher in the molecular physiology and biophysics department at Vanderbilt. Her father, Alan Hasty, is an executive with Nissan. Except for a two-year stint in Japan as a young child, Alyson has always lived in this area.

"I had talked to UT a little bit and a few smaller schools," she says of her decision-making process. During her junior year Hasty was mistakenly listed as a sophomore in a local newspaper report about her state championship. "That kind of messed things up because if you're a sophomore, schools can't talk to you.

I don't know if things would've been different if I'd been listed correctly. Coach Humphreys started to talk to me, and it seemed like a really good fit. I came on a visit and loved it."

As do all Vanderbilt freshmen, Hasty lives in The Commons, the university's residential community for first-year students. "I'm in a triple," she says of the accommodations. "Both of the other girls are from here, too. One of them is a soccer player, and the other one went to school with my boyfriend in high school. It was just a crazy thing, but we all wound up blending perfectly."

Hasty is majoring in child development, so being housed on the Peabody campus in The Commons is a bonus. "My classes are about a five-minute walk from my door." She has spent summers teaching gymnastics to preschoolers. "I love children. I'd love to do some kind of family counseling or something in that area," she says of life after Vanderbilt.

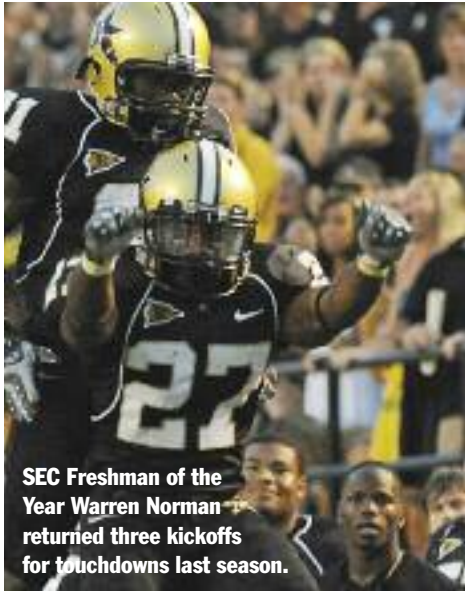
Life close to home has worked out well, too. She has the out-of-the-nest space she wanted and more. "It's been really good," she says. "It's also been nice on weekends to be able to go home right down the road."

Weekend trips home are few and far between this spring, however, as track and field is in full swing. "In high school there was some indoor competition, but not much. In college you have indoor and outdoor. They back up to each other. We came back from Christmas break a few days early and had our first meet that next weekend. For the most part, we're traveling almost every weekend." ▼



Pole-vaulter Alyson Hasty was determined not to attend Vanderbilt because it's so close to home—but sometimes life has other plans.





**SEC Freshman of the Year Warren Norman returned three kickoffs for touchdowns last season.**

JOHN RUSSELL

## 2010 Football Preview

Admittedly, a 2–10 record with no conference wins is a disappointing football season. That's how Vanderbilt finished the 2009 season. It would be easy enough to think that the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train. With a little luck, though, that light is a beacon urging the Commodores to stay on track. Good things are just down the line.

Three members of last season's freshman class earned All-SEC honors.

Warren Norman, a running back and kick returner, was named to the Freshman All-

SEC team as a kick returner and voted SEC Freshman of the Year by the league's coaches. He set an SEC freshman record with 1,941 all-purpose yards, led the league with 161.8 all-purpose yards per game, and returned three kickoffs for touchdowns. He also was named to the All-SEC second team as a return specialist. His freshman numbers eclipsed those of Herschel Walker, which had stood since 1981. Norman was Vanderbilt's leading rusher with 783 yards.

Kicker Ryan Fowler was a unanimous selection to the Freshman All-SEC team. He tied a Vanderbilt single-season record with 16 field goals, converting 11 of his final 12 attempts. He nailed a career-long 47-yarder against Kentucky. Ryan Seymour joined Fowler and Norman on the Freshman All-SEC team as a left tackle.

Three more Commodores were named to the Coaches' All-SEC second team. Chris Marve, a sophomore, was named to the list as a linebacker, and senior Myron Lewis earned a spot as a defensive back. Senior Brett Upson was named as a punter.

"I'm really pleased for all of them," says Head Football Coach Bobby Johnson. "Warren just put together a fantastic season as a freshman, and Myron had a fine year and tremendous career. I'm also glad Chris was

recognized for the great year he put together at linebacker. Finally, I'm thankful the coaches appreciated how effective Brett was this season as our punter."

Thirty-seven Commodores were named to the SEC 2009 Fall Academic Honor Roll. Alabama and Georgia followed close behind with 31 each. "I am extremely pleased that Vanderbilt football players, and all of our Commodore student athletes, continue to be academic leaders in the SEC," Johnson says. "Our university places the utmost importance on academic success—and, ultimately, graduation—by its student athletes."

The team picked up 24 players in the 2010 signing class on National Signing Day in February—potentially the most talented group of signees in Johnson's tenure as Vanderbilt's head coach. "Our staff thinks this is a deep and talented class who will continue to improve our program," says Johnson. "I'm very pleased with who we signed and how we successfully addressed certain position needs."

A junior-college transfer has been added to the mix at quarterback. Jordan Rodgers comes to Vanderbilt by way of Butte College in Oroville, Calif., where he led the Roadrunners to the junior college national championship. One of his brothers, Aaron, is quarterback for the NFL Green Bay Packers.

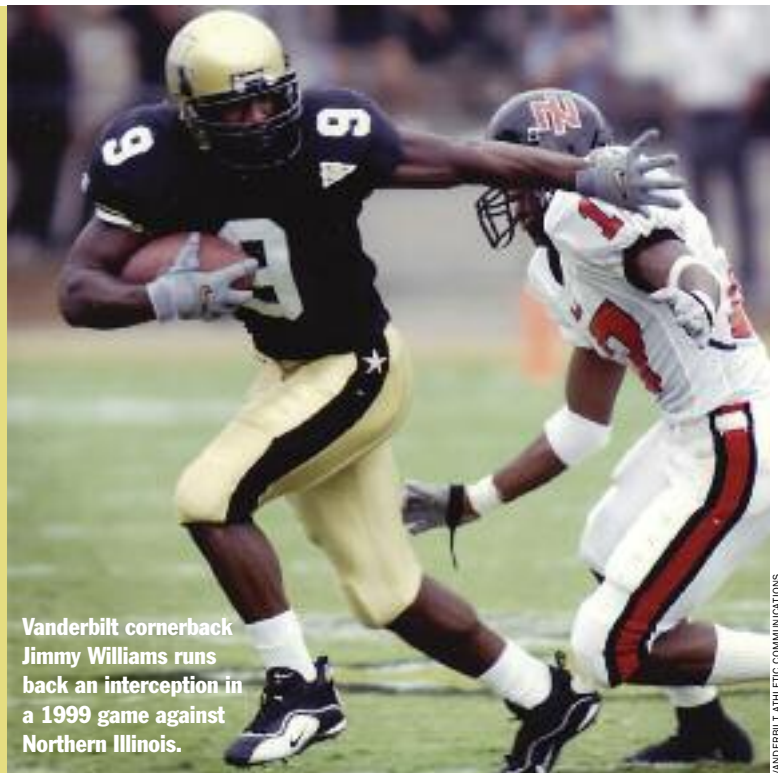
## Where are they now?

**Jimmy Williams, BS'01**, retired from professional football last June. He spent his years in the NFL as a cornerback and return specialist with the San Francisco 49ers and the Seattle Seahawks. During that time, and since, he has donated his time and resources to the youth of Baton Rouge, La., through the Jimmy Williams Intercepting Our Youth Foundation. He and his wife, Chandra, started the foundation in 2004 with the goal of awarding five scholarships to high school students in the Baton Rouge area. "We don't look for the top-tier kids," he says. "We look for the kids who aren't at the top of their class, but are trying to do the right thing." In addition to awarding scholarships, the foundation contributes to the community by donating school supplies, hosting summer youth camps focused on health and wellness, and other activities. Williams' time at Vanderbilt prepared him well for his philanthropic efforts. During his matriculation he worked with the Charles



**Williams and his wife, Chandra, flank the 2009 scholarship recipients.**

Davis Foundation and the Backfield in Motion program, both of which were started by Vanderbilt alumni to encourage at-risk youth in the Nashville area. "We don't really do a lot to get noticed," he says. "We just do what we can because it is the right thing."



**Vanderbilt cornerback Jimmy Williams runs back an interception in a 1999 game against Northern Illinois.**

VANDERBILT ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS



# Sports Roundup

## Lacrosse: Team Ranks High in Preseason

*Lacrosse Magazine* has ranked the Commodores No. 11 in the nation in a preseason pick. Last year's team had a 10–7 season and advanced to the NCAA tournament for the third consecutive year. Eleven of 12 starters return.

## Soccer: Three Earn All-SEC Honors

Senior Megan Forester, junior Molly Kinsella and freshman Chelsea Stewart were named to the All-Southeastern Conference team as voted by the league's coaches. Forester, a four-year starter, earned first-team honors as a defender. It was her first league recognition during her collegiate career. Kinsella earned her third honor in the three years she has started for the Commodores. The midfielder was named second-team All-SEC and led the team in scoring and assists. Stewart was named to the SEC All-Freshman team. She started in 17 of the team's 19 regular-season games. The Commodores finished with an 11–8–1 record.

## Bowling: Snow Doesn't Halt Hot Start

The Smyrna Bowling Center, home lanes for the Commodores, suffered extensive damage when the roof collapsed under the weight of snow and ice in late January, just days before the team was to leave for a major tournament in St. Louis. The team was able to schedule practice times at lanes in nearby Columbia and Antioch. Vanderbilt went on to dominate the field at the McKendree Baker Challenge and won its third championship of the spring season. The Smyrna facility was expected to be repaired and ready for the Music City Classic, an annual collegiate event hosted by the Commodores in mid-March.

## Baseball: Pitchers Named Preseason All Americans

Sophomore right-handed pitchers Sonny Gray and Jack Armstrong were named to *Baseball America's* preseason All-America teams. Gray was named to the second team, and Armstrong was a third-team selection. Gray finished last season with a 5–1 record, 4.3 ERA, logging 72 strikeouts in 58.2 innings en route to All-American honors. Armstrong performed well last summer with the Cape Cod Baseball League's Wareham Gatemen with a 4–1 record and 2.57 ERA. He was named to the Cape Cod All-Star team and received the Wareham Albert Bigelow Award for most outstanding pitcher.

## Cross Country: Women Finish Strong in 2009

The Commodores ran to a fifth-place finish at the NCAA South Regional Championships in November, equaling the team's best finish in the program's 27-year existence. Vanderbilt defeated four SEC teams in the competition, including host Alabama, Auburn, Mississippi State and Ole Miss. "This season has been about the team," said Coach Steve Keith, "and how we can position ourselves to move the program forward."

**Commodore defender Mary Rachel Reynolds cuts off an LSU player in a 2–1 overtime loss at the Vanderbilt Soccer Complex.**

# Collective Memory

Vanderbilt's roots revealed

## The School of Country Life

*In Bruce Payne's vision of Peabody College, milk cows, fruit trees and students all thrived.* By PAUL K. CONKIN

**G**EORGE PEABODY COLLEGE for Teachers, which opened on its present-day campus in 1914 after a series of previous incarnations dating from 1785, had two related missions. One was to provide a graduate-level education for Southern teachers, the other to improve country life in the South.

This second mission, now all but forgotten, explains why the first classroom buildings on the new campus were for home economics and industrial arts. It also explains why the first and most eminent professor was the leading horticulturalist in the United States. By 1915 vegetable gardens, chicken coops and a barn occupied the eastern part of the campus, while the latest farm machinery was on display in the basement of the Home Economics Building.

Early plans for the new Peabody coincided with a national concern about the eroding quality of life in rural America, especially in the most rural part of America, the backward South. By 1900 rural Americans were steadily lagging behind urban areas—in income, health, education, transportation and cultural opportunities. To deal with this problem, Liberty Hyde Bailey, dean of the College of Agriculture at Cornell University, organized a Country Life Association that sponsored country life conferences throughout the country. These helped persuade President Theodore Roosevelt to appoint a Country Life Commission in 1908, which issued a long analysis of rural problems and proposed dozens of reforms.

One of these reforms involved rural schools, which had failed to relate directly to the way people lived. They had not emphasized agricultural and country life subjects. The commission recommended that rural schools should become community centers and teach courses on agriculture, home economics,

as a special agent to promote agriculture in the South. In pursuit of this goal, he began to appoint agents to work with individual farmers. Both the Department of Agriculture and the John D. Rockefeller-funded General Education Board (GEB) provided money for more and more such agents each year, until more than 500 extension agents were at work in Southern states by the time of Knapp's death in 1911. The success of these agents led Congress, in 1914, to pass the Smith–Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension Service, which soon supported farming and home demonstration agents in every rural county.

By 1914, the year Peabody opened for classes, Knapp was a hero in the South. Local Knapp Memorial societies had begun plans for a school of country life in his honor. Wallace Buttrick, the executive secretary of the GEB and one of the greatest benefactors of both Vanderbilt and Peabody, had already

decided that Peabody was the perfect location for such a school. In 1913 during a final, desperate effort to raise a million dollars for the new campus, Buttrick's GEB donated \$250,000 to fund a Knapp School of Country Life.

No one was more enthusiastic about such a school than Bruce Payne, a close friend of Buttrick and first president of the new Peabody. Payne was a prominent educator with a Ph.D. from Columbia Teachers College. He, like one of his teachers, John Dewey, wanted schools to become change agents in rural communities.

Payne came to Peabody from the Univer-



health and sanitation. This agenda became, in effect, a mission statement for the new Peabody.

The commission also recommended increased extension work to aid farmers and homemakers. This was already under way in the South, thanks largely to the work of Seaman A. Knapp. A farmer, clergyman, and second president of Iowa Agricultural College (now Iowa State University), Knapp moved to Louisiana in 1885 to help develop a new, scientific rice culture. To induce farmers to adopt new methods, he set up some successful demonstration farms. In 1904 the federal Department of Agriculture appointed him





**Left: Until the late 1950s, Peabody College's Knapp Farm was known for its herd of prize, purebred Holsteins. Above and right: Both indoor and open-air classrooms covered topics from crop maintenance to roosters.**

sity of Virginia, where he was a professor of psychology and secondary education. The GEB, which paid his salary, funded one professor in each of several Southern universities to help improve secondary schools and country life. At Virginia, Payne began a co-educational summer school, organized the first university conference on country life, and invited Liberty Bailey to address such a conference in 1908.

Peabody never organized a formal school of country life—no department, no separate faculty. In the early years it awaited expected funds from the Knapp Memorial societies to fund a country life building. Only meager funds came in, and these went into a new demonstration farm, appropriately named Knapp Farm. But even without an organized school, Peabody abundantly fulfilled the goals of the country life movement, and in four areas: agriculture, home economics, industrial arts and public health. Payne simply announced, in early catalogs, that all the courses in these fields, plus Knapp Farm, constituted a school of country life.

The three most eminent professors of the early Peabody College well served the country life cause. Kerry Davis, hired two years before classes opened, was a Ph.D. student of Liberty Hyde Bailey at Cornell. An expert on



orchards, Davis was author of a dozen books and articles. He headed the agriculture department until his death in 1936.

In 1915, Peabody hired Lewis C. Gray, a recent Ph.D. graduate from the premier program in agricultural economics at the University of Wisconsin. He remained only three years, but would eventually complete a classic two-volume history of agriculture in the South, head the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the 1920s, and chair a famous committee on farm tenancy during the New Deal era.

For the critical field of health education, Payne hired Fletcher Bascom Dresslar. In addition to lending expertise in health education, Dresslar became the leading national expert on school design.

During the first full academic year, Peabody listed 18 courses in agriculture, 11 in agriculture economics, 11 in health education, and six in rural education. An ever greater array of courses was listed in home economics and industrial arts. During the first summer 113 students took courses in agriculture, 308 in home economics. By then donors had funded 20 country life scholarships.

In the absence of a country life building, Peabody most emphasized its Knapp demonstration farm. Payne and Davis loved the farm, which was located on Mill Creek, northwest of the present Nashville International Airport. A small Knapp Memorial gift, plus two state appropriations, helped pay for more than 300 acres of land.

Davis planted 25 acres in a model orchard. The farm experimented with every crop that would grow in Tennessee and soon accumulated a herd of purebred Holsteins. During the first few years, the farm attracted visitors from all over the South. It offered jobs for students and provided healthy food for the college cafeteria. But the demonstration value of the farm soon declined, as state experiment stations and the Extension Service assumed its role. By the 1930s the dairy operation alone remained viable.

The recreational value of the farm, however, endured until World War II. In 1922 the College, in a bit of indulgence, built a clubhouse on Elm Hill Pike, adjoining Knapp Farm. It had a large dining space, outdoor fireplaces and meeting rooms. Students and faculty scheduled parties and picnics every weekend and, as Payne desired, were able to explore the wonders of Knapp Farm. The fare for city streetcars that ran by the club was only a nickel. But after the war, with no more streetcars, the club fell into disrepair and was rarely used.

By 1925 the GEB recognized that the land-grant universities were better equipped to aid the rural South than Peabody. It urged Peabody to drop increasingly ill-attended courses in agriculture, but to no avail. Payne and Davis would not let go of their early dreams.

When Davis, his dearest friend, died in 1936, a sorrowful Payne decided not to replace him. This ended instruction in agriculture at Peabody. For years no one but Payne had referred to a school of country life. Payne himself died in 1937. Only Knapp Farm remained as a reminder of the visions of 1914. A financially challenged Peabody auctioned its valuable dairy herd in 1959 and sold the whole farm in 1965 for an even \$1 million. ▼

# Bright Ideas

“Where did employers get the idea they owned their employees’

## In Business, Poaching Allowed

1. AMONG BUSINESS leaders it's generally accepted that “poaching” or hiring a competitor’s employees violates an unwritten rule of business and may be unethical. But a new research paper concludes that as long as their actions are not deceptive or illegal, companies that intentionally identify, contact and offer employment to a rival firm’s employees are within the bounds of ethical behavior.

In “The Ethics of Lateral Hiring,” a Vanderbilt professor who specializes in strategic human-resource management suggests that the practice of “poaching” other companies’ employees should be an accepted or even encouraged form of business competition.

Companies that declare an ethical breach following the loss of an employee to a rival are claiming ownership of employees in a way that harkens back to feudalism and indentured servitude, says Tim Gardner, associate professor of management at Vanderbilt’s Owen Graduate School of Management.

“When my colleagues and I started this project, the first questions we tried to address



RICHARD COOK

were: Where did employers get the idea they owned their employees’ energies, efforts and human capital? And why does that line of thinking continue today?” Gardner says.



Gardner

Based on the authors’ review of historical and contemporary accounts of the employment relationship, they concluded that modern employers don’t generally believe they “own” their employees. But by suggesting, even subtly, that lateral hiring is unethical, employers are misusing ethics to try to prevent rivals from using a common, fair and competitive business practice, the study says.

Instead, responsibility for entertaining or rejecting an outside offer rests with the

employee in question, the authors suggest. Only employees can determine whether, for example, a current employer provides a collaborative environment or whether they have reaped the benefits of educational and training opportunities and owe their current employer more time.

“Another tactic is the so-called ‘gentleman’s agreement’ among firms that discourages lateral hiring. That is not much different from gas stations on the same street corner agreeing to keep the price of gas high,” Gardner says. Informal agreements not to hire each others’ employees benefit the colluding employers to the detriment of the employees. Because the employees are not party to these agreements yet are affected by them, the practice is clearly unethical, the authors say.

Gardner and his colleagues point out such agreements also may be illegal. In June 2009 the U.S. Department of Justice opened an investigation of Google, Yahoo!, Apple, Genentech and others for allegedly agreeing not to purposefully target and recruit each other’s employees.

The paper is to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Business Ethics Quarterly*. Co-authors with Gardner are Jason Stansbury of Calvin College in

Grand Rapids, Mich., and David Hart from the Marriott School at Brigham Young University.

Find out more:  
<http://snipurl.com/vu-poach>

## Physicists Measure Material Hotter Than the Sun

2. IT’S THE HOTTEST temperature ever achieved in a laboratory: 250,000 times hotter than the heart of the sun. Three Vanderbilt physicists are members of the scientific team that has reported creating an exotic state of matter with a temperature of 4 trillion degrees Celsius. The new temperature measurement has strengthened the physicists’ conviction that they have managed to recreate the quark-gluon plasma (QGP), a state of matter that may have existed fractions of seconds after the Big Bang.

Scientists produced this super-heated state of matter by accelerating gold nuclei to nearly the speed of light in opposite directions and then colliding them. Their work took place in the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) at Brookhaven National Laboratory, the largest particle accelerator in the world dedicated to nuclear physics research.

The Vanderbilt scientists involved are Victoria Greene,



energies, efforts and human capital? And why does that line of thinking continue today? ”

—PROFESSOR TIM GARDNER

professor of physics and executive dean in the College of Arts and Science; Charles Maguire, professor of physics; and Julia Velkovska, associate professor of physics. For the past nine



DANIEL GREENE



MAGUIRE



VELKOVSKA

years, they have played a key role in the design and operation of PHENIX, the largest of the four detectors positioned around the accelerator's 2.4-mile circumference. The new results were announced Feb. 15 at the annual meeting of the American Physical Society in New York.

"The temperature measurement was made at PHENIX by measuring the photons, the light particles, that were created with the plasma and escaped without interacting with other particles," says Greene. Scientists figured out a way to separate the primordial photons from those coming from more

mundane sources by comparing the photons produced in the collisions of the gold nuclei with those produced in simple collisions between two protons.

RHIC scientists don't know the exact temperature at which the protons and neutrons in atoms "melt" into their constituent parts, quarks and gluons. But they do think it is considerably below 4 trillion degrees. The new measurement increases their confidence that the matter they are creating and studying is indeed the QGP.

Their observations of the most primordial of all primordial soups is improving scientists' understanding of the "strong force," the force that acts within the nucleus of the atom and holds it together. Originally, they had predicted that the QGP would act like a gas, with all the particles moving independently. They were surprised to find that the quarks appear to be bound

together in a way similar to the molecules in a liquid. This is forcing theoreticians back to their drawing boards.

Increased knowledge about the nature of the QGP can also improve cosmologists' understanding of the origin of the universe. For the first few microseconds after the Big Bang, cosmologists calculate that temperatures were so hot that a quark-gluon plasma should have formed. However, the universe immediately began to expand and cool. As it cooled below the melting point of protons and neutrons, these particles began forming much like rain drops condensing out of steam.

Brookhaven officials have announced that they will be upgrading RHIC during the next five years to get better measurements of the QGP's temperature, viscosity and other basic properties. Greene, Maguire and Velkovska continue to participate in the RHIC collaboration and have also joined a scientific team using one of the detectors on the new Large Hadron Collider, the world's most powerful particle accelerator, operated by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland. Here they hope to study the behavior of the quark-gluon plasma at even more extreme temperatures. They

are also creating a control room at Vanderbilt where they can monitor the quality of the data and analyze results in near real time.

## Sexual Parasite Sheds Light on Disease Treatments

3 ABOUT 100 MILLION years ago, the bacterium *Wolbachia* came up with a trick that has made it one of the most successful parasites in the animal kingdom: It evolved the ability to manipulate the sex lives of its hosts.

"When it developed this capability, *Wolbachia* spread rapidly among the world's populations of insects, mites, spiders and nematodes, producing the greatest pandemic in the history of life," says Seth Bordenstein, assistant professor of biological sciences, who is studying the relationship between this parasitic bacteria and *Nasonia*, a genus of small wasps that preys on various species of flies.

Bordenstein is a member of the *Nasonia* Genome Working Group, a collaboration of scientists who published the complete genomes of three species of *Nasonia* in the Jan. 15 issue of the journal *Science*. The group identifies several genes that the wasps appear to have picked up from the bacteria.



Simulation of subatomic particles that are created when gold nuclei collide in the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider.

This new genetic information has allowed Bordenstein to identify one of the key tools in the bacterium's bag of tricks. It causes a gene in the wasp's immune system to produce less of the protein responsible for detecting bacterial intruders and issuing the chemical alarm signal that activates the wasp's various defense mechanisms. This hijacking of the immune system allows the bacterium to invade the bodies of its hosts with relative impunity, he proposes.

Exactly how the bacterium alters its hosts' reproductive systems to its advantage remains a matter for future study. But scientists have identified the bacterium's basic strategies. Depending on its host, the bacterium either:

- Kills infected males;
- Feminizes infected males so they develop as females or infertile pseudo-females;
- Induces parthenogenesis (the reproduction of infected females without males); or
- Makes the sperm of infected males incompatible with the eggs of uninfected females or females infected with a different *Wolbachia* strain.

*Wolbachia* favors female over male offspring because they are present in mature eggs, but not in mature sperm. As a result, only infected females pass on the infection to their offspring. "This makes them the ultimate feminist weapon," says Bordenstein.

Although the bacterium's parasitism is limited to arthropods—animals with exoskeletons instead of backbones—its prevalence has a major impact on the biosphere. According to



**Seth Bordenstein's work could help lead to ways to fight human diseases spread by insects.**

one study, more than 16 percent of insect species in South and Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean Islands and southern Florida are infected, and as many as 70 percent of all insect species are potential hosts.

Recognition of *Wolbachia's* capabilities has made it a promising candidate for genetic engineers who are looking for ways to fight human diseases spread by insects. "Once we understand how *Wolbachia* works, we should be able to add some genes that allow us to control insects that vector human diseases like malaria and dengue fever," says Bordenstein. Several research projects supported by the Gates Foundation and the National Institutes of Health are pursuing this idea.

Although the ubiquitous bacteria cannot trick the human immune system, it does have an adverse impact on human health. For example, it infects many species of nematodes, including the filarial nematodes that infect more than 200 million people worldwide, causing debilitating inflammatory diseases such as river blindness and elephantiasis.

During the past 10 years, scientists have realized that it is actually the bacteria, not the nematode, that are responsible for most symptoms produced by these illnesses. Although *Wolbachia* can only survive about three days in the human body,

the parasitic nematodes act as a continuing source of the bacteria that cause most of the damage. This surprising insight has improved the treatment of these illnesses: They are now treated with an antibiotic that kills the bacteria and is less toxic than anti-nematode medications.

Bordenstein's research was supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, and the genome sequencing was funded by the National Human Genome Research Institute.

**Find out more:** <http://bordensteinlab.vanderbilt.edu>

## Collaboration Advances Sepsis Detection and Management

**4** WHEN JASON Martin gives a talk about his research, he begins with the story of Mariana Bridi da Costa. The Brazilian supermodel died from severe sepsis after amputation of her hands and feet failed to stop its spread.

Martin, a fellow in allergy, pulmonary and critical care medicine, is part of a Vanderbilt interdisciplinary team that offers a high-tech approach to combating this deadly illness, one of the top 10 causes of death

in the United States.

The team, which includes clinicians and informatics experts from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and computer scientists from Vanderbilt's Institute for Software Integrated Systems (ISIS) in the School of Engineering, has developed what it believes is the first real-time system for sepsis detection.

"This is an effort to use the power of informatics to help us move from reactive to proactive medical treatment by creating tools to support the use of evidence-based clinical guidelines," says Peter Miller, director of the Vanderbilt HealthTech Laboratory.

Miller decided to focus on sepsis because it is common, deadly, expensive and treatable. Sepsis is triggered when bacteria invade the body from outside through wounds or IV lines. The bacterial infection overstimulates the body's immune system, setting off a cascade of inflammatory and abnormal clotting responses that can lead to organ failure and death.

When Miller and ISIS Director Janos Sztipanovits compared notes, they realized that computer-modeling tools developed by ISIS offered a chance for collaboration. But the \$360,000-plus sepsis project required creating a common vocabulary and knowledge base among the



**Jason Martin (left), Michael Hooper and Liza Weavind are using the power of informatics to combat sepsis, a deadly illness that occurs when a bacterial infection overstimulates the body's immune system.**



team members. ISIS researchers spent two weeks at the hospital to familiarize themselves with the clinical environment.

The first part of the project involved the development of an automated early detection system that can alert doctors that a patient may be developing sepsis. The doctors came up with a formula involving patient temperature, heart rate, respiration rate and white blood count.

Currently the alerts appear on “patient dashboards” displayed on ICU workstations. In the future developers hope to add the capability of displaying the alert on doctors’ cell phones.

“Even a few years ago, we couldn’t have done a project like this because it makes decisions based on information stored on different systems that could not communicate effectively in real time,” says Ed Shultz, director of information technology integration. Patient temperature and respiratory data are handled by one system, for instance, while another handles laboratory test results. So a major technical challenge was building pipelines between the different systems and getting them to “play nicely” with each other.

Creating the decision-management system presented a different kind of problem. “It’s not easy to convert medical protocols into ones and zeros because a lot of nuance and judgment is involved,” says Martin. The ISIS team proposed breaking down guidelines into a series of independent processes that can take place sequentially or simultaneously.

“This really captures the way doctors work,” Martin says. “If we see low blood pressure, then we think of one set of treatments. If we see low blood

sugar, then we think of another set. If we see the two together, then we consider a third set of possible measures we can take.”

Graduate student Janos Mathe and colleagues developed a special modeling language specifically for clinical decision-making. “Although the language is specific to sepsis management, we made the underlying technical infrastructure so general that it can model virtually any medical protocol,” Mathe says. The team already has begun applying it to a second problem, treatment of chronic heart failure.

“A key message of this project is that collaboration is very important in addressing these kinds of problems,” says Miller. “When people from different disciplines come together, they produce positive outcomes.”

## A Gift from the Sea: World Peace

**5** ONE OF THE BEST ways the world can promote peace and stability is to expand commercial nuclear power based on the extraction of uranium from the ocean, contends Frank Parker, an internationally recognized expert in remediation of radioactively contaminated soil and water. At a meeting held at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican last fall, Parker explained how some of the estimated 4.5 billion tons of uranium dissolved in the world’s oceans might be extracted to provide a virtually inexhaustible supply of fuel for nuclear reactors.

The subject of the conference, which was jointly spon-

sored by the academy, the Ettore Majorana Foundation and Centre for Scientific Culture, and the World Federation of Scientists, was how science can be used to further world peace. Control of resources such as water and oil is widely recognized as a major cause of war.

Nuclear power is one of the few technologies capable of providing the amount of electricity that will be required at a reasonable cost, says Parker, who is Distinguished Professor of Environmental and Water Resources Engineering.



According to the World Nuclear Association, commercial nuclear reactors in the United States are currently producing electricity for slightly more than 2 cents per kilowatt-hour—less than coal, natural gas or oil-fired



generators. Japanese experiments have demonstrated the feasibility of seawater extraction of uranium and indicate that doing so could produce uranium at twice the cost of mining the ore. The cost of uranium is about half the total cost of nuclear fuel, so such a doubling would add only about 5 percent to the price of the electricity it produces. Even when decommissioning and waste disposal costs, which add about 15 percent, are included, the overall cost of the electricity remains

highly cost effective. In addition, nuclear power has an extremely low carbon footprint—equivalent to that of solar, wind and hydrothermal power.

Parker offers straightforward solutions to two major issues surrounding nuclear power: proliferation potential and waste disposal.

Spent fuel removed from commercial reactors is highly radioactive, so it is extremely difficult for terrorists to extract bomb-grade material from it. The risk of proliferation comes primarily from the reprocessing and recycling of spent fuel.

Recycling is advocated as a way to expand limited uranium resources because it can squeeze 50 times more energy from a ton of uranium when used with proven breeder-reactor technology. Moving to seawater extraction, however, provides enough uranium to support a major expansion of nuclear power without recycling.

Parker also turns to the ocean for disposal, favoring disposal in deep-seabed sediments. “A major international study about 25 years ago looked into deep-sea and other disposal methods. It confirmed the technical feasibility of this method, but the program was ended and sea disposal was banned for purely political reasons,” Parker says. Recent advances in deep-drilling technology in the oil industry means that the injection of immobilized wastes under thousands of feet of seawater and hundreds of feet of sediment several miles underground is a promising alternative.

Modeling, research and pilot-plant testing are needed to determine if commercial-scale extraction of uranium from seawater is feasible. ▼

# InClass

A spotlight on faculty and their work

## Vox Populi

For Jim Lovensheimer, popular culture has a lot to tell us about the world we live in. By JONATHAN MARX

EXPERIENCED IN THE CONTEXT of our day-to-day lives, pop music can seem ephemeral at best, crass at worst. It's what we hear blaring from the windows of passing cars, what kids listen to when they're getting ready to go out on a Friday night. Blair School of Music professor Jim Lovensheimer knows better. If there's one thing this musicologist wants his students to learn, it's that the music they've loaded onto their MP3 players—be it Taylor Swift or Ke\$ha or Vampire Weekend—is inextricably linked to a complex, endlessly fascinating cultural history that stretches across centuries and continents.

"I don't think of 'high' or 'low' culture in hierarchical terms," says Lovensheimer, who is assistant professor of music history and literature. "I think of it all as being very informative. We have learned that popular culture tells us much about ourselves, perhaps even more than 'high' culture."

At the heart of Lovensheimer's teaching is not just an eagerness to embrace all forms of cultural expression, but a drive to make real sense of them.

As a result, he has earned a reputation as an enthralling lecturer, in 2008 receiving both the Ellen Gregg Ingalls Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching at Vanderbilt and the Chancellor's Cup, which honors a Vanderbilt faculty member's contributions to under-

graduate student-faculty relationships.

"There's always a point to what he's saying," says Cynthia Cyrus, associate dean of the Blair School of Music and associate professor of musicology and affiliated faculty in women's and gender studies. "He doesn't just present



a set of facts, but facts tied together to make a bigger and more interesting picture."

Whether he's talking about 18th-century folk ballads, 19th-century minstrelsy, 20th-century classical music, or 21st-century hip-hop, Lovensheimer treats his course material

as a way of getting at the very essence of one's identity. "In my class on American music, we look at the whole expanse of music in this country and how it's related to everything from Supreme Court decisions to cultural trends and fads. My students may not expect to learn about *Plessy v. Ferguson* or *Brown v. Board of Education*, but these things and many others play into musical moments."

This all-encompassing view of history and culture figures just as strongly into his work as a researcher, which focuses on the American musical theater. To be published by Oxford University Press in August, Lovensheimer's book, *South Pacific: Paradise Rewritten*, explores the myriad ways in which Rodgers and Hammerstein's enduringly popular 1949 musical both embodied and responded to American attitudes about race, gender and colonialism in the postwar era. Already, Lovensheimer's work on this topic, which grew out of research he originally did for his dissertation, has earned attention and respect from his colleagues.

"He brings a compelling mixture of rigor and creativity to the research he does," Cyrus says, "and he's been able to bring old techniques to new repertoires. His work on Rodgers and Hammerstein draws on archival documents and in-depth analysis of compositional process. There is a respect for the music in that decision: The techniques one uses to study Beethoven can be used just





“My students may not expect to learn about *Plessy v. Ferguson* or *Brown v. Board of Education*, but these things and many others play into musical moments,” says Jim Lovensheimer, shown here with his faithful greyhound, Shoes.

as helpfully to understand the legacy of American musical theater.”

Lovensheimer’s forthcoming book is so compelling, in fact, that Oxford University Press has decided to use it to help launch a new scholarly series titled Broadway Legacies. “Because my book takes the approach of looking at this music in a broader context, it’s going to serve as a template for what the publisher would like the whole series to be,” he explains. “Other work out there deals with the theater in terms of source study and textual criticism, but I’m also looking at *South Pacific* as a cultural document. No prior works have actually put those two approaches together.

“This holistic approach is going to inform my next research project, which will be a biography of Oscar Hammerstein for the Broadway Legacies series. Where it will wind up, I don’t know. Once I start looking at his work, it may take on a life of its own.”

Not so long ago, musical theater was considered something of a redheaded stepchild in the academic world. In fact, Lovensheimer says, this still remains the case at some insti-

tutions around the country. “Musical theater has been thought of as frivolous because it’s commercial, it’s show business, and many people who do research in this area often feel that they don’t get institutional or peer support—none of which I feel. What I would like to leave with my work is the idea that the American musical theater provides us with a deeper understanding of who we are.

“Look at a modern-day musical like *Legally Blonde*,” he continues. “No one would take it seriously, and yet it’s a very problematic piece in the way it deals with gender and gay and lesbian issues. It’s very much a product of its time, and there’s much to be gleaned from looking at it.”

For Lovensheimer, who initially pursued a career as a performer and writer for the stage, academia has provided him with the ideal profession. “I’m very much a person of the theater, so being able to make that my central area of research and writing makes me very happy. I’ve always had this idea that somehow musicals are of their time and place in very specific ways, and my work has been

a constant revisiting of that idea.”

As a teacher Lovensheimer finds that constantly revisiting the curriculum is essential to keeping his classes meaningful both for his students and for himself. Since he first started teaching at Vanderbilt in 2002, he says, “I’ve become much more focused in what I try to accomplish in each class. When I started out I was trying to do everything, but I quickly realized that focus is the most important part of being good in the classroom. Every semester I reinvest myself in the material: I do more research, I add more readings. It is a continual process, which is part of the excitement of academia for me.”

Ideally, every undergraduate student takes at least one course during his or her college career that proves to be a life-changing experience. For Vanderbilt senior and Student Government President Wyatt Smith, Lovensheimer’s American Music Survey was that kind of class. He attributes this, in part, to the blend of passion and compassion that Lovensheimer routinely brings to the classroom. “He genuinely cares about his students,



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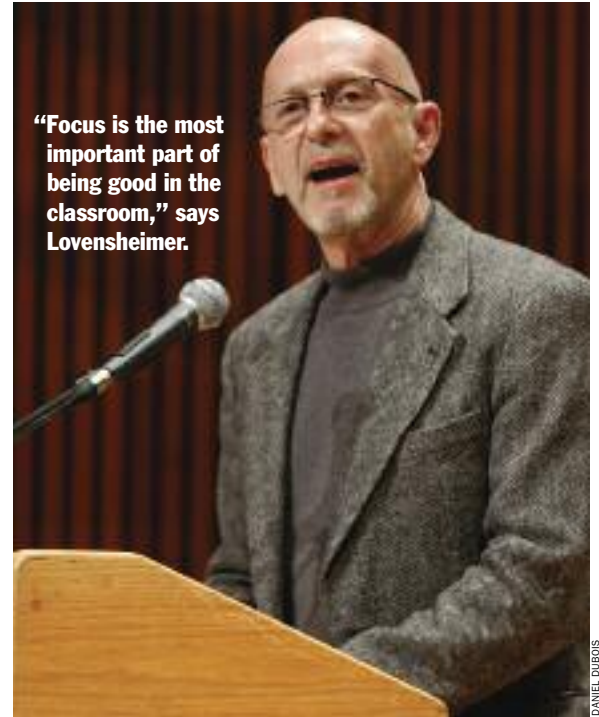
regardless of their backgrounds or interests, and that concern emanates from the way he carries himself,” Smith says. “For instance, he pledges to reply to every email you send him within 24 hours, regardless of how mundane.”

Just as significant, Smith adds, is Lovensheimer’s ability to discuss the course material in vivid, real-world terms. “He talks about some concepts that may seem distant, but he explains them in a way that connects very directly with our everyday experience of music. For me, as a student with a background in human and organizational development and political science, being able to learn about the ways in which music played a role in the Civil Rights Era has opened my view to a whole new dimension of that struggle. That’s something I had no awareness of, and it’s another building block in what I’m hoping to do when I graduate from school.”

Students respond not only to Lovensheimer’s engagement with the course material, but also to his candor. He makes a point, for instance, of being open about his sexuality because he believes it’s important to

create a comfortable environment when the classroom discussion turns to gay themes in the history of popular culture. “I’m not embarrassed by it, and I don’t want them to be uncomfortable. But it’s not an agenda—just because I’m mentioning the problems that a composer encountered as a result of his sexual orientation doesn’t mean I am promoting something; I’m trying to show that it’s an important aspect of the bigger picture.”

At the very end of the semester, Lovensheimer also reveals to his students that his career as a university professor was preceded by a battle with alcoholism that effectively destroyed his burgeoning success as a stage actor. “It’s a motivational talk about how they have powers of regeneration they didn’t know they have,” he explains. “I want to show them as an example how I have turned my life around, when 20 years ago no one would



**“Focus is the most important part of being good in the classroom,” says Lovensheimer.**

DANIEL DUBOIS

have thought it was possible. It’s my hope that when they’re faced with something challenging in their own lives, they’ll reflect back on this talk.” ▼

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# GOOD TO



VANDERBILT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



STEVE GREEN





By JOANNE BECKHAM, BA'62

*A focus on scholarship and service—not shenanigans—  
ensures the 21st-century Greek system's relevance.*

# BE GREEK



NEIL BRONKE

*“What is the worst fraternity on this campus? Who dropped a whole truckload of fizzies into the swim meet? Who delivered the medical school cadavers to the alumni dinner? Every Halloween the trees are filled with underwear. Every spring the toilets explode. ... As of this moment I'm putting them on Double Secret Probation!”*

—Dean Vernon Wormer  
in *Animal House*

**M**ovies like *Animal House* give parents nightmares and their entering college students unrealistic expectations about Greek life.

Take, for example, Annalise Miyashiro, a senior majoring in human and organizational development at Peabody. As she boarded the plane from Hawaii to Nashville in the summer of 2007, Miyashiro was concerned about pledging a sorority.

“I didn't know what to expect,” she recalls. “All I knew about sororities and fraternities came from movies and television, which did not present a positive picture of Greek life. I was worried about hazing.”

Miyashiro discovered a very different reality at Vanderbilt where, instead of hazing, she received gifts from her Alpha Omicron Pi sisters. Today the Chancellor's Scholar and former Vanderbilt cheerleader is president of the Panhellenic Council, which governs 12 member sororities on campus.

"Being Greek has become a big part of my Vanderbilt experience," she says.

Greek life is a tradition that predates the founding of the university (see sidebar). Today Vanderbilt is home to 20 national fraternities and 16 national sororities. About 43 percent of undergraduates, or 2,775 students, belong to Greek organizations. In January nearly 700 students pledged fraternities and sororities, slightly less than last year. More women than men—50 percent of all female undergraduates vs. 35 percent of males—are members of Greek organizations.

Membership in fraternities and sororities was very high in the late 1960s, when about 85 percent of Vanderbilt students were active members, says Sandy Stahl, BA'70, associate dean of students.

"The percentage began to drop off in the 1970s for a variety of reasons," Stahl says. "They included the Vietnam War, the anti-establishment movement, a changing Vanderbilt population that was more balanced between men and women, and the merger with Peabody. We have remained fairly consistent since the 1980s."

### Not Your Daddy's Greek Scene

The Greek organizations of today range from traditional fraternities and sororities governed by the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and National Panhellenic Council, to newer groups for African American, Latina and Southeast Asian students.

Historically African American fraternities joined the Vanderbilt community in 1971. Together with African American sororities, they come under the umbrella of the National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc. (NPHC). "They have been particularly important in supporting and retaining minority students," notes Kristin Torrey, director of Greek life.

Last November the IFC approved the formation of a Delta Lambda Phi colony at Vanderbilt. A fraternity for gay, bisexual, transgendered and progressive men, Delta



Coeds keep a stiff upper lip during this 1951 Greek gathering.

Lambda Phi was founded in 1986. Vanderbilt is also home to several religion-based fraternities and sororities, which are overseen by the Office of Religious Life. (For more, visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/religiouslife/groups.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/religiouslife/groups.html).)

"A fraternity is more than a short-term social club," says Charles Higgins, BE'71, MS'78, past alumni adviser to Phi Kappa Psi. "It is a lifelong participation in a national organization with larger ideals and values."

Those values include mutual support, academic achievement, involvement in the life of the university, and community service. Last year Greek organizations contributed \$342,536 to charitable organizations. Members performed 64,988 hours of community service, and 182 participated in Alternative Spring Break.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, belonging to a Greek organization doesn't translate to lower academic performance. Freshmen must have at least a 2.5 grade-point average to pledge, but the average for new members actually exceeds 3.2. Last spring 52 percent of Greeks made the dean's list. The average GPA of all Greek members was 3.42, while the average for all undergraduates was 3.35.

"Academic excellence may not be the first thing that comes to mind when people think of Greek organizations, but the data is clear," says Jim Lovensheimer, assistant professor of

music history and literature and the 2009 Greek Community Faculty Member of the Year (see "In Class," page 26). "In addition to substantial service within and outside Vanderbilt and a commitment to upholding the Fraternity and Sorority Standards, our Greek community also leads its peers in overall GPAs. This, perhaps more than any other factor of Greek life, demonstrates the high standards that our Greek community sets for itself and for the campus-wide community."

Greek organizations foster leadership, with many members holding offices in some of the 350 other campus organizations outside the Greek system. They include Wyatt Smith, president of the Vanderbilt Student Government Association and a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

"Both independents and Greeks play leadership roles on campus," says Kyle Southern, BA'07, MPP'09, an independent who was president of Interhall. While Greeks may dominate the social scene, sorority and fraternity parties are open to nonmembers, and non-Greek organizations also sponsor campus-wide social events.

Greeks are sometimes criticized for being too exclusive or even segregated. The Office of Greek Life doesn't keep racial statistics, but many chapters do have minority members.

"A lot of houses have minority members," says former IFC President Charles Kirby, a



senior majoring in mechanical engineering. “They include African Americans, Latinos, and Jewish and Middle Eastern students.”

The university also sponsors multicultural groups like Sigma Lambda Gamma (Gamma Sigma). A historically Latina-based national sorority, Gamma was established at Vanderbilt in 2007 “for women of all cultures,” according to its website.

Aspiring Greeks must have deep pockets. Dues range from \$550 to \$1,200 per semester for IFC men, from \$700 to \$1,000 for Panhellenic women, and \$70 to \$500 for National Pan-Hellenic Council members. Students may incur additional costs for meal plans, pictures, gifts, parties, T-shirts, etc. Members can use payment plans for dues, and individual chapters offer scholarships. Governing councils also have begun offering dues scholarships to allow more students the opportunity to have a Greek experience.

The Panhellenic Council tries to find a place for any woman who wants to pledge a Panhellenic sorority, and places about 80 to



JOHN RUSSELL

**Vanderbilt’s Greek triumvirate (left to right): Annalise Miyashiro, president of the Panhellenic Council; Patrick Seamens, president of the Interfraternity Council; and Emani Davis, president of the National Pan-Hellenic Council.**

85 percent of women who go through formal recruitment. Most of the other women withdraw, “usually because they were not asked back to their favorite sorority. Compared to other schools, that is very good,” Torrey states.

Not being accepted by a Greek organization could be one among many reasons why

some students drop out, says Frank Wcislo, associate professor of history and dean of The Commons. However, more than 98 percent of entering freshmen graduate from Vanderbilt—a remarkable statistic. In contrast, nearly 50 percent of all students nationwide drop out of college without earning a degree, according to the Center for the Study of College Student Retention (2008).

### Meshing Greek and Residential Life

Although some proponents of Greek life feared that The Commons—the residential system for first-year students that opened last year on the Peabody campus—would cause a decline in Greek membership, that hasn’t happened, say Torrey and Wcislo.

“The Commons creates a built-in community for freshmen on arrival and establishes another set of networks for them,” Wcislo says. “Many of those networks reach into Greek life and increase the social and intellectual diversity on campus.”

Because faculty members live at The Com-

## 36 Flavors of Greek

**G**reek Life at Vanderbilt, technically speaking, dates to the mid-1800s, when Delta Kappa Epsilon and Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternities established chapters at the University of Nashville, an early forerunner of Peabody College.

Within a few years of Vanderbilt’s founding in 1873, these two fraternities, plus seven others, joined the university community. Seven remain active at Vanderbilt today: Delta Kappa Epsilon, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Phi Delta Theta, Kappa Sigma, Sigma Nu, Alpha Tau Omega and Sigma Chi.

The university currently recognizes 20 national fraternities and 16 national sororities, representing the North American Interfraternity Conference (IFC), National Panhellenic Conference, National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc. (NPHC), and the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations.

### The 16 fraternities governed by the IFC are:

- Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi)**, founded at New York University in 1913; the Vanderbilt chapter, Tau, was established in 1929.
- Alpha Tau Omega (ATO)**, founded at Virginia Military Institute in 1865; the Vanderbilt chapter, Beta Pi, was established in 1889.
- Beta Chi Theta (Beta Chi)**, founded at the University of California-Los Angeles in 1999; the Vanderbilt chapter, Theta, was established in 2005.
- Beta Theta Pi (Beta)**, founded at Miami University of Ohio in 1839; the Vanderbilt chapter, Beta Lambda, was established in 1884.
- Delta Kappa Epsilon (Deke)**, founded at Yale University in 1844; the Vanderbilt chapter, Gamma, was established at the University of Nashville in 1847. It is the university’s oldest Greek organization.

- Delta Lambda Phi (DLP)**, for gay, transgendered and bisexual men, founded in Washington, D.C., in 1986; a Vanderbilt colony was established in 2010, with a full chapter anticipated by the end of the 2010–11 academic year.
- Kappa Alpha (KA)**, founded at Washington and Lee University in 1865; the Vanderbilt chapter, Chi, was established in 1883.
- Kappa Sigma (Kappa Sig)**, founded at the University of Virginia in 1869; the Vanderbilt chapter, Kappa, was established in 1877.
- Lambda Chi Alpha (Lambda Chis)**, founded at Boston University in 1909; the Vanderbilt chapter, Gamma Delta, was established in 1922.
- Phi Delta Theta (Phi Delt)**, founded at Miami University of Ohio in 1848; the Vanderbilt chapter, Tennessee Alpha, was established in 1876.
- Phi Kappa Sigma (Phi Kaps or Skulls)**, founded at the University of Pennsylvania in 1850; the Vanderbilt chapter, Alpha Iota, was established in 1902.
- Pi Kappa Alpha (Pike)**, founded at the University of Virginia in 1868; the Vanderbilt chapter, Sigma, was established in 1893.
- Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE, E’s)**, founded at the University of Alabama in 1856; the Vanderbilt chapter, Tennessee Nu, was established at the University of Nashville in 1857.
- Sigma Chi (Sigma Chis or Sigs)**, founded at Miami University of Ohio in 1855; the Vanderbilt chapter, Alpha Psi, was established in 1891.
- Sigma Nu**, founded at Virginia Military Institute in 1868; the Vanderbilt chapter, Sigma, was established in 1886.
- Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT)**, founded at the City University of New York in 1898; the Vanderbilt chapter, Alpha Gamma, was established in 1918.

*continued on next page*

mons with the students, the university now has more eyes and ears on the ground. Today's freshmen are stronger academically than ever before and more cognizant of their power in the Greek process, Wcislo says. "They are more activist in reporting hazing and more intolerant of pledge training," he notes.

Students like Miyashiro find that joining a fraternity or sorority gives them a home away from home in a supportive community with a group of friends that shares their values and interests. For many alumni, lifelong friendships began at "the house." Others fondly remember keg parties, road trips and pledge hazing as youthful rites of passage.

But the times, they are a-changin'—again.

Students at colleges and universities throughout the United States have died as a result of hazing and alcohol abuse in recent years. Universities and their administrators have been sued and charged with crimes as a result. National fraternal organizations have clamped down on local chapters, fearing lawsuits and cancellation of their liability insurance.

Although Vanderbilt has largely escaped terrible tragedies like those that have plagued other universities, students—both Greek and independent—have been involved in underage drinking, arrests and violence both on and off campus in the recent past.

Vanderbilt has the same high expectations for students whether they're Greek or independent. Everyone is held to the same standards.

### Probations and Suspensions

A number of incidents led the administration to take disciplinary action regarding some Greek organizations last year. During the 2008–2009 academic year, most fraternities—15 of the 17 Interfraternity Council (IFC) groups—and three sororities found themselves on social probation for at least part of the year. Activities where alcohol is present were restricted, and additional education and alcohol-free programs were required of the chapters. Sigma Phi Epsilon was suspended last spring for a variety of risk-management violations, and Phi Kappa Psi was suspended this fall for violating terms of their probation after a series of risk-management infractions.

Excessive consumption of alcohol directly contributed to the large number of probations, according to Dean of Students Mark Bandas. Violations of the hazing policy and the student honor code also were involved.

"Substance abuse, hazing, poor decision-making, inappropriate behavior and dishonesty have plagued the Greek community this year," wrote Director of Greek Life Kristin Torrey in the 2008–2009 annual report.



**The fraternity house of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, one of the oldest Greek organizations at Vanderbilt.**

"While the university environment is changing, the Greek community has held on to traditions and activities that are inconsistent with the mission of the institution. Behaviors once tolerated by students and their families are no longer tolerated."

Vanderbilt enforces a zero-tolerance policy on hazing, consistent with Tennessee state law. The university defines hazing as "any activity that subjects members to harassment, ridicule, intimidation, physical exhaustion, abuse or mental distress," and encourages students to report inappropriate behavior to the Office of Greek Life.

## 36 Flavors of Greek *continued*

Sororities joined the Greek community soon after the university began admitting women in 1892. Out of a need for housing and close friendships, these new female students established two local sororities: Phi Kappa Upsilon and Theta Delta Theta. Within 10 years those groups affiliated with the national organizations of Kappa Alpha Theta and Delta Delta Delta. Since that time 12 more National Panhellenic Conference organizations have established Vanderbilt chapters, 10 of which remain active on campus.

### Sororities governed by the Panhellenic Council are:

**Alpha Chi Omega** (Alpha Chi, A-Chi-O), founded at DePauw University in 1885; the Vanderbilt chapter, Zeta Omicron, was established in 1982.

**Alpha Delta Pi** (A D Pi), founded at Wesleyan College in 1851; the Vanderbilt chapter, Zeta Rho, was established in 1978.

**Alpha Omicron Pi** (AOPi), founded at Barnard College in 1897; the Vanderbilt chapter, Nu Omicron, was established in 1917.

**Chi Omega** (Chi-O), founded at the University of Arkansas in 1895; the Vanderbilt chapter, Sigma Epsilon, was established in 1954.

**Delta Delta Delta** (Tri-Delt), founded at Boston University in 1888; the Vanderbilt chapter, Delta Gamma, was established in 1911.

**Delta Gamma** (DG), founded at the Lewis School (Oxford, Miss.) in 1873; the Vanderbilt chapter, Eta Epsilon, was established in 2000.

**Kappa Alpha Theta** (Theta), founded at DePauw University in 1870; the Vanderbilt chapter, Alpha Eta, was established in 1904.

**Kappa Delta** (KD), founded at Longwood College in 1897; the Vanderbilt chapter, Beta Tau, was established in 1949.

**Kappa Kappa Gamma** (Kappa), founded at Monmouth College in 1870; the Vanderbilt chapter, Epsilon Nu, was established in 1924.

**Pi Beta Phi** (Pi Phi), founded at Monmouth College in 1867; the Vanderbilt chapter, Tennessee Beta, was established in 1940.

### Associate members of the Panhellenic Council are:

**Lambda Theta Alpha** (LTA), the first Latin sorority created in the U.S., was founded at Kean University in 1975; the Vanderbilt chapter, Gamma Beta, was established in 2001. It is a member of the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations.

**Sigma Lambda Gamma** (Gammas), "the largest, historically Latina-based national sorority with a multicultural membership ... in the United States," was founded at the University of Iowa in 1990; the Vanderbilt chapter, Gamma Delta, was established in 2007.



University officials and the Greeks themselves have taken steps to ensure such dangerous behavior doesn't continue. Chapter presidents and council officers have identified specific initiatives addressing alcohol abuse, drug abuse, eating disorders and mental health issues.

Last spring IFC created Delta Force, a task force for improving the recruitment process. Their recommendations were implemented in fall 2009. "We recognized that we needed to address the systemic elements behind the disciplinary issues, or have them addressed for us," says VSG President Wyatt Smith, leader of the task force.

As a result, fraternity rush has become more formal and structured, much like sorority rush. No longer do cars pull up to freshman residence halls on day one to take new students to illegal, off-campus fraternity parties. Chapters face a minimum fine of \$5,000 for hosting parties where alcohol is served during freshman orientation.

"After the orientation time period is over, first-year students are permitted to attend events where alcohol is present," Torrey says. "They should, of course, never be provided alcohol as they are not of legal drinking age." This year three fraternities and no sororities were placed on probation. "The culture really did change," says former IFC President Kirby.

"We used to say Vanderbilt was a 'work hard, play hard' university. Now it's 'work hard, play hard, be smart, be safe, be responsible.'"

Vanderbilt claims more than 25,000 living Greek alumni who have gone on to excel in politics, business, education, industry and technology, medicine, law, entertainment and sports. Most provide needed guidance and advice to their active chapters.

"A fraternity adviser can be a resource for the active chapter to connect to the larger fraternal organization," Higgins says. "He can help facilitate relations between the chapter and the university."

Many, if not most, alumni feel their involvement in Greek life was an important and positive part of their Vanderbilt undergraduate experience.

"Looking back at my undergraduate career, nothing defined my college experience or shaped my character more than involvement in the Greek community," says Andrew Wilson, BS'07, a young alumni trustee of the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust, an M.D. and M.B.A. candidate at Baylor College of Medicine, and a member of Alpha Tau Omega.

"Most Vanderbilt graduates who were members of a Greek organization would tell you that their experience broadened their collegiate experience tremendously," says Lawson C. Allen, BA'92, Sigma Chi International

**"We used to say Vanderbilt was a 'work hard, play hard' university. Now it's 'work hard, play hard, be smart, be safe, be responsible.'"**

— former IFC President Charles Kirby

Chapter Adviser of the Year in 2002.

"The friendships developed through such organizations run deep and in many cases last a lifetime. Furthermore, the leadership opportunities are abundant; in fact, many of Vanderbilt's most successful graduates around the world were members of fraternities and sororities during their undergraduate studies."

University administrators agree. "Men and women in fraternities and sororities are committed to their academics, volunteer time in the community, develop and strengthen their leadership skills, and form a campus network with other Greeks," says Torrey.

"The Greek community always has been, and will continue to be, an integral part of the undergraduate experience at Vanderbilt," Smith says. "The fundamental strength of the community remains." ▼

Find out more: [www.vanderbilt.edu/greek\\_life](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/greek_life)



Historically African American fraternities joined the Vanderbilt community in 1971 with the founding of a chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. By 1975 the university added several other African American fraternities and sororities. In 1990 these organizations formed the Black Greek Council, which became a chartered council under the National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc. (NPHC) in 1999.

**These fraternities are affiliated with the NPHC:**

Alpha Phi Alpha (Alphas), founded at Cornell University in 1906; the Vanderbilt chapter, Kappa Theta, was established in 1975.

Kappa Alpha Psi (Kappas or Nupes), founded at Indiana University in 1911; the Vanderbilt chapter, Nu Rho, was established in 1989.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. (Ques), founded at Howard University in 1911; the Vanderbilt chapter, Theta Beta, was established in 1971.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. (Sigmas), founded at Howard University in 1914; the Vanderbilt chapter, Alpha Gamma Alpha, was established in 1994.

**These sororities are affiliated with NPHC:**

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. (AKA), founded at Howard University in 1908; the Vanderbilt chapter, Eta Beta, was established in 1972.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. (Deltas), founded at Howard University in 1913; the Vanderbilt chapter, Mu Rho, was established in 1975.

Sigma Gamma Rho, founded in 1922 at Butler University; the Vanderbilt chapter, Sigma Delta, was established in 2009.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. (Zetas), founded in 1920 at Howard University; the Vanderbilt chapter, Omega Pi, was established in 2000.

# *Wandy* H*in* HOLLY





# WOOD

Starring William M. Akers, Hayley Dickson,  
Jeannette Francis, Tiffany Franklin, Sam Girgus,  
Sam Miller, Matt Shelton and Paul Young



by Cindy Thomsen



FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE.

Office is upscale. Cubicles and desks are scattered outside plush window offices.

Young men and women are scurrying about. Phones are ringing. There is a hubbub of voices in the background. The camera follows one young man carrying a take-out coffee and small sack. He enters one office and places the items on the desk. The agent in the office is on the phone, his back turned to the camera. The young man exits the office and is several steps away as we hear a loud scream from the office. The young man stops in his tracks.

AGENT (loud and angry)

What the @#\$\$ is this? I asked for a blueberry scone ... there are cranberries in this scone!  
What does it take to get a blueberry scone around here? Where's that intern???

The young man sighs and goes back into the office.

FADE TO BLACK.

## The Back Story

The lure of Hollywood is just as strong today as it was a century ago when motion picture production companies from New York and New Jersey moved west to take advantage of the warm, sunny weather. Vanderbilt alumni have always had a presence in Hollywood, from actress/singer Dinah Shore, BA'38, to Oscar-winning director Delbert Mann, BA'41 (*Marty*), to Oscar-winning screenwriter Tom Schulman, BA'72 (*Dead Poets Society*), to Fred Thompson, JD'67, who played the folksy district attorney on television's *Law and Order* before making a run for the presidency in 2008.

In the early days movie-making was much simpler: Actors, writers, producers, directors, cameramen, editors, and muscle to move the equipment were just about all that was necessary to take a production from the back lot to the big screen. Today, with the advent of special effects, international distribution, and as many cable channels as there are stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, opportunities abound. Finding them, however, can be tricky, and in Hollywood it's not always *what* you know, but rather *who* you know.

That's where Vandy-in-Hollywood—and Chad Gervich—come in.

## Scene One

Gervich knew from an early age that he wanted to work in television and film and was surprised that Vanderbilt had few affiliations with the local entertainment business.

"I loved Vanderbilt, but it was frustrating for me that this top-20 school in one of the most important entertainment cities in the country wasn't tapping into that industry," Gervich says. "There were multimillion-dollar musicians recording albums and multimillion-dollar videos being shot just blocks from campus, but there was little interaction between Vanderbilt and the entertainment industry."

After graduating from Vanderbilt in 1996, Gervich earned a master's degree from UCLA. His résumé includes writing and producing stints for the Fox Reality Channel, Fox TV, the E! and Style networks and Warner Bros. He is currently working on *The Wanda Sykes*



**Matt Shelton, a junior communications studies major from Springfield, Ill., interned last summer for the Gersh talent and literary agency in Beverly Hills, Calif. He hopes to become an agent himself.**

**M**ATT SHELTON LAUGHS as he recounts this story from his internship at The Gersh Agency in Beverly Hills, Calif. Shelton, a junior from Springfield, Ill., was a participant in Vandy-in-Hollywood, an internship program created by Chad Gervich, BA'96, to give Vanderbilt students aspiring to an entertainment career a leg up on their competition. Shelton's goal after graduation is to become an agent himself.

"Little details make the difference in being a good agent and a great agent," Shelton says. "The people there legitimately cared about teaching me; they just showed it in a different way. What's worse than getting yelled at is having someone roll their eyes and walk away. Yelling is their way of saying, 'We want to see you improve and do better.'"



**Vandy-in-Hollywood creator Chad Gervich on the set of *The Wanda Sykes Show*, for which he currently works as a producer. Gervich has worked in development and production at NBC Studios, Sony Pictures, CBS Productions and 20th Century Fox.**



HUGH HAMILTON

*Show*. His network of friends and colleagues in the business is large now, but it was years in the making.

“When I got to LA, I knew literally nobody,” Gervich says. “I just kept thinking that life would’ve been so much easier if there had been a network of people I could look up—friendly Vanderbilt faces who I could call and say, ‘Hey, I’m from Vandy, and I just moved here. Can I take you to dinner or lunch?’”

As his career progressed, so did the idea of creating a networking tool for Vanderbilt students interested in a Hollywood career. In 2006 Gervich returned to campus to introduce the Vandy-in-Hollywood program and to conduct a workshop for Sam Girgus, professor of English and the self-proclaimed “godfather of everything we do in film here at Vanderbilt.”

“I had a grant and some funds to bring Chad here for the workshop and to start talking to students about the program,” Girgus says. “I helped create an environment of interest in film that he was able to nurture.”

“ I just kept thinking that life would’ve been so much easier if there had been a network of people I could look up—friendly Vanderbilt faces who I could call and say, ‘Hey, I’m from Vandy, and I just moved here. Can I take you to dinner or lunch?’ ”

—Chad Gervich, BA’96

### Scene Two

Rich Hull, BA’92, is a 16-year veteran of the film and television business. The busy producer was one of the first people Gervich turned to for help in launching Vandy-in-Hollywood.

“Chad called me and said he wanted two

things,” Hull says. “He wanted my help in getting the program started, and he wanted my company to host an intern. I agreed to both.”

Like Gervich, Hull knew all too well the difficulties of launching a career in Hollywood.

“I started as an unpaid intern, like most people do, and it’s incredibly competitive,” Hull says. “I had three interviews for an unpaid internship, but that’s your path for getting your first real job in the business. What Chad and I want to do is take our collective experience and relationships in the business and lean on companies to give Vanderbilt students internships they never would be able to get on their own.”

While Gervich and Hull promoted the program in Hollywood, a different group was leading the charge in Nashville. Along with Girgus, the Vanderbilt connection includes Paul Young, director of Vanderbilt’s film studies program; William M. Akers, senior lec-



JOHN RUSSELL

**A producer of such movies as “*She’s All That*,” “*Tenure*” and “*Daddy Day Camp*,” Rich Hull, BA’92, helped launch Vandy-in-Hollywood to give Vanderbilt students a leg up in finding work in the entertainment business.**

turer in the theatre department; and Tiffany Franklin, assistant director of the Vanderbilt Career Center. Young and Akers promote the program in their classes and keep an eye out for suitable intern prospects, while Franklin helps take care of the logistics and paperwork.

Just wanting to work in Hollywood isn't enough to land one of these coveted spots. The best candidates are able to articulate exactly what type of career in the entertainment field they want—or at least think they want.

"We're looking for people who can be incredibly specific about their professional goals and what they want to do," Gervich says. "The interns who are chosen are the ones who come in and can say, 'I want to be a television writer on a half-hour comedy like *The Simpsons*' or 'My goal is to be a studio executive developing small, character-driven movies like *Precious*.'"

Gervich and Hull work to find an intern's dream job, but there are no guarantees. What is assured, though, is that the students will work long hours for no compensation and must pay all their own expenses. The payoff comes in receiving class credit and having a beefed-up résumé with bona fide work experience plus sterling references from some of Hollywood's biggest names, including NBC-Universal, CBS-Paramount, ABC Studios and IMAX.



Senior film studies major Jeannette Francis from Andover, Mass., worked last summer as an intern for Red Varden Studios, a film and television production company.

**FADE IN:**

**INT. OFFICE.**

Well-dressed young men and women are walking back and forth in front of a glassed-in office. The boss is sitting behind the desk.

**BOSS** (loudly)

Jeannette ... Jeannette! Come in here!

A young woman, dressed more casually than her colleagues, rushes into the office and stands with her back to the camera. Typical office noises in the background.

**BOSS** (yelling)

Chad Gervich gave you this bright recommendation, so I give you this great opportunity and you don't even bother to dress professionally!

He continues to berate the woman as the camera zooms out. We see the woman's shoulders shake. She is crying.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**T**HAT SCENE OCCURRED last summer on Jeannette Francis' third day on the job at Red Varden Studios in Hollywood.

"I started on a Thursday, and the boss was out that day and Friday, so everyone dressed casually," Francis says. "I just thought that was the office environment and showed up a little casual on Monday. I got yelled at, and it was very jarring, but it was great because I'm never going to show up to meet my boss for the first time unless I'm wearing the most professional attire possible."

Attitudes like Jeannette's are the reason that, in just three short years, employers are actually calling Gervich to request Vandy-in-Hollywood interns.

"We have a great reputation, and employers love to hire Vanderbilt kids for the summer," says Hull. "They show up on time, they do great work, they're smart and they're not knuckleheads. We want to keep that going."

### Scene Three

Several factors have contributed to Vandy-in-Hollywood's success, but one in particular must be the screening and interview process. Last year close to 50 students applied, but only 12 actually received internships. Chad interviews each candidate personally. Because of the caliber of Vanderbilt's interns, some companies now actually guarantee holding a spot for interns selected by Gervich.

"Chad looks for a good fit for their skill set and focus—which company or area of the entertainment industry they are most interested in," says Tiffany Franklin of the Vanderbilt Career Center. "We're also looking for dedication, passion, a willingness to work long hours, and an excitement about that world."

Once the students have been selected, Gervich and Hull speak to them via conference call—usually at the end of April before exams.

"We want to make sure they put their best





**Hayley Dickson created the internship program at Reveille, the independent Los Angeles production company responsible for *The Office*, *The Biggest Loser* and other popular programs. Vandy-in-Hollywood interns hired by Reveille are rotated through each of the company's four main departments, ensuring a comprehensive experience.**

foot forward, that they know what to expect, and have information about their jobs and housing and life in Los Angeles,” Franklin says. “They also get to meet each other and start forming their own Hollywood network before they even leave town.”

Each selected student receives a Vandy-in-Hollywood summer intern handbook, which includes such tips as, “Timing is everything in Hollywood. Projects fall apart all the time because one piece of an intricate puzzle didn’t happen on time. Understand this, and know that when you’re asked to do something, the default timeline is that it’s urgent.”

One goal of this handbook is to deconstruct any misconceptions the interns may have about working in the land of year-round suntans and red carpets.

“The public face of Hollywood is glamorous, but behind the scenes it’s a really hard, time-consuming, tough slog of a business,” says Hull. “We’re trying to help people crack that world because it’s so tough to get into. Even when I go to movie premieres, it seems sexy, but it’s a lot of hard work.”

Another factor in the program’s success

**“We’re looking for dedication, passion, a willingness to work long hours, and an excitement about that world,” says Tiffany Franklin, assistant director of the Vanderbilt Career Center. Franklin helps to prep selected interns for their experience on the West Coast.**

is the academic training they’ve received in the classroom. While Vanderbilt is not thought of as a “film school,” it provides training that some schools can’t offer.

“At some schools students are lucky to get to hold a camera by the time they’re a junior or senior,” says Paul Young, head of Vanderbilt’s film studies program. “Here we have fewer students, lots of equipment, and lots of space for editing and shooting and setting up lights. Our students have better opportunities right down the line.”



“ I want to make sure our interns have an incredible experience. They come here and dedicate their time and energy and work for free. It’s important to me that they learn something every day. ”

—Hayley Dickson, BS’05

Vanderbilt also offers an advanced production workshop, taught by William M. Akers, BS’78, in which students work on production teams with a division of labor resembling an independent studio production.

“Will instills an ethic of professionalism,” says Young. “He teaches them that it’s about being part of a team, and it’s about looking out for your own future because one has to get along in the field in order to get ahead at all. It really is an industry in which who one knows is as important as knowing your stuff.”

Scone and coffee-fetching aside, the interns actually do valuable work, and their contributions matter to their employers. It’s said everyone in Hollywood has a movie script in their back pocket. Reading those scripts is a typical intern chore.

“Agents don’t have time to read every single script, but when they hear of an open role, they need a quick summary of what that script is about,” Shelton says. “They delegate those scripts to interns. We read them and write a summary with character synopses—which we’re heavily critiqued on. My five hours of work translates into about five minutes for the agent.”

One of the most comprehensive internships is with Reveille, an independent production company responsible for some of today’s most popular television shows, including *The Office*, *The Tudors* and *The Biggest Loser*. Hayley Dickson, BS’05, is the acquisitions coordinator for Reveille’s distribution arm, Shine International. Dickson created Reveille’s program when she was the company’s internship coordinator. She takes the responsibility seriously because of her own meaningful internship when she was majoring in human and organizational development at Peabody.

Dickson’s program calls for Reveille to hire 12 interns three times a year. While at Reveille they rotate throughout each of the company’s four main departments—reality television, scripted television, business and legal operations, and international sales and distribution.

“I want to make sure our interns have an incredible experience,” Dickson says. “They come here and dedicate their time and energy and work for free. It’s important to me that they learn something every day. They’re exposed to all the different activities and truly see how an independent production company works.”

While she may be slightly biased, Dickson says the Vanderbilt interns are a special group.

“They are definitely a cut above the others and bring an incredibly different and fresh perspective,” she says. “Most of our interns come from California schools or from schools with big entertainment programs. The Vanderbilt students provide the kind of diversity that creates a much stronger team, and they become leaders early on in the process.”



## Scene Four

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. ALUMNI LAWN, VANDERBILT CAMPUS**

It is graduation day at Vanderbilt. Families are seated behind the students, who are dressed in their regalia. The stage in front of the students is full of dignitaries. The camera slowly zooms in on one young man seated with his fellow graduates. As we get closer, we hear the “buzz, buzz” of a cell phone set to vibrate. People turn to stare at the young man, who hurriedly locates his phone and turns it off.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**T**HE YOUNG MAN in that scenario is a superstar of the Vandy-in-Hollywood program, Sam Miller, BA’07, who interned at ABC, which is owned by Disney. “I had human resources at Disney calling me in the middle of graduation,” says Miller. “I had to silence my vibrating phone while there was a speaker on stage.”

A week later Miller was in Los Angeles working as an assistant to a vice president of studio comedy at ABC Entertainment Group.

“It’s very lucky for me, someone who wants to write professionally, that I’m in a place where I’m actually working with writers and reading scripts,” says Miller. “My boss acts as a liaison between the producers and people writing the shows and the network that is airing the shows.”

Miller describes his job as managing his boss’ day. “Basically I am a secretary. I answer the phones and make sure my boss has access to the right people and that the wrong peo-





HUGH HAMILTON

**Sam Miller, BA'07, is a Vandy-in-Hollywood alumnus who made the leap from unpaid intern to paid employee. Today his office is in the Burbank, Calif., Walt Disney Studios complex, where he is an assistant to an ABC Entertainment vice president.**

Gervich. “Hollywood is very rarely about how talented you are. Good ideas are a dime a dozen. For every Vanderbilt kid who comes out here, a million other people out here are more talented than they are. Success is about learning the business, understanding the business, and about forming and maintaining relationships. Vandy-in-Hollywood is constructed to help students do just that.”

Professor Akers, who has written feature screenplays for MGM, Disney and Universal Studios, has an insider’s view of life in Hollywood. He offers some advice for parents who may be leery of footing the bill for a three-month unpaid internship.

“The question is, How much would you pay for your child to know people who can give them a job? When school’s over and you have no internship and you’re standing there holding your résumé in the freezing wind, you say, ‘Gosh, I wish I’d been able to do this.’ It’s worth it, without a doubt.”

Vandy-in-Hollywood has had remarkable success in a very short time, but that success

is almost entirely due to the grassroots efforts of Gervich and Hull. They would like to grow the program and have a wish list that includes, among other items, a website, more networking events for alumni and students, and scholarships for students who can’t afford to foot the bill for three months in Los Angeles. Donations made to the film studies department can be earmarked for Vandy-in-Hollywood.

### Coda

All student interns have an “a-ha” moment when they realize they’re actually living and working in Hollywood. Sam Miller’s went like this:

“The first script I read was for a project I had already read about online. It was for a TV show called *Reaper*, which was being directed by Kevin Smith, who is one of my favorites. I opened it up and was introduced to the main character—a 21-year-old named Sam. I was a 21-year-old named Sam at the time. It just sort of smacked me in the face that I really was in Hollywood.” ▼

ple don’t get to him. My current boss started like me. It’s a time-honored tradition simply because the only way to really learn about the television business is to experience it.”

As someone who made the leap from unpaid intern to paid employee, Miller has great advice for Vandy-in-Hollywood students. “An office job is different from college,” he says. “Be aware that you’re working long hours with people who’ve seen a lot of interns before, and they’ll see others again. The most important thing is to have a good attitude and make their job easier. If you do that, they’ll remember you when you get back out there and are looking for a job. You must make them want to help you.”

### Scene Five

No matter whom you talk to, one thing is clear: Without connections, without a network, it’s almost impossible to find your way in Hollywood.

“A lot of people come out here thinking that just because they’re good writers, they won’t have any trouble landing a job,” says



JOHN RUSSELL

**Professors William Akers, left, and Sam Girgus—along with Paul Young (not pictured)—represent the brain power behind Vanderbilt’s film studies program. While technically not a “film school,” Vanderbilt offers advantages some schools can’t.**







It's easy to see why Plemmons, who is director of the Pediatric Weight Management Clinic at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, uses this illustration. The second bell curve looks menacingly like an encroaching wave. It represents wholesale change in the average weight of American children—an alarming and historic shift.

The average size of an American child has changed so much during the past two decades that in 2000, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) retooled growth charts to include body mass index so health providers could better track obesity in young children. Four years later scientists from the National Institutes of Health warned that, for the first time, life expectancy in the United States will

begin to decline again as heavier children grow up to have health problems linked with obesity, like heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

In Tennessee it's estimated that more than two-thirds of adults are overweight, and more than 30 percent of them are obese. An incredible 36.5 percent of children ages 10 to 17 are overweight or obese; in some counties, it's more than 50 percent. A mere 18 percent of children across the state get enough fruits and vegetables in their daily diets.

### Failing Grades in Fitness

The figures for fitness are even worse. In the United States the standard for assessing students' cardiovascular and respiratory fitness in schools is the mile run. During the 2007–08 school year, none of the grade levels in Tennessee (from two through 12) reached the national standard of the 50th percentile. Nor did they achieve the goal of running and/or walking a mile in the equivalent time it took their national peers.

That encroaching wave illustration can seem more like a tidal wave from the front lines. The weight management clinic that Plemmons directs has a five-month waiting list. He is considering prioritizing children who are so obese they already have high blood pressure or other health problems.

Addressing childhood obesity is central to Vanderbilt's institution-wide focus on children's health, says Jonathan Gitlin, assistant vice chancellor for maternal and child health and chair of pediatrics at Vanderbilt. He quotes Nelson Mandela: "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children."

The difficult question facing today's obesity experts is where to spend precious time and dollars. No one doubts large-scale change is desperately needed at the state and national level, but for those working at ground level, individual children and families are the ones who need help right now to avoid becoming part of the grim statistics.

Families like the Genesys.

Cassandra Genesy has been determined for a long time to get her 10-year-old son, Ian, a referral to Plemmons' clinic. "Both his father and the pediatrician have told me not to worry, that he'll grow out of it," Cassandra says with a tinge of frustration. "But I know

this is important. Diabetes and heart disease run on both sides of my family."

Cassandra Genesy worries about Ian's future. The fifth-grader at Madison Middle School has a bright smile and gets good grades, but he weighs 143 pounds, his blood pressure is elevated, and he has a body mass index of 30.6—classifying him as morbidly obese.

Plemmons says despite Ian's numbers, it's really Cassandra who is the patient here.

"We could manage most obesity just by working with the parents," Plemmons says. "The kids are fun to see, but it is the parents who have the power to effect change."

Cassandra and Ian came to the Pediatric Weight Management Clinic in January for an intensive two-hour appointment. They talked with registered dietician Amy Freedman, pediatrician Kyle Brothers, and physical therapist Amy Darrow.

Together they went over challenges and strengths, then signed an action plan for simple changes, like getting the whole family to stop drinking sugary sodas. Cassandra was encouraged to have a simple start and a plan. But the odds are not great that Ian's weight will turn around.

Predicting who will succeed in losing weight and who will fail is impossible, says Plemmons. Even socioeconomic status doesn't seem to matter all that much. All in all, weight-loss clinics have low rates of success, and this is not lost on insurance companies. Obesity is not, in general, defined as a medical condition, so most insurance won't reimburse the services offered at the Weight Management Clinic.

### Too Much, Too Little, Too Late

While he believes help for obese individuals will increase, Plemmons worries the help might come too late for kids like Ian. "So much more is needed. Policymakers are not thinking yet about long-term complications," Plemmons says. "When we see a dramatic change in heart disease and diabetes in 20- and 30-year-olds in 2020—that will get attention."

Joan Randall, assistant professor of medical education and administration, is the administrative director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Obesity and Metabolism. "Experts now believe that we cannot go one-on-one to solve the obesity problem," she says. "We



"Policymakers are not thinking yet about long-term complications [of childhood obesity]," says Dr. Greg Plemmons.

JOHN ROSSSELL

**Nationally, success rates for weight-loss programs are only about 20 percent. Even at Vanderbilt, where rates are higher, about half of families never come back for their second visit.**





Ian Genesey tries to ramp up his activity level in his backyard. The busy street in front of his home isn't safe for biking or walking.

STEVE GREEN

need to focus on population-based changes to create an environment that is more conducive to making healthy choices.”

Randall also serves a much larger role in the statewide battle against obesity. As the newly elected chair of the Tennessee Obesity Task Force, it is her job to take a “bird’s-eye view” of anti-obesity efforts all over the state.

The task force is funded by the CDC to the tune of about a half-million dollars a year for five years. The goal: Work with the Department of Health and multiple statewide partners to create and implement a cohesive and comprehensive state plan to help turn the tide of obesity in Tennessee.

Vanderbilt is rich ground for such programs. In addition to the multidisciplinary weight management clinic at the Children’s Hospital, there is an effort led by Dr. Russell Rothman, assistant professor of medicine and pediatrics and director of the Vanderbilt Program on Effective Health Communication, to examine how simple changes in the way families are instructed about nutrition and activity can impact infant and toddler weight gain.

Policy and environmental change efforts led by Vanderbilt staff, faculty and students are under way in locations from schools to the Tennessee State Capitol.

Peabody College students majoring in human and organizational development help with a school-based project called “Live It! Go for the Red, White and Blue,” led by Vanderbilt Children’s Health Improvement and Prevention. One group of medical students is lobbying for soda tax money to be used to support anti-obesity policy, while another tends a community garden in an urban neighborhood. The “Veggie Project” brings mini-farmers markets to Boys and Girls Clubs locations around town. And the list goes on.

Kim Harrell, interim director of children’s health advocacy at Vanderbilt, says it’s important to work within the systems in which children live—schools, neighborhoods and the family—to create environments where it is easier for them to exercise and eat well. The Live It! Go for the Red, White and Blue program, based in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, strives to do just that.

“We pass out pedometers and have an online program for the children and teachers to track their steps and daily food intake,” Harrell says. “We work with teachers to give them tools and curriculum to help them help their students make better choices about nutrition and activity. And every year the effort results in more of an environmental shift or cultural change.”

She points to the Glencliff High School program, where groundbreaking is taking place on half an acre of the school’s land for a community garden, and the idea of adding a track around the school is being discussed.

“The Garden Club students are now learning about good dirt, how to test it, and how to amend it to grow healthy foods,” Harrell says. “Some of these kids have challenging lives. This gives them something good to share with others while cultivating what could become a life-long interest in issues like food inequality and sustainable agriculture.”

Talks are under way to expand the Live It! project to help meet mandated goals established in 2006 by Coordinated School Health, a Tennessee Department of Education program designed to connect health with education. Harrell says Live It! is in a perfect position to help, especially because of its effective use of community partners and available resources.

But despite the past foresight of Tennessee lawmakers to fund Coordinated School Health, says Joan Randall, the economic downturn means funding for that program could be chopped. Advocates are fighting to avoid roll-backs on programs that appeared to be making headway.

### More Scientific Evidence Needed

Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is the lack of scientific evidence to prove which of these programs works. Without the evidence, some programs are sure to be left behind.

“We must have research to guide policy,” Randall says. “We don’t have strong evidence now.” She is especially interested in another emerging Vanderbilt effort, the brainchild of Dr. Shari Barkin, division chief of general pediatrics in the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics.

It’s called “The Nashville Collaborative.” A year and a half ago, this unique partner-

ship was formed between Vanderbilt's Department of Pediatrics and the Metro Nashville-Davidson County Department of Parks and Recreation. The Coleman Recreation Center, which serves one of the most culturally diverse communities in Davidson County, was selected as a prototype for a "community-based laboratory" to develop and test interventions that could halt pediatric obesity. The goal was to create rigorous research, based on an ecological model—one that would be sustainable and reproducible elsewhere.

"The goal is not just to stop childhood obesity, but to turn it around," says Barkin, who is also a professor of pediatrics and the Marion Wright Edelman Chair of Pediatrics. "You cannot wait until children are already obese to intervene. Prevention is what will be critical to turn the tide."

A clinical trial led by Barkin called "Salud con la Familia" (Health with the Family), which examined how to impact weight gain in preschoolers by working with Latino parents and children in their community, was one such research-creating intervention. The work was funded by the State of Tennessee and the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research.

Some six papers are now in the works containing evidence from the project and The Nashville Collaborative. Local government agencies from around the country have taken a closer look at the program. Barkin says the

**Below: The Veggie Project, which promotes healthy eating through Boys and Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee, began as part of a doctoral dissertation project by Darcy Freedman, PhD'08.**



science will reveal keys to success that include engagement of parents and preschool children together, beginning at an age of rapid growth when short-term intervention can have a significant impact, and better utilization of existing community services.



**Ian Genesy and his mother, Cassandra. "It's hard to keep saying no," Cassandra says.**

The means to expand this formula is already in place. A Robert Wood Johnson Foundation network has selected The Nashville Collaborative to be part of a nationwide effort called "Salud America!" That funding will allow Barkin and her colleagues to closely examine how the results that emerge from this kind of community-based research laboratory affects local programs and policies.

Barkin's project is exciting, and Randall says she is watching other promising projects across the state. But Vanderbilt has yet another plan to pull its various experts together in ways that may bring large-scale change through new governmental policies.

Roger Cone, professor and chair of molecular physiology and biophysics and medical director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Obe-

sity and Metabolism, has completed a proposal to make Vanderbilt one of 12 Nutrition Obesity Research Centers funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. The proposal was turned in last fall, and Vanderbilt should learn the outcome this spring.

### **The Goal: A Comprehensive National Center**

If Cone wins the grant, that would position Vanderbilt as a comprehensive national center for the study of obesity—one that could bring support to a number of programs, including everything from the study of the genetics, molecular science and brain chemistry behind obesity to "ecological" research efforts like Barkin's and projects like Live It!, and to clinical efforts like the Weight Management Clinic.

Plemmons says national and statewide programs with money to back them cannot come too soon. "This is our fifth year. At first we'd never seen a 200-pound 5-year-old," he says, "but now we do, as well as a number of children who are very, very obese."

Cassandra Genesy feels frustrated by a life that's already difficult. Single and between jobs, Cassandra talks about challenges, such as the fact she lives on a busy street—a dangerous place for Ian and his younger brother to ride bikes or walk. She wonders if her efforts to help Ian lose weight just make things harder.

"Ian wants to eat because he's bored, and I try to talk to him about it, but he literally cries that he wants something to eat," she says. "It's hard to keep saying no."

Standing at ground level and going one-on-one with lives experienced in a society

**"The goal is not just to stop childhood obesity, but to turn it around. You cannot wait until children are already obese to intervene."**

—Dr. Shari Barkin



## Preventing Obesity Year-Round: A Summertime Activity Plan

The approaching end of the school year is prime time to get children more active. Dr. Greg Plemmons, director of the Pediatric Weight Management Clinic at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, says summer is the best time to turn inactivity around and plan for greater activity for the rest of the year.

Participation in physical activity declines as children get older. Nearly 40 percent of high school students do not regularly engage in sustained vigorous activity, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Sedentary lifestyles are linked not only to increased risk of obesity, but also to increased lifetime risks of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

"When the weather is nice and the days are long, children often lose or at least maintain weight during the summer more easily than any other season," Plemmons says. "Summer is an excellent time to begin working on conditioning. If a child wants to play a sport in the fall, he or she can become more physically fit and may find more enjoyment than past years."

Children's Hospital shares this three-month plan to help get children primed for an active year:

### MAY (or Month One)

- Get them outside for 30 minutes a day. If a child has low tolerance for continuous activity, parents should start by encouraging them to get outside for at least 30 minutes every day to walk, ride a bike or swim—or, if it's raining, perhaps dancing indoors. "The goal is to get 'em moving," says Plemmons.

- If 30 minutes is too much (or too boring), research by Dr. Sari Acra, associate professor of pediatrics, and others at Vanderbilt suggests that it's beneficial to split the activity into two or three shorter increments (but no shorter than 10-minute bursts), with the goal of reaching 30 minutes a day by month's end for improved cardiovascular health—and longer if weight loss is a goal.

### JUNE (or Month Two)

- Crank it up! Now that your child's stamina has begun to improve, encourage him or her to participate in a higher-intensity activity a few times a week. This could include an organized sport, prolonged hike or bike ride, or a day of swimming at the pool or lake.
- Take precautions on hot, humid days to be sure children take breaks when needed. Be alert to signs of heat exhaustion, which can include nausea, vomiting, lightheadedness or dizziness.
- Don't go overboard with sports drinks. Most contain unneeded sugar and far too many calories, despite what the labels may promise. Water is best for replenishing most losses. Most children need about 8 ounces of water for every half-hour of exercise—more if it's hot and humid.

### JULY (or Month Three)

Make it a family affair to carry on the activity after summer is over. The ultimate goal for a new summertime activity is to keep it fun and perhaps introduce a new sport or pastime



in which the whole family can participate and continue to enjoy when everyone heads back to school.

"Family activities and outings are great," Plemmons says. "If the whole family is trying to learn softball, or getting into rollerblading, then everyone bonds and lifelong healthy habits are encouraged."

During the last month of summer break, it's time for families to begin planning to keep that extra activity on the docket. Parents should look into places where they can take a child during inclement weather or when classes take up the daylight hours, such as a nearby community center. Start thinking about the school year ahead.

"When families get busy during the school year, it's easy to slip back into gathering around the TV for the only family time of the day," Plemmons says. "But if you make a decision to keep going to the park for hikes even when the weather cools, you'll be introducing habits that could last a child's whole life."

designed to encourage obesity can make a person feel hopeless. But, despite implications and evidence that children who are already obese probably won't be helped, Plemmons believes reaching out to people like Cassandra and Ian is worth every second and every penny.

"The problem is formidable, but not to address it at this level would be ignoring the obvious," Plemmons says. "We don't just throw up our hands at leukemia because it's hard. There is no cure for diabetes, but we want to help families manage it. Maybe obesity cannot be cured, but it can be controlled."

Ian is right at the top of that encroaching wave, sitting firmly on the expanding right side of the bell curve. He sits through his long appointment at the clinic, patiently playing Guitar Hero on his mother's cell phone, but often flashing a bright smile as if to show he is paying attention. He has his own reasons for wanting to lose weight.

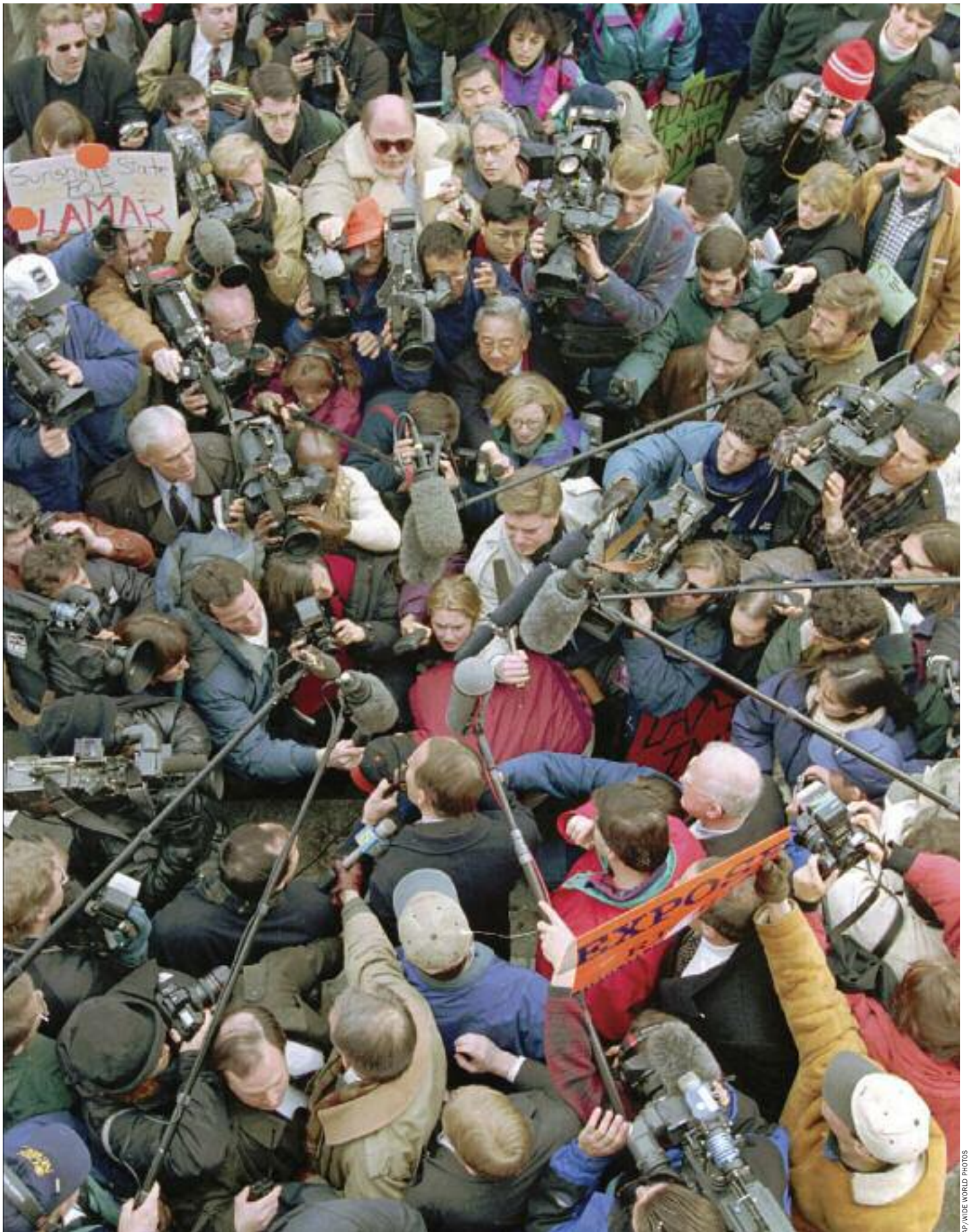
"Mostly I would like to be able to play more sports without getting an asthma attack," he says.

His smile reminds everyone of his promise. Ian is the future and the reason parents like Cassandra are willing to try to overcome

steep odds. He is the reason bright clinicians like Plemmons and his colleagues continue to work so hard—even to change one life. In families like the Genesys, Plemmons can see the tide turning.

"It matters when you see the beam on the kids' faces when the numbers on the scale change," says Plemmons. "The glass is half full because this problem didn't happen overnight. This has been in the making for 30 years in this country and will not be solved quickly. These kids will grow up having learned something. It may take a generation, but hopefully they will pass it on." ▼





AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

**On the eve of the 1996 New Hampshire primary, presidential hopeful Lamar Alexander speaks with reporters outside Phillips Exeter Academy. He left the race after finishing third, and attempted a brief presidential run again four years later.**



# *deep roots* STRONG TREE

*In the morass of partisan politics,  
Lamar Alexander forges his own path.*

By LISA ROBBINS

Like the plaid shirts that became his trademark, U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, BA'62, is patterned from contrasts.

He's an ambitious former Tennessee governor who twice threw his hat into the presidential ring, but he avoids the grandstanding that earns headlines. As chair of the Republican Senate Conference, he formulates party strategy and policy in a hyper-partisan political climate, but his record betrays bipartisan leanings. He's a multimillionaire who owns residences in Washington and Nashville, earned his law degree in New York, and has traveled the globe for months at a time, but East Tennessee continues to draw him home.

Even as a Vanderbilt student, Alexander resisted playing to type. He walked the high-achieving straight and narrow—as a fraternity brother, track athlete, and Phi Beta Kappa graduate—while using his platform as *Vanderbilt Hustler* editor to oppose a status quo supported by a majority of his fellow students: the undergraduate school's racial segregation. In the early 1990s, *The New York Times*, referring to his work as education secretary for President George H.W. Bush, described him as “quietly subversive.” Today Alexander seems flattered by the characterization.

“That's probably true,” he says with a chuckle.

## The Thousand-Mile Walk That Launched a Career

A magnolia with a distinguished Tennessee pedigree grows outside Alexander's log house on the edge of the Smoky Mountains. The tree's lineage begins with President Andrew Jackson, who took a sprout from his home at The Hermitage and planted it at the White House. President Reagan gifted a cutting from that tree, which still graces the South Lawn, to Sen. Howard Baker Jr., Alexander's former boss, mentor and friend. Baker shared cuttings with John Rice Irwin, founder of the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, Tenn. From the museum's magnolia, Irwin gave a cutting to his friend Lamar.

"When I visit him, we go outside to see how it is doing," Irwin says. The tree now stands about 40 feet tall.

Alexander's family, like Jackson, arrived in eastern Tennessee in the 1780s, when it was

still part of North Carolina. Alexander speaks proudly of his family's deep roots in the region, and during his long career, they have given him strength. When he successfully ran for governor in 1978—his second attempt, after a humiliating defeat four years earlier—he launched his thousand-mile campaign walk across the state from his parents' front porch in Maryville.

"At first my walk embarrassed quite a few establishment Republicans," Alexander writes in his memoir *Six Months Off*. "Playing my old high-school trombone—or sometimes the washboard—in 'Alexander's Washboard Band,' a ragtag collection of four University of Tennessee band members and me! Wearing the same red-and-black flannel shirt each and every day, even to dinners, even in the summer, even on TV! ... [My wife] Honey was absolutely my No. 1 chief defender. She would tell them, 'It's Lamar, through and through. Let him be.'"

Some observers found Alexander's campaigning contrived, but his record reflects the tangible impact his personal background has had on him. A son of educators whose father left his post as a school principal to earn better money at the nearby Alcoa aluminum plant, he made educational reform and job creation centerpieces of his governorship. To this day his environmental policies, inspired by his deep love for the Smoky Mountains, promote land conservation, pollutant controls, and alternatives to coal-fired electricity.

"So many politicians or statesmen have an interest that revolves around their profession, but he's just fascinated with the people and with the culture," says Irwin, who met Alexander when he was governor. "He has a true heartfelt love for the mountain people and the mountains from which they come."

Alexander tried to bring his Tennessee style to the national political stage, but it did not resonate in the less intimate setting. Prepar-



Red and black checked shirts have been an Alexander trademark throughout his political career. In 2007, in honor of Alexander's support for research funding, scientists dubbed a similarly checkerboard-colored insect species first discovered in the Great Smoky Mountains the "Lamar Alexander springtail."



ing for the 1996 presidential primaries, he traded his feet for a red Ford Explorer and drove almost 9,000 miles across the country, again wearing plaid, again staying in people's homes. He did not survive the New Hampshire primary. Four years later he dropped the plaid, but spent long months politicking county-by-county in Iowa. He left the race after the state's straw poll.

"I remember after his presidential race, he was just tired and dogged and worn out," Irwin says. Irwin, who retired in 2009, regularly traveled the Appalachian region to meet people, hear their stories and collect artifacts. Alexander, who served as the Museum of Appalachia's board chair for years until being elected senator, sometimes would tag along.

"When he got home, we went out into the mountains," Irwin says. "We would go to the country store and buy Cokes and crackers and bologna, and lounge around out in the country and visit the old folks and relax. And he didn't want to talk about politics or anything."

### Breaking Away

**A**gainst his father's hopes, Alexander decided not to apply to his town's local college; he tried for the University of Tennessee, Duke University and Vanderbilt University instead. As he puts it, he was ready "to go afield, but not that far."

Duke offered him a scholarship.

"I called [then-Director of Admissions for the College of Arts and Science] James Buford," Alexander says, still sounding a bit amazed that his call worked. "I said, 'I've got a scholarship to Duke, but I'd prefer Vanderbilt. Can you give me a scholarship for Vanderbilt?' And he did."

Alexander became an active, high-profile student.

"I don't think anybody who knew Lamar in college was surprised that he has gone into politics and been successful at it," says writer and humorist Roy Blount Jr., BA'63, who followed Alexander as *Hustler* editor and was his fraternity brother in Sigma Chi.

"He was sort of statesmanly, without being pompous; serious enough and also light-hearted enough, in a dry sort of way—cool enough, let's say, but not slick or back-slapping, to be widely popular, despite the fact that two-thirds of the student body in a referen-



**Alexander frequently crosses the aisle to get results, as in this 2007 meeting with other members of the Senate Education Committee. From left: Democrat Jeff Bingaman, Republican Michael B. Enzi, Democrat and committee chairman Edward Kennedy, and Alexander.**

dum voted against letting black students in."

Blount is referring to the referendum he and Alexander vocally supported. They had written editorials in the *Hustler* in favor of the undergraduate school's integration, and then had joined forces with fellow student John Sergent, BA'63, MD'66 (now a Vanderbilt physician and professor), who brought



**Shown here during his college track-team days, Alexander was also *Vanderbilt Hustler* editor and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate.**

the issue before the student senate. When the senate voted against recommending desegregation to Vanderbilt's Board of Trust, the three organized the school-wide vote.

After the vote failed, they kept up their advocacy. They were quietly encouraged by Chancellor Harvie Branscomb, who invited Alexander to share his opinions with Harold Stirling Vanderbilt, Cornelius Vanderbilt's great-grandson and chairman of the Board of Trust. The board voted to integrate the university in the spring of that year.

Not all of Alexander and Blount's work as *Hustler* scribes was as serious as their lobbying for desegregation.

"There was this time a report reached the *Hustler* newsroom that Burl Ives was in the Krystal on West End, so Lamar and I sped to the location on his motorbike," Blount says. "As it turned out, Burl Ives—at least *the* Burl Ives—was not in the Krystal, but if he had been, we would have had us a story."

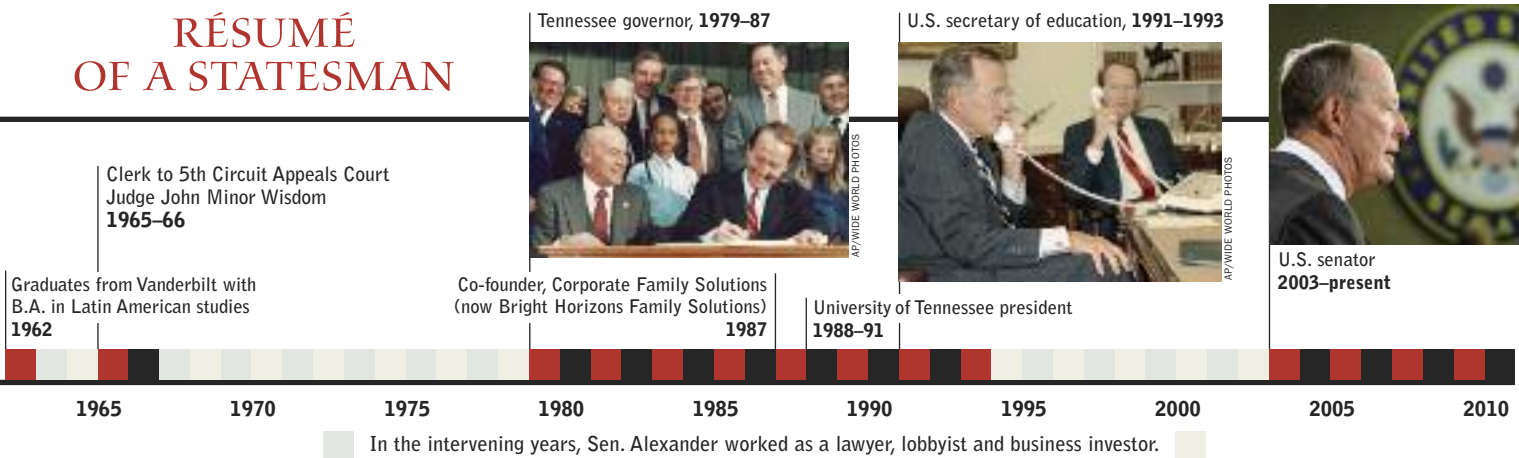
After college, Alexander kept moving. He got his law degree at New York University. He worked as a law clerk to Judge John Minor Wisdom, most renowned for his civil rights decisions, on the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. His work as a legislative assistant to Sen. Baker took him to Washington, where he went on to a job in the Nixon White House.

Politics drew him back to Tennessee. He returned in 1970 to manage Republican Winfield Dunn's campaign for governor. Dunn's win put Alexander in position to run four years later; at the time Tennessee governors could not serve consecutive terms. Unfortunately for Alexander, being a Republican who had worked for the Nixon administration did not help candidates in 1974. He lost to Democrat Ray Blanton by nearly 12 points.

By Alexander's own account, he had trouble recovering from the defeat.

"Wallowing is just the right word for the process, which became uncomfortably long for the wallower—me—and uncomfortably

# RÉSUMÉ OF A STATESMAN



messy for those who had to watch,” Alexander writes of the experience.

Nonetheless, the campaign set the stage for future runs. His friend Lew Conner, BA’60, JD’63, with whom he helped found the law firm Dearborn & Ewing in 1971, is one of several from the campaign’s team who remain part of Alexander’s circle today. Conner met Alexander in college and became his longtime campaign finance chair.

“We borrowed \$37,000 the last week,” Conner says, referring to Alexander and a core group of supporters during Alexander’s second gubernatorial attempt. “We thought if we ran the ads, we’d beat Blanton. We four all signed the note. We all said, ‘God, you have to run again or we’ll never get out of debt.’”

Alexander did run again, and this time he won handily, aided by scandals plugging the

incumbent Democrat, Ray Blanton, who did not run for re-election.

Alexander’s term had an inauspicious beginning. To prevent Blanton from releasing prisoners implicated in a clemency-for-cash investigation, the U.S. attorney, Democrat Hal Hardin, JD’68, wanted Alexander sworn in early. With the assent of Democratic legislators, Alexander took his oath of office three days before the official inauguration. He was 39 years old. He went on to become the first Tennessee governor to serve two consecutive terms, winning re-election by nearly 20 percentage points.

Alexander is still friends with Hardin, who practices law in Nashville. This year he invited Hardin to be his guest at President Obama’s first State of the Union address.

“He could have invited someone more

influential, but not more grateful,” says Hardin, describing himself as a history buff and yellow-dog Democrat. “It was a remarkable event, to be at dinner with 100 senators and their guests. And the speech—that was pretty overwhelming.”

## The Tennessee Brand

The 2008 elections left the Republican Party reeling, but not in Tennessee. John McCain carried the state by 15 points. Alexander did even better: He trounced his opponent 65 percent to 31 percent, and carried every county save small, rural Haywood in the western part of the state. So-called “Lamar Democrats” helped to keep his margins high, and even with the nation’s first African American presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket, Alexander was able to garner about 26 percent of the black vote. During the campaign he described himself as having “conservative principles and independent views,” and he released lists of Democrats and independents who had endorsed him.

“I would call him a reasonable Republican, and someone who tries to work with the other side,” Conner says. “When he was governor, his longest suit was working with the Democratic legislature. He was a successful governor because of that.”

While many of Alexander’s colleagues burnish their ideological *bona fides* with heated rhetoric, Alexander references history.

“I’m a Lincoln Republican. I grew up in an East Tennessee congressional district that has never sent a Democrat to Congress since Lincoln was president. Most people there supported the Union in the Civil War,” Alexander says. He then repeats a favorite anecdote.



Alexander hugs his wife, Honey, and son, Will, after winning the Republican primary for U.S. Senate in August 2002. His win in the general election that November made him the first Tennessean to be popularly elected both governor and senator.



“My great-grandfather Alexander was once asked about his politics and he replied, ‘I am a Republican. I fought to save the Union, and I vote like I shot.’”

Still, as part of the Republican leadership at a time when partisanship rocks the nation’s Capitol, Alexander has a thin line to walk. A 2009 survey of his colleagues, reported by *The Hill* newspaper, identified him as one of the Senate’s most partisan members. Paradoxically, a *Congressional Quarterly* review of that same year’s legislative votes identified Alexander as one of the more bipartisan senators, voting against his party about 23 percent of the time.

“Most of my colleagues laughed out loud at [the *Hill* survey],” Alexander says. “I don’t know how that came out. The second [report] is pretty reflective of my time here.”

As proof, Alexander touts recent bipartisan legislation he has supported, including an energy bill he introduced with Virginia Sen. Jim Webb and amendments to the Clean Air Act that he introduced with Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware.

“We’re both recovering governors,” says Carper, who sits on the Senate’s Environment and Public Works Committee with Alexander. “We see eye to eye on a couple of issues, and we’re results oriented. We want to get things done.”

The bill would significantly cut mercury, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from coal-fired power plants. Carbon emissions, now part of the contentious cap-and-trade debate, were left out of the bill, though they had been included in previous versions. The two senators could not reach common ground.

“I think he got a lot of push-back,” Carper says. “I found that on the Democratic and the Republican side, when people move into leadership positions, they tend to become less bipartisan; it’s just the nature of the job. It happens to some extent to most everybody.”

Marguerite Kondracke, president and CEO of America’s Promise Alliance, predicts that Alexander will be actively involved in the long-awaited reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Kondracke served in Alexander’s cabinet and

as staff director for the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families, which he chaired. They founded the day care company Corporate Family Solutions together in 1987.

“Lamar was ahead of his time on education,” Kondracke says. She points to issues he emphasized as governor and as U.S. education secretary that now are part of the mainstream debate, such as charter schools, teacher performance, and site-based after-school care. “He thinks Education Secretary Arne Duncan is the best appointment Obama has made.”

Alexander says his leadership goal as conference chair is to help Republican senators do a better job of presenting a constructive message.

“Unfortunately, during 2009, a lot of it had to be about what we’re *against*, with the health-care bill,” Alexander says. “I don’t miss being a governor, but I enjoyed it very much. Being a governor is like singing a solo. Being a legislator is more like being in the chorus. This lets me be something analogous to the choir leader.” ▼

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# The Mind's

“The ability of people to pick themselves up, find hope and move forward after such

## Visual Art:

### River Run

JOHN GUIDER, BE'72, understands fully what Emerson meant when he said, “Who looks upon a river ... and is not reminded of the flux of all things?”

Guider, a well-known commercial photographer, has traveled the world to produce the perfect image for clients. In August 2003 he embarked on a journey of a different kind that would take him miles from home as well as miles from his previous life in commercial photography. He canoed from the creek in his Nashville backyard, up the Harpeth River to the Cumberland River to the Ohio, and then down the Mississippi to New Orleans.

The result is *The River Inside*, a book and a traveling exhibit of platinum print photographs, a number of which are exhibited at Vanderbilt Health One Hundred Oaks through April under the auspices of the Medical Center's Office of Cultural Enrichment.

Guider says in the introduction to his book that he dreamed of “walking out of my familiar world and entering a completely new one.” He accomplished his dream, despite having little experience with canoeing and camping.

“It sort of spoke of my capricious and romantic nature,” says Guider. “There was very little planning at all. The only thing that saved my life was that I started in my creek. I was seven days on the Harpeth, which is a gentle, beautiful river. It's probably the most spiritual experience I've ever had in my life. That was my training.”

When he reached the Ohio, things were not so gentle. It was at flood stage at Paducah, Ky., with banks submerged, and Guider wound up caught in spill-off from the Lake Barkley Dam. “You get in trouble once and you remember it,” says Guider. “Getting caught



“Pier with Matt and Jonathan, Lake Itasca, Minn.”

in the dam prepared me for the wing dikes. [Built into the river by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, wing dikes force water away from the banks, thus speeding up the river.] The whirlpools, too, are daunting, and they run the river like movable minefields.”

Despite his lack of experience and the forces of nature, Guider completed his journey of 2,800 river miles in five years, going back for shorter runs from the headwaters of the Mississippi during the summers until finishing in mid-July 2007. Though sometimes going for days without seeing another person, Guider discovered the power of community. “All along the river, people went out of their way providing for my safety and well-

being,” he writes in his book. As he entered the darkroom, making the images that would tell his story (a yearlong process of experimentation by which he settled on the platinum print process), he also discovered the power of the Vanderbilt community.

“David Fox [BA'72] saw my work at a show and literally grabbed me and took me over to Ingram [Industries] and set me up,” says Guider. “He did as much of the groundwork getting the project where it is as anybody else.” Others involved include Andrew Maraniss, BA'92, who helped edit the book; Susan Knowles, BA'74, MLS'75, MA'86, who served as the exhibition's curator; Stacey Irvin, BA'98, who designed the website



# Eye

devastation really inspired me. ”  
— SUSAN BOTTI,  
composer of *Gates of Silence*



© JOHN GUIDER 2003



The Blakemore Trio

6,000 miles down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, around the eastern United States through the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, up to the Hudson River, and through the Great Lakes back down to his starting point. Last June and July, he completed the first section to the Gulf of Mexico, where he was caught in a storm and nearly sank.

“It made me realize that everything I had learned on the river was of little use on the ocean,” Guider says. Even as he journeyed down the Mississippi again, Guider was aware of how dynamic life on the river is, how it changes, and how it has paralleled his own life since he began undertaking these trips nearly seven years ago.

“I think the river is like a person’s life,” he says. “It changes. One of the bittersweet aspects of this last journey was that I had met so many people on the canoe trip, and I was really looking forward to reconnecting with them. But all the way down the river, I could not find a single person [I had met before]. It was as if somebody had changed the set on me. Even the river level was different, so the banks had a different appearance.

“It’s enough to spend your life on the river and not ever know it. It’s just that amazing.”

**Find out more:** [www.theRiverinside.com](http://www.theRiverinside.com)  
—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

## Music: Approaching the Gates

NEARLY FOUR YEARS HAVE PASSED since the Blakemore Trio (violinist Carolyn Huebl, cellist Felix Wang and pianist Amy Dorfman, all three of whom are on the faculty of Vanderbilt’s Blair School of Music) first decided to ask New York composer Susan Botti to write a work specifically for them. Through



Susan Botti, composer of *Gates of Silence* for Blair’s Blakemore Trio, sang the soprano solo for the world premiere of the piece Feb. 19 in Ingram Hall.

inspiration, anticipation and perspiration, the piece is finally ready.

“The selection process was exciting but exhausting,” Wang says. “It’s one thing to play new musical works, but it’s different when commissioning premieres. We love embracing contemporary music, and we want to be more active in getting new pieces written for us.”

The Blakemore Trio and Botti, a well-regarded contemporary composer and soprano, gave the world premiere performance of *Gates of Silence* on Feb. 19 in Ingram Hall

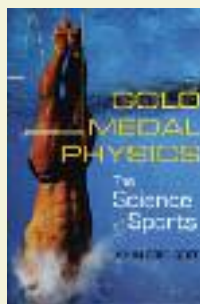
[theriverinside.com](http://theriverinside.com); Coke Sams, BA’68, who produced and directed a short documentary about the trip; and Orrin Ingram, BA’82, of Ingram Industries (and Ingram Marine Group), who provided funding. The exhibit, which originated at the Tennessee State Museum during fall 2008, has been to Dubuque, Iowa; St. Louis; and Memphis, Tenn., and will travel to the Delta Cultural Center in Helena, Ark., in April. In August it travels to Clarksville, Tenn., and then to the River Discovery Center in Paducah.

Guider’s new project is to photograph his navigation of “the Great Loop” during the next five or six years. For this journey he has built his own boat, and will journey up to

## Recent Books

*Gold Medal Physics: The Science of Sports* (2010, The Johns Hopkins University Press) by John Eric Goff, BS'92

Using performances by elite athletes such as Greg Louganis, Bob Beamon and Lance Armstrong as starting points, Goff discusses the science behind diving, long jumping, cycling, skating, football, soccer, and a host of other sports.

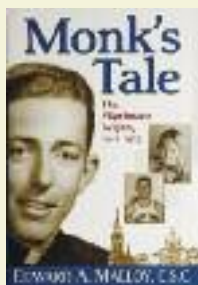
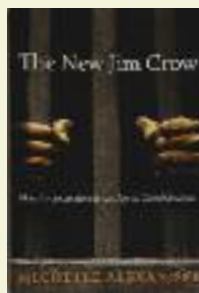


*Orson Welles and the Unfinished RKO Projects: A Postmodern Perspective* (2009, Southern Illinois University Press) by Marguerite H. Rippy, MA'90

Orson Welles was the first of the Modernist directors who was as much star as artist. Rippy looks at film and radio projects shelved by Welles himself or by RKO Pictures during his early years there to show how his work straddles the fine line between fact and fiction, serving as a precursor to today's reality television and fake news shows.

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010, The New Press) by Michelle Alexander, BA'89

In her first book, Alexander asks what the election of Barack Obama means for black men when more African Americans are behind bars today than were enslaved in 1850. Alexander argues that the racial caste system has not been eradicated in America, and that an astounding percentage of the African American community remains in prison, viewed and treated as a subordinate class.



*Monk's Tale: The Pilgrimage Begins, 1941-1975* (2009, University of Notre Dame Press) by the Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C., PhD'75

The Rev. Edward "Monk" Malloy, emeritus president of the University of Notre Dame (and emeritus trustee at Vanderbilt), writes in this first volume of a three-part autobiography about the years from 1941 to 1975, chronicling his life from his beginnings as a middle-class Irish American Catholic boy with a gift for basketball, to his call to become a priest, to his receiving a doctorate in Christian ethics from Vanderbilt.

at the Blair School. The New York City premiere followed March 13 in Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Center.

"Botti's music is very imaginative," Wang says. "The thing that draws me—there's often a sense of drama. Even in the dissonances and timbres, there's a sense of singing in her work. The kinds of sounds she gets are very emotional and surprising."

*Gates of Silence* is a set of three compositions: "Lament: The Fallen City" for violin and piano; "The Journey without Her" for piano trio; and "Dido Refuses to Speak" for piano trio and soprano with text by Linda

Gregerson, National Book Award finalist and Caroline Walker Bynum Distinguished University Professor at the University of Michigan. Inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*, each composition is connected by themes of loss, renewal, hope and continuation.

"While conceptualizing this piece, I read a description of the fall of Troy, and then I would pick up the newspaper and read about the destruction of Baghdad or the devastation of a small town in Oklahoma after a storm," explains Botti. "The ability of people to pick themselves up, find hope and move forward after such devastation really inspired me."

The trio commissioned *Gates of Silence* as part of the ongoing commissioning project "The Blair Commissions: Music for the 21st Century," funded by the James Stephen Turner Family Charitable Foundation for the Blair School.

## Books and Writers: Writing Upstarts

FOUR YEARS after its creation and only a year and a half after granting degrees to its first class, the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing program at Vanderbilt University has been named a top 20 program in the country by *Poets & Writers* magazine.

Vanderbilt was ranked No. 18 in the November/December 2009 issue of the magazine. *Poets & Writers* ranked programs in eight categories, including size, duration, cost of living, teaching load and curriculum focus. Vanderbilt—which admits three poetry and three fiction writers to its program each year—was ranked No. 4 in the country for selectivity.

"Last year we had 374 applications for those six slots, and we will expect to receive many more this year—demand is increasing," says Mark Jarman, Centennial Professor of English, director of creative writing, and an acclaimed poet. "Our teacher-student ratio is 1 to 1. If you are accepted into this program, you are going to get attention."

Each of the six students accepted receives full-tuition scholarships, health insurance and stipends, says Sandy Solomon, a poet and associate director of the program. This support is a significant attraction for incoming students, she says, as is the prospect of acquiring teaching experience at Vanderbilt. All the students tutor at the Vanderbilt Writing Studio during the first year and teach a workshop in their genre during the second year.

"As soon as I arrived in Nashville, the members of the MFA faculty were calling me to invite me out to coffee, to take me out to lunch, to offer me their furniture, anything," says Matt Baker, a first-year fiction student. "At any program in the country, you can study under talented, published professors, but at Vanderbilt they're also genuinely interested in the lives of their students."





STEVE GREEN

That's something the *Poets & Writers* rankings don't even take into account. Take that into consideration, and I think our program ranks at least in the top five."

Vanderbilt launched its Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program in 2006. The faculty includes fiction writers Tony Earley, Lorraine López, Alice Randall and Nancy Reisman; poets Jarman, Solomon, Beth Bachmann, Kate Daniels and Rick Hilles; and non-fiction writer Peter Guralnick.

**Find out more:** [www.vanderbilt.edu/english/creative\\_writing](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/english/creative_writing)

—Jim Patterson

### Twain and Twang

THE JEAN AND ALEXANDER HEARD Library is remembering one of America's most beloved writers with the exhibit "Mark Twain: An American Original," on display in Special Collections through June 30. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

"Twain and Twang," Nashville's city-wide celebration, marks the 175th anniversary this year of Twain's birth, 100th anniversary of his death, and 125th anniversary of the publication of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"We are pleased to collaborate with several other Nashville institutions to pay trib-

ute to Mark Twain's literary legacy and humor," says Dean of Libraries Connie Vinita Dowell. "Vanderbilt is fortunate to have a strong collection of Twain materials—both first editions and original materials—to be able to share with the community."

The approximately 350 items in Vanderbilt's Twain collection, which includes numerous first editions, were donated by the late Dr. Marc H. Hollender, a Vanderbilt psychiatrist and professor who traced his love of the author to reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"Dr. Hollender's widow, Betty, told us that her husband's profession had nothing to do with his collecting habits," says Kathy Smith, associate director of Special Collections and University Archives. "Betty relayed that he had said, 'I want to enjoy Mark Twain, not analyze him.'"

The exhibit also includes memorabilia from the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum in Hannibal, Mo., and items from Special Collections at San Diego State University. Dowell led the charge to partner with the California university and boyhood home in order to expand the variety of artifacts visitors could see. The exhibit will move to San Diego State this summer for a 19-week run.

**Find out more:** <http://twainandtwang.org>

—Ann Marie Deer Owens



FROM FOLLOWING THE EQUATOR: A JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD

## Accolades



### Bachmann Wins Tufts Discovery Award

Beth Bachmann, assistant professor of English, is the

2010 winner of the prestigious Kate Tufts Discovery Award, given to honor a poet's first book. The award, presented by Claremont Graduate University, includes a \$10,000 prize.

Bachmann's *Temper*, published last year by the University of Pittsburgh Press, was called "an unforgettable first book" by poet Lynn Emanuel.

### López Nominated for PEN/Faulkner Award



A short story collection by Lorraine López, associate professor of English, described as "an amazingly original Flannery O'Connor/Loretta Lynn collision," is one of five nominees for the 2010 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction.

*Homicide Survivors Picnic* will compete with books by Sherman Alexie, Barbara Kingsolver, Lorrie Moore and Colson Whitehead for the award, which comes with a \$15,000 prize. The other four finalists will receive \$5,000.

The PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction is the largest peer-juried prize for fiction in America. The winner will be named March 23 and honored May 8 at the 30th annual PEN/Faulkner Award ceremony at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

—Jim Patterson

# S.P.O.V.\*

\* Student Point of View

## How I Play

*Making up stories is the next best thing to slaying monsters.*

By MATT BAKER, 2011 M.F.A. CANDIDATE

ONE GAME MY BEST FRIEND and I used to play was this: We were castaways on an island where we were trapped with a horrible monster. We played this game every day for an entire summer. Brian lived next door to me, and every morning we would take his dad's machete (which we weren't supposed to touch) from their garage and hike out to our make-shift shelter in the woods behind his house and carve another notch into the fallen oak tree by the creek.

"Day 24," Brian would say, counting the notches. "Marooned."

"Maybe today," I would say, looking up through the trees, "a plane will come."

Then we would go forage for mushrooms.

We had theories about the monster: that it was something old, something shed-sized with wrinkly skin and no sense of humor, something that only cared about eating little children. It hunted us back and forth across the island—we would climb trees when we thought we heard it coming, or wade out into the creek, or disguise ourselves with dead leaves. We had homemade spears stashed around the island in case

we were ever caught without the machete.

Then one day—by our records, day 51—we decided we would hunt the monster back. We were tired of hiding.

"We'll dig a pit," Brian said, drawing a blueprint in the dirt, "and after it falls in and breaks all its legs, we'll roast it over a fire." Part of our theory was that the monster probably had six legs.



**Baker is one of six students accepted last year into Vanderbilt's M.F.A. program in creative writing out of a pool of 374 applicants.**

abandoned hornet's nest with a stick when we heard a crashing sound. Then a roaring. We had never before heard the monster roar so loudly that we could hear it not just in our imaginations but even in real life.

We dropped the stick and grabbed our

machete and a couple of our homemade spears and ran through the forest chanting and singing and doing little we-killed-the-monster dances all the way back to our pit. But then there was no more singing because we saw that Brian's dad was sitting at the bottom of the pit covered in stinkweed and mud. I had never heard him swear before, but considering he never got much practice, he was really good at it.

We dug a pit along the edge of the forest. We picked a couple of loads of stinkweed from the creek and dumped them into the pit so that the smell would knock out the monster if the 4-foot drop didn't. Then we covered the mouth of the pit with branches and twigs and dead leaves.

We waited awhile for the monster, but it did not come. So we went to the other side of the island to climb trees.

Later that afternoon we were poking an

That's the first time I remember getting in trouble for playing, but after that it happened more and more often until we had to give up playing altogether. This is why I'm a writer. As a 24-year-old man, writing stories is the only way I can get away with pretending—the only way I can play. It is no longer socially acceptable for me to run around in the woods shouting at imaginary creatures. (Actually, there are adults who do that. It's called LARP, which stands for live-action role-playing, and which is basically a bunch of adults wearing tunics and leather boots running around public parks hitting each other with plastic swords and shouting made-up spells. I've always been sort of secretly obsessed with it. But I like the idea of having a girlfriend more than the idea of playing LARP, and it turns out that usually you have to choose between the two.)

So instead, I make up stories. It is not as good as being outside and getting to live them, but it is a close second-best.

I am good enough at making up stories that Vanderbilt's MFA program let me join



its team. It's kind of like getting drafted to play college basketball. In high school I made the freshman basketball team, but only because I was faster than everyone else; during the free-throw drill, I only made four out of 10. The next year I only made two out of 10, and then being fast wasn't good enough. But my friend Justin made varsity. I loved watching him on the court. For me basketball had been stressful because I was always so worried about dribbling off my foot or passing the ball to someone on the other team, but for Justin it was just a sort of playing. I always thought of him as our Best of the Neighborhood: The rest of us couldn't make a layup, but he could drop a shot from anywhere on the floor, and for him it was fun.

That's what I've always loved about watching college basketball. It's all of the Best of the Neighborhood kids playing the same game together.

Actors are a Best of the Neighborhood, too, but with a different sort of playing. Whenever I watch a movie with Johnny Depp in it where he is being especially weird or funny, I get this goosebumpy feeling and think, *Can you imagine if he had grown up in*

*your neighborhood? If you had gotten to play a pirates game with him, or a we-are-monsters game? Whenever I listen to Tom Waits I think, What if he had grown up in your neighborhood? What if you had gotten to play with him, to make up songs together while hitting empty garbage cans with sticks?*

In the MFA program the sort of playing we're good at is making up stories. Sitting in on a fiction workshop is like growing up in a dream neighborhood where every single kid is a Best of the Neighborhood kid. We are obsessed with words like scrimshaw and parasol and cannikin. We fight about storytellers that most everyone has never heard of—we fight about who's better, Borges or Hannah? Each class we workshop two stories by students in the program, which means that every

week we get to explore two brand new worlds, worlds we built out of nothing, entirely with our words.

Between our two backyards, Brian and I had a national park's worth of forest. We had two forts, three sledding hills, one abandoned shed we could climb onto and then jump off of, one baseball diamond, one three-hole golf course and a rope swing. During winter we



As a 24-year-old man, writing stories is the only way I can get away with pretending—the only way I can play.

built igloos big enough for me and him and all his brothers. During summer we made potions out of tree sap and pine needles and dead bugs and kept them in jars to poison our enemies. We would lower my basketball hoop low enough that we could dunk on it and pretend we were in *Space Jam* playing against aliens for the fate of planet Earth. We would play *Jurassic Park* games, *Men in Black* games, *Mission Impossible*.

Now Brian does not have a job where he can play; he has a job where he can stack boxes.

Brian owns (literally) more than a thousand DVDs. If you say the name of any film (literally, any film that exists), he can tell you not just who directed it but also the names of everyone who acted in it (no matter how obscure) and which part was the funniest or

best. I want him to have a job where he can pretend things, a job where he can play like we used to. I want him to make movies. But he says he doesn't want to. He's given up on playing altogether. Now he'd just rather watch someone else do it—so many times that he's become a sort of human IMDB.

The best part about studying in an MFA program isn't that all the other students are

Best of the Neighborhood kids—it's that all of the faculty are, too. They're even better at that sort of playing than we are. Lorraine López was just nominated for a PEN/Faulkner award—she's one of only five finalists—which is sort of the literary equivalent of qualifying for the Olympics. We won't hear which medal she's won for another month or so, but still, she's an Olympic athlete. Tony Earley's stories have appeared in *Best American Short Stories*; so have Nancy Reisman's. These are the people we get to learn about storytelling from.

But for many of us, these two years in the MFA program may be the last ones we're able to make a life out of playing. The storytelling jobs are limited. It's possible to get a job teaching younger storytellers

(I know that at least two of our 2009 graduates did); it's possible to get a job at a magazine that publishes stories (which is why we've founded *Nashville Review*); it's possible to become an editor of stories, or a reviewer of stories, or a literary agent. And then there's the dream gig: to write stories that are so good that you earn a living from your stories alone. But getting someone to publish your book is like getting drafted to the NBA: It's possible for a college basketball player to get drafted, but their chances are about 1 out of 100. Odds are that they'll end up in accounting or real estate or advertising instead, getting to play their game only at night.

Those odds are just another sort of game we're playing. I don't know if we'll beat them. But it's going to be fun to try. ▼

# A.P.O.V. \*

\* Alumni Point of View

## A Wrinkle in Time

*No previous trip to Haiti could prepare me for the chaos of my last visit.*

By GLEN STEWART, MDiv'74, DMin'75

**W**E WERE GOING TO BE late for supper. That thought was uppermost in my mind as I prodded the members of my group to conclude their purchases in the One Stop Market, a grocery store in Port-au-Prince, so we could arrive at our nearby guesthouse in time for the evening meal.

It was a Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 12, and we were returning from the day's visit to a large Baptist mission in Kenscoff. I had left Nashville for Haiti the previous Friday with my group of 10 others from Nashville, Memphis and Rockwood, Tenn.

Leading a group like this involves a good deal of logistics and responsibility, but I had done it many times before. I have been traveling to Haiti since 1992—usually with members of Tennessee congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—doing short-term mission work. Our denomination has a partner in ministry in Port-au-Prince, CONASPEH, a national council of small, poor congregations from all over Haiti. In addition to the work we do, we learn about the history of Haiti, visit important landmarks, and visit with missionaries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who serve in Port-au-Prince.

This trip had started much like previous ones. We visited most of the same places I had before, with new places being added because of the interests of our two new missionaries, who had spent that day teaching—

one at a nursing school and the other at a seminary. The rest of us were staying at Walls International Guesthouse, where we were served breakfast and supper and had a place to sleep each night.

On the way home from the Baptist mission that Tuesday afternoon, I had directed our driver to take us to the One Stop Market, where I would exchange some Haitian gourdes for U.S. dollars so I could pay our bill for the room and board on Thursday. But on this day, the manager of the market, Tariq, had no U.S. money. He promised that if I returned in the morning, he would have some for me and we would do our business then.



**Glen Stewart (right) enjoys a pre-earthquake lunch with members of his mission group at the Olafson Hotel in downtown Port-au-Prince.**

I helped some of the people in the group buy vanilla, sugar and coffee. I knew we were already late for supper at the guesthouse, and while I paid for some of the food, I hurried my friends out of the store and into our van,

parked immediately in front of the double front doors. I was the last one into the van and was about to close the sliding door when it all started.

I had never been in a sizable earthquake before, but I was now. The earth was shaking and rippling. It felt as if someone had grabbed hold of our van and was shaking it very hard.

"It's an earthquake! Get out of the van and away from the buildings!" yelled a member of the group who had grown up in California.

That made a lot of sense. I scrambled to my feet and ran to the middle of the grocery store's parking lot. I turned around to look for the members of my group and saw the three-story building collapse onto the first floor—including the market I had been in seconds before. As it collapsed, a great cloud of cement dust rose up and got into my eyes, nose and throat.

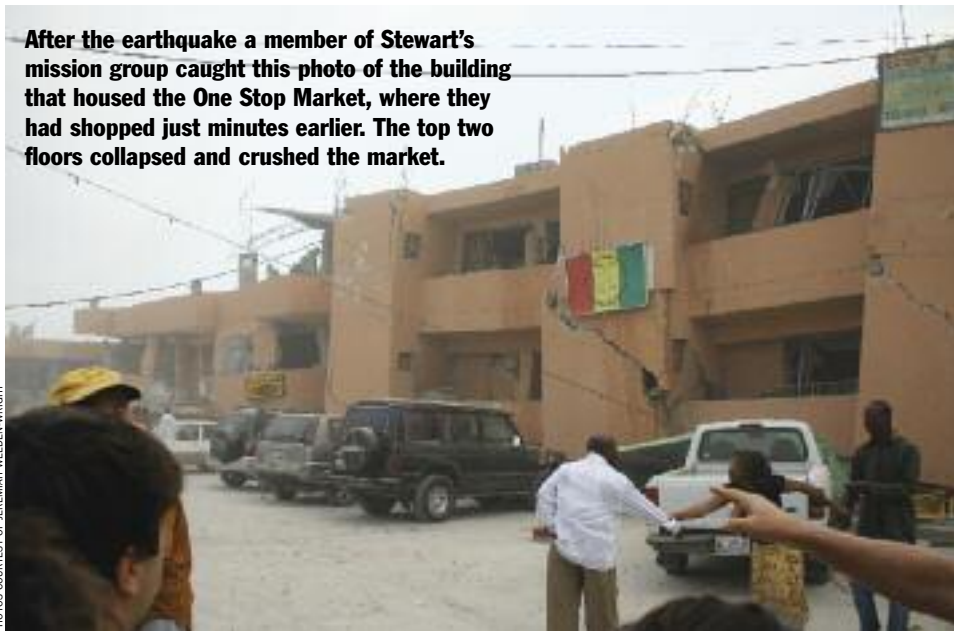
I took a few seconds to clear my vision and saw my wards following me. I quickly counted 10 and found the driver as we stood watching all the buildings to make sure none was falling in our direction.

Chaos broke out. People began running in all directions. Some were coated in blood from injuries, and others were simply running as fast as possible. The noise was loud. People were yelling, crying, screaming. All seemed in shock. Once I determined I had my 10 people and our van driver, I aimed us all back into the van for the short ride to the guesthouse, a mere mile away.

The windows of our van had been bro-



**After the earthquake a member of Stewart's mission group caught this photo of the building that housed the One Stop Market, where they had shopped just minutes earlier. The top two floors collapsed and crushed the market.**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMIAH WEEDEN-WRIGHT

I scrambled to my feet and ran to the middle of the grocery store's parking lot. I turned around to look for the members of my group and saw the three-story building collapse onto the first floor—including the market I had been in seconds before.

ken out, and the front windshield was webbed with cracks, but our driver slowly made his way back to the guesthouse. The streets were filled with people, some running and walking with purpose, others just getting out of buildings. Cement blocks and pieces of cement littered the streets. We began to see the unfor- giving damage to other buildings.

Our driver stopped the van and pointed to a woman on the grass off to the side. It was his wife, and she was injured. He pointed me in the direction of the guesthouse even though I did not see it. I led our people in that direction.

Our guesthouse had collapsed. Three guests who had just moved in that day and two staff persons were dead. Two other staff persons were injured and were being treated for their wounds on the driveway. We were stunned, not knowing what to do. It was now about 5 p.m., and dusk was settling in.

A few of the guys got beds, mattresses, sheets and pillows from another building, and about 40 guests settled in for the night on the guesthouse driveway. Our missionaries came to the guesthouse to see how we were doing and to tell us their apartment was badly damaged.

With no electricity it was dark, the stars brilliant. During the night we saw four shoot-

ing stars. Some of us were very anxious because just outside the house gate we could hear cries, screaming, and the grief that was beginning to grip Port-au-Prince. Inside the gate we were huddled together for a long night, some getting a little sleep, but all safe. A sentry stood guard with a shotgun.

The guesthouse was between two churches. Both congregations had come together after the earthquake to sing hymns of the faith and to pray. While we did not recognize the words they were singing, we often recognized the hymn tune and sometimes sang along in English. There would be periods of silence as well. I knew the pastor was leading the congregation in prayer. Prayers for one another, for Haiti, and even for us were being sent toward heaven and God after the great display of power felt on earth. As the unseen worshipers sang hymns, I thought I heard angels, surrounding us, caring for us, calming us. Unseen things are stronger, more lasting, than the things one can see.

After the very long night at the guesthouse, the manager put our group in the back of a pickup truck and had us taken to the U.S. Embassy, about a 20-minute ride. During the ride we continued to see profound damage to about 75 percent of the buildings. At the embassy

we were welcomed but told we were in for a tough time. They had no food for us and very little water. They were not prepared for us, and we would have a miserable time while there. The general consul at the embassy was right.

We went a full day without food and not much water. We were promised a flight early the next day to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, where we would have our airline tickets changed for our flight back to Nashville. We spent a night sleeping on the floor of a large room at the embassy, with two strong aftershocks waking many of us and sending us scurrying out the door in the middle of the night. The hours were long, but we knew we were as safe as possible and that the embassy staff was working on returning us home.

On Thursday, Jan. 14, after a caravan of cars escorted us to the airport and after an extended wait on the tarmac, we boarded a U.S. Coast Guard C-130 for a flight to Santo Domingo. There the U.S. Embassy was waiting for us with provisions. They had a phone bank that allowed us to call home, and they had some food, clothes and toiletries for us. We had left behind our luggage and everything in them under tons of cement, and all we had were the clothes on our backs. We were taken to a hotel for the night. The next day we flew to Miami and then to Nashville.

As leader of the group, I had a lot of responsibility to get everyone home safe and sound. I would not have wanted anyone from our delegation to have been hurt back in Haiti. It took longer than I had hoped, but all made it home safe and sound. We were welcomed at the Nashville airport about midnight, Friday, Jan. 15, by friends, family, and some people from the media. We were glad to be home and were now able to let loose some emotions we had held in for some time.

Since my return to my comfortable home, my eyes have been glued to CNN, looking for familiar sites and faces. The news reports, though, have been difficult to watch and listen to as the injuries, deaths and devastation only continue to mount. I have been praying for friends in Haiti and all Haitian people every day. I have been telling my story and encouraging people to make contributions toward Haiti relief. I look forward to returning one day to help rebuild churches, schools, and other parts of the whole country. ▼

# A million thanks to all the Reunion 2009 volunteers

Over the last year and a half, our hard-working volunteers encouraged classmates to come back and give back to Vanderbilt. We welcomed 5,160 Vanderbilt alumni, spouses and friends to campus for the 2009 Reunion/Homecoming weekend. Our volunteers' hard work also resulted in more than \$39 million in gifts and pledges—an amount that exceeded our goal. The generosity of the undergraduate Reunion classes and our distinguished Quinqs is already making an impact across campus.



## Reunion 2009 General Chair

Steve Turner  
*Class of 1969*

## Quinq Chair

Buddy T. Fisher Jr.  
*Class of 1950*

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Marianna M. LaRue  
Janie Capps Macey  
Robert E. McNeilly Jr.  
William E. Turner Jr.  
Robertta Witherspoon

## Class of 1959

Lewis E. Akin  
Ann Anderson  
John F. Anderson Jr.  
Edward S. Beason  
Marvin B. Berke  
Melissa Luton Bradford  
Clarence E. Bryan  
Winston P. Caine\*  
William Winder Campbell  
James A. Charron  
William S. Cochran  
Gary Cohen  
James E. Dunn  
Lucia Flowers Gilliland  
Bill D. Grover

Mildred G. Hansen  
Fletcher D. Harvey III  
Elizabeth C. Harwell  
Joan Heywood  
James C. Hickey  
Edwin L. Holt  
Mary G. Jabaley  
Jeanne Janney  
William C. Keaton Jr.  
Jean Sanders Kirkpatrick  
M. Reed Knight Jr.  
Eunetta M. Kready  
Charles B. Lahan  
Joseph F. Lentz+  
Lewis Dubard Lipscomb  
Clellon L. Loveall  
Ralph E. Maple  
Spencer J. McCallie III  
Kay McKinney  
Betty Nunn Morris  
Shelley Carter Page  
John L. Parish Sr.\*  
Yancey R. Parks  
Marshall T. Polk III  
Evelyn Pet Shepherd Pruden  
Thomas B. Redmond Jr.  
Ted L. Ridings  
Elizabeth C. Robertson  
Thomas Jackson Robinson  
Winnie Robinson  
Ellen Fall Russell Sadler  
Patricia Pelot Sanders  
Robert D. Simmons  
Cessna L. Skaggs  
H. Stennis Smith  
Alfred B. Strayhorn  
Edward L. Thackston  
E. Graham Thompson  
William E. Van Order Jr.  
Douglas J. Yates

## Class of 1964

Andrew Bell Benedict III  
Henry B. Cain  
Patricia Gail Caudle  
Lee J. Chase III  
W. Hickman Ewing Jr.  
Alan H. Fruin  
L. Wilford Fuqua

Sallye Martin Galloway  
G. Marc Hamburger  
Judy S. Haynie Hill  
W. Roscoe Johnson III  
Frank D. McArthur II\*  
Rev. Lynn McDowell  
Ann Marie M. McNamara  
Stafford F. McNamee Jr.  
Molly Tarkington Moller  
Joseph W. Robbins  
Bertie F. Shriver  
M. Lee Smith\*  
Jane P. Spainhour  
Robert M. Sullins  
Anne B. Trabue

## Class of 1969

Judy Kemp Amonett  
Douglas Thompson Bates III  
Darryl David Berger\*  
Steven H. Bigelow  
Mary Elizabeth Brabston  
Denise Sarratt Brock  
Leslie R. Brooks III  
Eileen A. Carpenter  
Peter S. Carson  
Patricia J. Christian  
Nancy E. Cooper  
Charlotte M. Covington  
Joe Vault Crockett III  
Harrison S. Davis  
Carol Milton Dean  
David G. Dimit  
Andrew W. Dozier  
Lynne Todd Edgerton  
Tandy L. Easley  
Steven E. Ernst  
John L. Farringer III  
Paul Trowbridge Gillespie Jr.  
Kevin E. Grady\*  
James A. Harper  
Henry Hecht  
Carl P. Heinemann  
Allan B. Hubbard\*  
Judy Hunt  
James H. Kaminer Jr.  
Elizabeth M. Kendall  
Frank M. Kibler Jr.  
Junith S. Koon

Rebecca M. Long  
James G. Martin III  
Fred McPhail Jr.  
Terry P. Medlin  
James H. Morgan  
Jean C. Nelson  
Lee F. Noel  
Charles H. Offenburger  
Thomas J. Reed  
Eugene B. Shanks Jr.\*  
William P. Snow  
Carole B. Steele  
Mark R. Steele  
Marsha M. Stemmler  
Robert G. Storey III  
Judith Thompson  
Cecy Sutherland Turner  
Steve Turner  
Karen Hinson Wakeford  
Mary Kay Walton  
Joe. V. Williams III  
Marsha Tanner Wilson  
Donald M. Wolfson

## Class of 1974

John M. Abernathy III  
J. Robin Barrick  
William Perry Brandt  
Nancy D. Brock  
Mary Henry Choppin  
Ruth Brown Cherry  
Kenneth G. Diehl Jr.  
James F. Dowden  
John C. Eason  
John W. Fowler Jr.  
Harold E. Fredericks  
Charles A. Grice II  
William D. Gutermuth  
L. Wearen Hughes  
Stephen P. Lainhart  
Anthony A. LaRiche Jr.  
Brian A. McEwen  
Rex V. McPherson II\*  
Sam G. Nicholson  
Carroll McCullough O'Brien  
Walter J. Overton  
Gayley Atkinson Patterson\*  
John A. Ramsey III  
Phyllis B. Riggins

Roderick M. Riggins  
William V. B. Webb  
Walter S. Weems  
James Edward White  
C. Nicks Williams+

## Class of 1979

Michael C. Ainbinder  
T. Clark Akers  
Betty Barber Anderson  
Beverly Jane Anderson  
Anne Sumpter Arney  
Herbert Eugene Baggett Jr.  
Sallie Wakefield Baggett  
John L. Bartlett  
Robert Elliott Beard  
Ann R. Beauchamp  
Keith A. Bergman  
Dixie L. Boston  
Nancy R. Butler  
Joel Gregory Coleman  
John Timothy Davis  
Ann M. Degarmo  
James Lambert Ehret  
Carrie Hendrix Eickenroht  
Sarah Bryant English  
Timothy Joseph English  
Kelley Walton Fenelon  
Mary Claiborne Frediani  
Kerry B. Graham  
Robert Downs Gregory  
Bruce Alan Heyman  
Vicki Lynn Simons Heyman  
J. French Hill  
George Barlow Huber  
Patricia Jo Kendall\*  
Lee A. Lahourcade\*  
Stephen John Maroda Jr.  
Ann Dalton McRae  
Thomas Alexander Todd  
McRae  
Lisa M. Menendez  
Barbara L. Mersereau  
James W. Mersereau  
Holly E. Moody  
W. Price Morrisson Jr.  
William Malcolm Mounger II  
La-Voe G. Mulgrew  
Karen Pannell Mullendore





Jennifer G. Nichols  
 Nancy D. Pellegrino  
 Diane Johnson Perry  
 Virginia Faison Perry  
 Nancy Short Phipps  
 Jefferson Lee Reeder  
 Patricia Anne F. Reeder  
 Anne Hauser Roberts  
 Debbie Joan Rutledge  
 John F. Schultz  
 Elizabeth G. Seckman  
 Raymond Clay Seckman  
 Susan S. Sharp  
 Katherine Anderson Sheesley  
 Betsy Koonce Sottek  
 Deborah B. Spoehel  
 Cosby Allen Stone  
 Kristina VanHoose Tignor  
 Jencie Tipton  
 Waymon Reuben Tipton  
 Bradley Charlton Turney  
 Margaret Shook Zeiger  
 Emily P. Zerfoss

**Class of 1984**

Ellen Haddock Chandler  
 Jane Overton Cobb  
 Patricia Elston Cook\*  
 Mary Huddleston Earthman  
 Martha Lyle Ford  
 Carroll E. Kimball  
 Harry Jonathan Klaff  
 Rodd S. Lawrence  
 Jennifer Staats Moore  
 Matthew Johnevan Morgan

Brian T. Morris  
 Richard Murray IV  
 Clark Griff Nicholson  
 James Price Pewitt  
 Leslie Smith Rawlings  
 John Maury Russell  
 Steve Joseph Sage  
 Lizabeth K. Schley  
 Margaret Wyant Schultz  
 Thomas William Sheedy Jr.  
 Michael W. Sheridan\*  
 John David Smart  
 William Hall Spencer IV  
 Paul Bush Stevenson  
 Karen Harris Story  
 Guilford F. Thornton Jr.  
 Timothy L. Warnock  
 James M. Weaver  
 Gay Morris Weber Esq.  
 Richard Gilliam Werner  
 Chandler Scott Wiegand

**Class of 1989**

Barry Kenneth Booker  
 Douglas Harold Bradley  
 Larry Britt  
 Melinda Young Britt  
 Mary Nell Bryan  
 Megan Brockey Butler  
 Katherine McCutchan Carey  
 Angie Gaw Emerson  
 Ike Lawrence Epstein\*  
 Laura Ferman Farrior  
 Clarke B. Futch  
 Christy Cranford Hamilton\*

Kevin Michael Hamilton\*  
 LuAnne Staley Hobbs  
 Ashley Anne Hofwolt  
 Joy Ammer Irwin  
 Elizabeth Howzen Kais  
 Colleen Marie Kavanagh  
 Patrick William Leary  
 Anne Richards McFall  
 Peter John Pawlak Jr.  
 Samuel Donelson Payne  
 Mary Elster Peters  
 Erik Raymond Puknys  
 James Douglas Rippeto Jr.  
 Bridget Roche Snelling  
 Mary Elizabeth Wills  
 Amanda Elizabeth Haynes  
 Young

**Class of 1994**

Robert Louis Baker  
 George Reid Calhoun V  
 Kristin Marie Nagy Catz  
 Lisa Laws Cole  
 Charles Eugene Cook Jr.\*  
 Daniel Lewis Dickinson\*  
 Lina Welliver Dickinson\*  
 Benjamin Chadwick Driver  
 Tee Gillespie Faircloth  
 Hill Ferguson IV  
 Patrick West Flaherty  
 Deborah Gordon  
 M. Eliza Graves  
 Virginia Collier Hopkins  
 Meg Welling Kerr  
 Stephanie Swallows Lowe

Meredith McLeod  
 Kathryn Friedman Miller  
 Sara Jane Misselhorn  
 Hunter Ryan Peterson  
 Joel Anthony Price Jr.  
 Melissa McGuire Price  
 Benjamin Alexander Reitzes  
 Jessica Maier Schnack  
 Will Edwards Settle  
 Emily Plant Sewell  
 Marcus Landon Sherrill  
 Elizabeth Reinhardt  
 Stansbury  
 Amy Katharine Warnock  
 Amanda Jane Zuse

**Class of 1999**

Jimmy Leonard Adams  
 Betsy Sanner Ayala  
 Jason Todd Brown  
 Jason Russell Chambers\*  
 Rachel Aquino Cleaver  
 Rebecca Brock Dixon  
 Dana Ashlea Gordon  
 Michael Chase Gray  
 James Michael Hambrick Jr.  
 Alison Katharine Hayden  
 Navdeep Singh Heer  
 Jessica Lynne Stansbury Hinz  
 Emily Margaret Kamp  
 Bianca Farrah Kaweck  
 Stacey Lynn Kincaid  
 Susan Joan Langenus  
 Jessica Carlen Liess  
 Eric Christopher Lyttle

Hubert Ray Ma  
 Alexandra Rowley Mackey  
 Paul Gerard Maron  
 Claire Munn Portolese  
 Elizabeth Virginia Randall  
 Jennifer Smith Rusie  
 Merideth Helgeson  
 Sorrentino\*  
 Gretchen Lynn Turpen  
 Leigh Elise Tyson  
 Erik Berget Weiss  
 Jeffrey Michael Wilcoxon  
 Anne Landis Williams  
 Betsy Harshbarger Williams

**Class of 2004**

Nicholas Justin Accrocco  
 Madani Aurbakken Adjali\*  
 Marc Ryan Alexander  
 Cameron Higgins Bierce  
 Lauren Elise Bowling  
 Elizabeth Bradford Brakebill  
 Allen Huntington Breed\*  
 Katherine Khoury Buxton  
 Jaclyn Felton Carney  
 Maria del Carmen Carrillo  
 Megan Colleen Casey  
 John Holt Clarkson  
 McLean Collins  
 Jonathan Allen Denning  
 Julie Roper Field  
 Anne Page Gaebe  
 Anita Jean Genetti  
 Joel Alan Hart  
 Jared Patrick Heady  
 Mary Beth Hettinger  
 Matthew David Israel  
 Carol Hyejin Lee  
 Hugh Ross Lucas  
 Jean Beverly Flaherty Maron  
 India Rachel McKinney  
 Chandni Pravin Patel  
 Virginia L. Shanks  
 Jessica Lyn Smat  
 Ashley Thomas Smith  
 Erin Elizabeth Snow  
 Casey Baldwin Stringham  
 John Eastman Tilsch  
 Jessica Gwynn Tipton  
 David Charles Wedemeyer  
 Laura Wicklander West  
 Dustin Ryan Whittier  
 Erica Leigh Williamson



+ Deceased  
 \* Indicates Class Weekend and Fundraising chairs

# Alumni Association News

## The President's Corner



All good things must come to an end. As my term as president of the Vanderbilt Alumni Association Board of Directors comes to a close, I am reminded about exciting changes that have taken place the past couple of years and look forward to the future—of both Vanderbilt and the Alumni Association.

My fellow board members have completed an amazing amount of work. I've watched a very qualified and capable board revise the bylaws of the Alumni Association and improve the structure of the board itself, all while encouraging wider participation among Alumni Association members at large.

Under the expert guidance of Carroll Kimball, BA'84, the board embarked upon a strategic planning process that I believe will strengthen and focus the mission of the Alumni Association for years to come. Even during that ambitious process, the board and the alumni relations staff managed to create new benefits of association membership and increase the number of student/alumni outreach opportunities dramatically while also making those opportunities more focused and effective.

This month a new electronic newsletter, *Alumni eXclusive*, will debut that will keep alumni better informed about activities of the Alumni Association. Opportunities for alumni to get involved through campus organizations and special-interest groups like the AVBA will continue to increase as we investigate and offer benefits that appeal to our alumni.

My able successor, John Hindle, BA'68, PhD'81, has been instrumental in the conception and drafting of the new bylaws, and was integral to the strategic planning process. He brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the Vanderbilt Alumni Association.

I've been fortunate during my term to travel to chapter events all over the country and meet fellow alumni with whom I'm exceptionally proud to have Vanderbilt in common, particularly given the university's rise in national and international reputation during the past decade. Your participation in the Alumni Association can contribute significantly to that ascendancy. Through time, effort, involvement and resources, we all can make Vanderbilt a better place for those who follow in our footsteps.

Thank you for the opportunity you have given me. Calling myself president of your Alumni Association truly has been an honor.

BILLY RAY CALDWELL, BA'85  
*President, Vanderbilt Alumni Association*



JIM BLOCK

## Golden Gate City Welcomes Chancellor

A packed house of Vanderbilt alumni, parents and friends gathered to hear an update about the university from Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos at the City Club of San Francisco on Jan. 28. Here the chancellor, left, chats with (clockwise) Meredith Thacker, BS'97; William Linsenmeyer, PhD'72; Doug Aspell, BA'92; Marjorie Sennett, BA'82; Gretchen Robinson, BS'06; Lisa Lawton, BA'89; and Jeffrey Ratinoff, JD'98.

## Alumni Pass the Torch

As part of a continuing effort to help increase current students' awareness of, and access to, Vanderbilt's network of alumni, the Office of Alumni Relations has created "Dores Across Nashville," a series of small, informal dinner gatherings for students in the homes of Nashville-area alumni. Each gathering centers on a particular interest—rugby, the *Hustler*,

or involvement in AVBA, for example—that is common to both the students and the alumni hosts.

For the alumni hosts these events are chances to share their Vanderbilt experiences and offer insights about life after graduation.

"Participating in Dores Across Nashville has offered me an opportunity to reconnect with Army ROTC through the

## VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BILLY RAY CALDWELL, BA'85  
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*President-Elect/Vice President*

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*Immediate Past President*

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James Crumlin Jr., BA'94, JD'97

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Lisa Uiberall-Noble, BA'93

James Stofan  
*Associate Vice Chancellor  
for Alumni Relations*



**Alumni  
Association**



# REUNION '09 by the numbers

**5,160** guests in attendance

**18%** increase in attendance by 2009's reuniting classes since their Reunion five years earlier

**\$39 million** raised in gifts and pledges

**4,651** undergraduate alumni made a gift in honor of their Reunion

**9** of 12 undergraduate Reunion classes exceeded their fundraising goal



Remember the times, rekindle the memories, and reconnect for life. If your graduating class year ends in 5 or 0, make plans now to attend **Reunion 2010**, which is set for the weekend of Oct. 21–23. Return to campus, and recapture your black and gold spirit. For continuously updated information, go online to [reunion.vanderbilt.edu](http://reunion.vanderbilt.edu).

current cadets we welcomed," says Ross Rainwater, BA'68, a recent dinner host with his wife, Suzanne. "As an AROTC student in 1968, I knew I would soon face service in Vietnam. These young cadets today face service in the War Against Terror. My wife and I treat this as an honor to extend a 'pre-thank you' for their service to our country."

Seven Dores Across Nashville events took place last fall, and approximately 10 others are taking place this spring. Many alumni families have expressed interest in

hosting a future event. "I didn't know there would be such an interesting and fantastic mix of undergraduate students and alumni [at the event], and I enjoyed getting to know people who love Vanderbilt in different ways," says Natalie Larson, a senior and recent Dores Across Nashville participant. "I was overwhelmed by the hospitality of our hosts and the interesting lives of my peers. I had a great time!"

For more information about Dores Across Nashville, email [robin.dunn@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:robin.dunn@vanderbilt.edu).

## Alumni Chapters Focus on Community Service

Last October alumni members of the Vanderbilt Atlanta Chapter were presented a President's Volunteer Service Award recognizing the group's nearly 400 hours of service to the Atlanta Community Food Bank during the previous year. Chapter members have been volunteering for the food bank on a monthly basis since 2007.

"We have wonderful turnouts at all our community service events," says Sarah Watson, BA'05, community service chair for the Atlanta Chapter. "Even food bank events, which are monthly, still draw a crowd. It's a great way for Atlanta alumni to get together, have fun and socialize, all while helping out the community."

Other community organizations that have benefited recently from the Atlanta Chapter's volunteer efforts include the Georgia Special Olympics, Ronald McDonald House Charities, a local shelter that helps homeless families to become self-sufficient, and a rehabilita-

tion hospital for patients with spinal cord and brain injuries.

The Atlanta Chapter is far from alone in its mission of service. From the West Coast to the Big Apple, Vanderbilt chapters increasingly are coming together to make a difference in their local communities.

The Charlotte, N.C.; Birmingham, Ala.; and Phoenix chapters all have devoted time packing food boxes and sorting and labeling canned goods for local food banks. The Chicago Chapter prepared dinner for guests at a community shelter, while the New York Chapter painted classrooms at a Brooklyn school. The San Diego Chapter organized a team for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the San Antonio Chapter worked to refurbish a community garden. And these are just a few recent examples.

Service opportunities for Vanderbilt alumni around the world are abundant. To find out how you can be part of your local chapter, go to <http://vuconnect.com/chapters>.



**Bill Bolling**, executive director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank, presents the President's Volunteer Service Award to **Cindy Carson**, BS'02, co-president of the Vanderbilt Atlanta Chapter (left); **Sarah Watson**, BA'05, chapter community service chair; and **Meghan Pietrantonio**, BA'05, chapter co-president. The federal awards program, which is administered by the U.S. President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, honors Americans who, by example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service.

## Stay Connected with Vanderbilt

[www.vuconnect.com](http://www.vuconnect.com) **VUCONNECT** A Vanderbilt network of alumni, students and friends worldwide.

**facebook** [www.facebook.com/VanderbiltAlumni](http://www.facebook.com/VanderbiltAlumni)

**LinkedIn** Search "Vanderbilt Alumni Group"

**twitter** <http://twitter.com/VanderbiltAlum>

# The Greater Good

## Citizens of the World

*“Demand things of the world and if they don’t do it, then change the world to suit those demands.”*

—Live Aid co-founder Bob Geldof,  
Nichols–Chancellor’s Medal recipient, 2008

FOUR YEARS AGO Ed Nichols, JD’70, and his wife, Janice, established two unique Vanderbilt philanthropic efforts to honor his parents through the Edward C. and Lucile H. Nichols Charitable Trust.

Each May since 2006, Vanderbilt has awarded the Nichols–Chancellor’s Medal during Senior Day, a day of activities for graduating seniors and their families held the day before Commencement. The award, which includes a cash prize of \$100,000, will this year go to renowned Afghan American author Khaled Hosseini, whose 2003 debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, was a worldwide best-seller.

As a companion piece to the Nichols–Chancellor’s Medal, the Nicholsons created the Nichols Humanitarian Fund, which encourages Vanderbilt students to become better citizens of the world and to broaden their thinking by volunteering for humanitarian efforts. Since 2006 the Nichols Humanitarian Fund has provided more than 50 students with awards to cover their educational, living and travel expenses.

These students have served in communities all over the world, including Australia, Costa Rica, India, Nicaragua and South Africa.



**Musician, activist, and 2008 Nichols–Chancellor’s Medal recipient Bob Geldof is flanked by Ed and Janice Nichols.**



**Tyler Sanchez, Class of 2010, uses his Nichols Humanitarian Fund award to spend a month working with International Development Enterprises India. Here he demonstrates how to use a treadle pump in the village of Gorakhpur.**

Support from the fund is primarily focused on summer projects or those that occur during defined academic breaks.

In summer 2006 the Nicholsons traveled to Kampala, Uganda, to see the work that some student recipients were doing. “These students worked tirelessly in hospitals, hospices and orphanages showing great compassion toward community members,” says Ed. “We were able to witness the courage and determination of children and families left in cities ravaged by deaths from AIDS. When I think about how remarkable these students are who work in these communities, I know that things will get better.”

Janice traveled to Melbourne, Australia, during the summer of 2008 to be part of the Vanderbilt Initiative for Scholarship and Global Engagement (VISAGE) program and participated in service activities hand-in-hand with some of the fund recipients. “The students and I learned about global warming and water desalination,” says Janice. “We saw for ourselves how little water they had and

how precious a resource it is.”

The couple encourages Vanderbilt alumni to make their next vacation an active learning experience. “By donating to student scholarships, you will receive the reward of a lifetime that will keep giving in the future.

—Shelley McFarlan, MEd’07,  
Vanderbilt International

## Wattles Fellowship Launched Promising Careers

DURING THE PAST 40 years, more than 100 graduating Vanderbilt women have had the once-in-a-lifetime chance to begin their careers at world-renowned Lloyd’s of London, thanks to the generosity of one man.

In 1969, Walter C. Wattles, BA’36, established a fellowship to allow women to live in London for one year after graduation, working as underwriters and brokers.

“[Wattles fellows] were the first women to do business on the floor of Lloyd’s,” says Anne Horsley Riegle, BS’83, a former Wattles fellow. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to experience international business, and that experience translates into any job opportunity.”

When Wattles, a prominent insurance executive, first began sending female college graduates to Lloyd’s in 1969, the fellows held mostly clerical positions. Beginning in 1978, Wattles sent only Vanderbilt graduates, with the women’s responsibilities becoming more demanding each year. Past fellows have gone on to become doctors, lawyers and stock brokers; some have continued to work for Lloyd’s and its American affiliate companies.

Walter Wattles grew up on the Vanderbilt campus. His mother, Myrta Woodson Wattles, managed the old Wesley Hall, where she also lived with her young family.

Wattles was 95 when he died last June.

For many years the management and process of selecting Wattles Fellows was overseen by Walter Wattles and a committee made up of former recipients.

In recent years the fellowship in its entirety was transferred to the Wattles Board, composed primarily of former participants. Van-



derbilt no longer oversees the funds received for the fellowship.

Because of changes in visa laws in the United Kingdom, the Wattles Program has not been able to send fellows to London for 2009–10, but its overseers hope to resume the program soon.

## Scholarship Honors College Friendship

ON THE SURFACE, Suzanne Perot McGee and Priscilla Call Craven didn't have much in common when they enrolled at Vanderbilt 28 years ago. McGee, BS'86, the daughter of plain-spoken Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot, was an elementary education major. Craven, BA'86, the granddaughter of noted American art critic and author Thomas Craven, was an art history major.



**Priscilla Craven (left) surprised Suzanne McGee by flying to Dallas and walking with her friend during part of the Avon 60-Mile Walk for Breast Cancer last year. McGee was the top fundraiser for the event.**

But the two have been good friends since their Vanderbilt days. When they returned to Vanderbilt for their 20th class reunion in 2006, Craven, who now teaches Italian and art history courses at the University of Colorado, proposed a toast to celebrate the fact that she recently had paid off the last of her college loans. Besides her Vanderbilt undergraduate degree, she also had earned a master of arts degree in language from Middlebury College and a master of arts degree in art history from the University of Colorado.

"Priscilla has always been so full of inner joy, and a great listener," McGee says of her

friend. "When we were students, I always knew how thankful she was to be at Vanderbilt. She was on financial aid and had to work hard not only during the school year but during the summer."

The fact that it had taken her friend 20 years to pay off her college loans made an impression on McGee—so much so that she made a decision to fund a need-based scholarship. The Priscilla Call Craven Scholarship, established in 2006 with a gift of \$1.5 million, provides much-needed support to deserving undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Science and Peabody College, with preference given to incoming freshmen who have an interest in the humanities.

The Perot family has gifted Vanderbilt with both its financial support and its active involvement for many years. Suzanne's husband, Patrick McGee Sr., BS'85, is currently fundraising chair for the Class of 1985's 25th reunion. Three of Suzanne's siblings also graduated from Vanderbilt—Henry Ross Perot Jr., BA'81; Nancy Perot Mulford, BA'82; and Carolyn Perot Rathjen, BA'90. Henry Ross Perot III just completed his B.A. in history last spring, and two other Perot family members are current students—Sarah Perot and Ross Mulford Jr.

## Question Everything, and Pass It On

AFTER MARTIN MCNAMARA JR. died 26 years ago, his family honored him by establishing the Martin F. McNamara Jr. Honor Scholarship, which provides scholarships based on academic merit to undergraduates in the College of Arts and Science.

Both Martin Jr., BA'32, LLB'32, and his wife, Elizabeth Frazier McNamara, BA'31, attended Vanderbilt and first met as college students.

"Vanderbilt made a great impression on them," says their son, Martin McNamara III, BA'58. "And the greatest thing they learned was to question everything. To me, that's the essence of an education. Our parents passed that on to us, and we passed that on to our children, who are passing it on to *their* children."

Martin Jr. was an all-time letterman dur-



**Aaron Noll, a sophomore biological sciences major from Fort Mitchell, Ky., is a forward on the basketball team and the current recipient of the Martin F. McNamara Jr. Honor Scholarship.**

ing the glory days of Vanderbilt football. Elizabeth played basketball as a teenager at Hume-Fogg High School. "She was a very accomplished bridge player and something of a math wizard," Martin III says of his mother, who died last year at age 101.

Martin III is convinced his dad would be proud to know the young men and women who have been recipients of the family's generosity. "The current McNamara Scholar, Aaron Noll, is just a joy. He walked onto—and made—the Vanderbilt basketball team."

The one-on-one relationships that have resulted from endowing the scholarship have made it "one of the most gratifying experiences of our lives" for Martin III and his wife, Ann Marie Mathis McNamara, BA'65. Philanthropically speaking, he adds, "In terms of bang for your buck, it's hard to beat."

Also supporting the scholarship that honors their father are Martin III's two sisters and their husbands: Elizabeth (Molly) McNamara Sasser, BA'56, and Dr. William F. Sasser, BA'56; and Matilda (Tillie) McNamara Moore, BA'60, and her husband, Herschel Moore.

Martin III and Ann Marie's three children—Margaret McNamara Tezak, BA'86; Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) McNamara Wills, BA'89, MEd'02; and Catherine Ann McNamara Grier, BS'91—all followed their parents to Vanderbilt, as did the Sassers' son, William F. Sasser III, BA'89. ▼

*Find out more about opportunities to give back to Vanderbilt:*

<https://givingvanderbilt.edu>

# The Classes

“ *During his 50-year career, Richard Moore, BA’56, has handled farm*

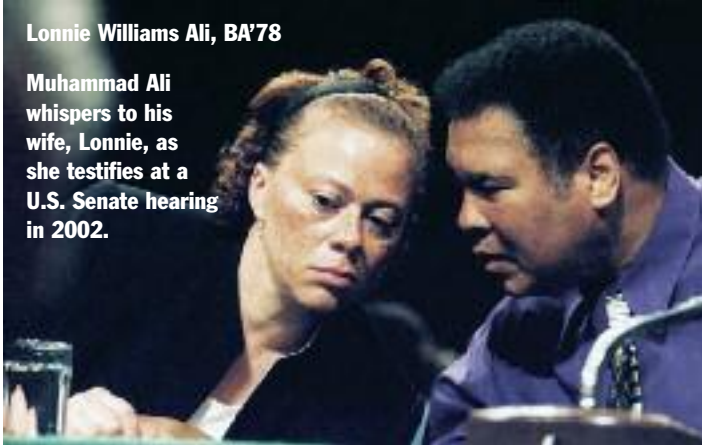
**N**ews for this section should be sent by mail to Nelson Bryan, class notes editor, at *Vanderbilt Magazine*, PMB 407703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7703; by email to [vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu); or by fax to (615) 343-8547. Please include your degree, class year and, when applicable, maiden name. You also may send us news, submit a photo, access other class notes, or update your address and other biographical information electronically through Vanderbilt’s online alumni community at [www.vuconnect.com](http://www.vuconnect.com). Your submission may be posted in both *Vanderbilt Magazine* and on VUconnect’s password-protected Web site unless otherwise specified.



and ranch real-estate law matters in more than 60 Texas counties. ”

**Lonnie Williams Ali, BA'78**

**Muhammad Ali whispers to his wife, Lonnie, as she testifies at a U.S. Senate hearing in 2002.**



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

## **The Greatest Fight**

When Lonnie Williams married the world's most famous athlete in 1986, she knew little about the degenerative neurological condition that was just beginning to grip Muhammad Ali's body. Since then, Parkinson's disease has steadily continued to rob the Olympic gold medalist and three-time world heavyweight champion of his physical abilities, leaving his wife in the multiple roles of partner, caregiver, and public champion for research funding for the disease.

"I didn't take it on as 'our' illness," Lonnie Ali recently told *AARP* magazine. "Better to externalize it into something more positive."

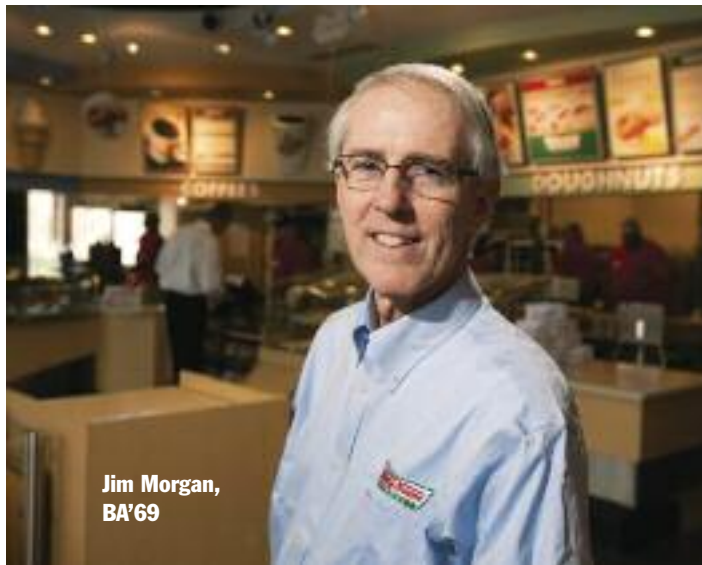
Ali has testified before Congress on behalf of the National Parkinson Foundation, and her determined efforts helped pave the way for the new Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, near the Alis' home. The new 10,000-square-foot facility opened last December and is expected to see about 1,600 new patients annually.

About 1 million Americans are currently living with Parkinson's disease, and most of those individuals rely on a caregiver to provide encouragement, support, and help with life's daily activities. Ali advocates positive thinking, laughter, meditation, plenty of rest and a healthy lifestyle as key coping mechanisms for those who are caring for someone with a chronic illness—along with a dose of reality.

"You can't be everything for everyone," she recently wrote in *Reader's Digest*. "I would love to imagine myself as superwoman, but I'm not. I have to make choices that are best for me and my family. It's been a process, but I am learning not to sweat the small stuff."

“ *Sam Feist, BA'91, is vice president of*





Jim Morgan,  
BA'69

WILL MCINTYRE

## Sweet Rewards

“We believe there’s a greater purpose in life than selling doughnuts,” says Jim Morgan. “During the past two years, we’ve committed to a new mission of taking this incredible product and brand and using it as an instrument through which to touch and enhance lives.”

Morgan is president, CEO and chairman of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts Inc., the Winston-Salem, N.C., company whose “Hot Doughnuts Now” sign tempts patrons in 18 countries. And if you think he’s feeding you a public relations line, think again. He is quite serious—and sincere—about Krispy Kreme’s ability to create goodwill in the world.

Case in point: Benjamin, a Tennessee 7-year-old who’d had a heart transplant as an infant, chose his local Krispy Kreme store as the place to celebrate what he called his “sixth heart birthday” on Feb. 26, 2009. When the store’s employees heard his story, they specially made heart-shaped doughnuts iced in red and delivered them to Benjamin’s class at school.

“From that point on, the store practically adopted him,” says Morgan, who personally corresponded with the boy. In February of this year, just after the company sent him a plaque naming him “Krispy Kreme’s Greatest Fan,” Benjamin passed away. Morgan keeps the thank-you letter from Benjamin’s mother in his briefcase.

“To have had somebody like Benjamin brought into our lives like that, to know about a life that was changed by a product—by a *doughnut*—is amazing. And strangely enough, I could tell you dozens of similar stories. Our brand is a thousand times bigger than our company. When people find out I’m associated with Krispy Kreme, their eyes light up. It’s a joy.”

—Phillip B. Tucker

“Ana Lopez, BS’99, has been named



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

## Early to Rise

It's fitting that one of the shows Willie Geist hosts on MSNBC is called *Way Too Early*. If there's one gripe he has about his job, it's the necessity of waking up in the wee hours of the morning. "When the alarm clock goes off at 3 a.m., I definitely re-evaluate my station in life," he laughs. "I can't sugarcoat that."

In the same breath, though, Geist acknowledges just how fortunate he feels to be on television. "I know this sounds a little corny, but if I didn't love my job and work with people who are genuinely my friends, it would be impossible to get out of bed so early."

Geist's TV career has been several years in the making, but his big break happened overnight—literally. When MSNBC dropped Don Imus' show in April 2007 after his infamous remarks about the Rutgers women's basketball team, network executives suddenly had three hours to fill. "The next day they threw a few of us on air and said, 'Go! Do anything. Just talk for three hours,'" Geist recalls.

MSNBC eventually offered Geist a spot on the talk show that replaced Imus': *Morning Joe*, which he co-hosts with Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski every weekday. Geist also hosts the aforementioned half-hour news show *Way Too Early*, as well as *ZeitGeist*, a satirical video blog on msnbc.com. He frequently contributes to other NBC News programs, including the *Today* show.

"I feel bad for the Rutgers players, and for Don, too," he says, "but that one comment opened up a whole world for me and changed my life for sure."

—Seth Robertson



*Washingtonian of the Year by Washingtonian magazine.* ”

“ *Dr. Alexis Rodriguez, BS'05, volunteers as a physician*




*at a small rural clinic in the Guatemalan highlands.* ”

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**Southern Journal** continued from page 84

Chemists were dreaming up new food products, advertised to people of modest means and eagerly adopted by the public. Fresh foods were replaced by convenience foods, with long lists of ingredients and additives. I remember when Oreos and sugared breakfast cereals were new. Frozen TV dinners became available, but my family never ate them, preferring home-cooked meals. I find it difficult

She may argue that she was not the perfect mother, but she is the perfect mother for me. I know there is always a place for me and mine at her table, where each of us feels loved from every direction and buffered from the ugly or frightening parts of life.

to forget Mama's standbys in those days: the creamed chipped beef on toast, fish sticks, meatloaf, hash (her name for beef stew), wedges of iceberg lettuce with bottled French dressing, and canned green beans cooked in a pressure cooker. As we dawdled reluctantly over each bite, we kids were frequently admonished to appreciate what we had because there were starving children in China. With no clear idea of the whereabouts of those children, I was more than willing to send them my food. But her homemade pies and cakes were *the best*, and that motivated me to clean my plate.

We carried our lunches to Will Rogers Elementary School—sandwiches on soft, white bread with the crusts cut off to eliminate any texture, and always cut in triangles and wrapped in wax paper. After lunch in the school cafeteria, we had regular drills, getting under our desks or lining up in the hall with our hands protecting our little necks from nuclear bombs and tornadoes.

After-school snacks were an enticement to share our day's experiences. It was at snack time that we first heard a favorite family tale. "Mama, tell us about the time you poured soup in my hair," I would plead. I'm told I poured my cool, congealed Campbell's tomato soup in my innocent and unsuspecting sister's hair. Shocking us all, my exasperated mother poured

soup in my hair to teach me a lesson, only to create a grand mess for herself.

Moments like these have reassured me that maybe I could be a good parent without losing myself. We don't have to behave perfectly all the time, but there are consequences. The soup story was my earliest indication that Mama was a real person, not just my mother. I got the occasional uneasy feeling that she wondered, *Who are these little girls, and when*

*is their real mother going to come and get them?* When she said, "You are driving me to the loony bin and you'll have to visit me there," that was our clue to back off for a while. Thank goodness she stayed to see that we were "raised right." She may argue that she was not the perfect mother, but she is the perfect mother for me. I know there is always a place for me and mine at her table, where each of us feels loved from every direction and buffered from the ugly or frightening parts of life.

In the '50s moms wore aprons in the kitchen while dads got dressed, had breakfast and coffee, and went off in the family's one car to work in the world beyond the neighborhood. Unable to comprehend or explain what a chemical engineer did at a paint and varnish company, I told people my daddy painted houses. He did paint ours, with full family participation. I lived for the day I could be the one on the ladder. As an extension of his work, he was always "cooking up" some product for us to use at home—cleaners, sunscreen, insect repellent, shampoo, colored concrete for our driveway, and more. These no-name-brand substitutes for commercial products were slow to gain family acceptance. He was experimental, too, when he cooked food. I remember the potatoes, dropped into boiling resin, while he grilled on the cooker he made from a 50-gallon paint drum. Con-

sidering recipes as formulas to be refined and tested was an engineer's approach to food, and not a bad legacy. His experimentation left us open to change, when the food revolution of the early 1970s freed us from reliance on convenience foods and led us back to "from scratch" cooking.

Through the changes of the years, the family has gathered to share food. We are how we eat, and who's at the table is more important than what is on it. Still, what's on the table draws my family there. Look for us in the kitchen. ▾

EDITOR'S NOTE: In 2006 a group of nurses who graduated 40 years earlier gathered at Vanderbilt for a class reunion. The event ignited the spark of an idea that soon led to formation of The Nurses' Apron Partnership (TNAP), a grassroots organization whose mission is to assist nurses in providing health-care services that might not otherwise be available. To help support TNAP, dozens of Vanderbilt nursing alumnae and professors contributed literary submissions to *Gotcha Covered: A Legacy of Service and Protection* (2009, Westview Inc.), which was compiled and edited by Ginger T. Manley. This essay by Linda Schlesinger Mabry, who lives in Tallahassee, Fla., is adapted from *Gotcha Covered*. All book royalties will be donated to Burning Bush Inc., a nonprofit microlending organization supporting community development initiatives in Central Kenya. Find out more about The Nurses' Apron Partnership at [www.thenursesapronpartnership.com](http://www.thenursesapronpartnership.com).





# Southern Journal

Reflections on the South

## Look for Us in the Kitchen

*At the family table, each of us feels loved from every direction and buffered from the ugly parts of life.* By LINDA SCHLESINGER MABRY, BSN'66

I HOPE THERE'S A KITCHEN IN HEAVEN. My loved ones know to look for me there. In fact, I expect to go to heaven straight from my own kitchen, leaving behind a freezer full of food and, less likely, clean dishes. I come from a long line of enthusiastic cooks and have persistent memories of family kitchens where I learned about life and the value of family members who care about each other.

On my father's side of the family, Great-Grandma Crawford made sweet wine from muscadine grapes and stored it in crocks down in her Tennessee basement. Her son, Henry, was allowed to taste it, but her daughters were not. Once, finding a batch of this medicinal potion, thickened and dark with age, my dad and his brothers got the dog drunk. Whether or not the boys tasted it themselves remains a secret.

Other family members had their specialties. Great-Grandma Schlesinger had a way with fresh spinach. Plain Grandma, my paternal grandmother, had a way with hot fudge sauce, which was always in the blue pitcher when we visited. It thickened just right when poured over vanilla ice cream. ("Plain Grandma" was my way of differentiating the grandmother with the same name as mine—Schlesinger—from the one with a different last name.) Plain Grandpa loved salty country ham and made his redeye gravy with coffee in it. On special occasions he made taffy, which the kids got to pull with him. He let us dig potatoes, pick cukes for bread-and-butter pickles, and gather huge blackberries from the fence row along his garden. There he taught us ditties like:

"Pie, pie, 'tater pie  
P-i-e, e-i-p, pie  
E for, i for, eat a  
piece of pie for,  
We just love that  
'tater pie."

When we wondered how anyone could eat a pie made of vegetables, Grandma made such a pie for us. I never see a sweet potato pie without the urge to burst into song.

On Mother's side of the family, Grandma Stoughton's German doughnuts, fragrant with mace, were an unusual treat. For special occasions she made a sherry pudding and brought in bowls of her beautiful roses for the table. To this day I prefer my grapefruit with salt and my cantaloupe with pepper, like they season them in Texas. The Stoughtons lived in Dallas and ran their neighborhood grocery store next door. When we visited, they let me mind the store. Grandpa was a wiry, hardworking man with the softest of hearts. It was his practice to run a tab for people who did not have the money for their purchases. He always let us fill a bag with candy and Devil Dogs from their store to take on the long drive home. Maybe I can attribute to him my attraction to candy bars.

During the early '50s in Houston, my family had a modern chrome and red Formica dinette set with matching chairs that grabbed the skin on our skinny, bare legs. In the sticky



climate (no air conditioning), the breeze from a black oscillating fan accompanied meals for much of the year.

A finicky eater through all of childhood, I must have been a disappointment at the table. My sister and I drank so much chocolate milk that the nonflavored version was referred to as "white milk." There was only whole milk at the time; my grandmother referred to it as "homogenized milk." She grew up with fresh milk, so the cream rose to the top and needed shaking to mix before drinking. One of us spilled milk at almost every meal. Was it rambunctious girls or unstable glasses? We lived the '50s ideal of family togetherness, and supper together was a ritual. There we eventually learned table manners, and now we rarely spill our milk.

We saw the dawn of a new age in food.

*continued on page 83*



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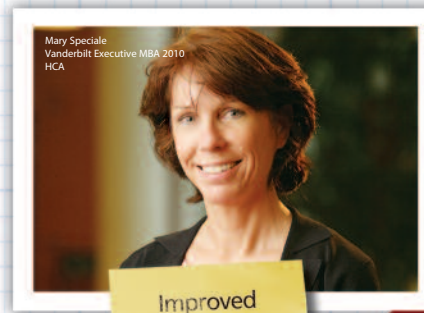
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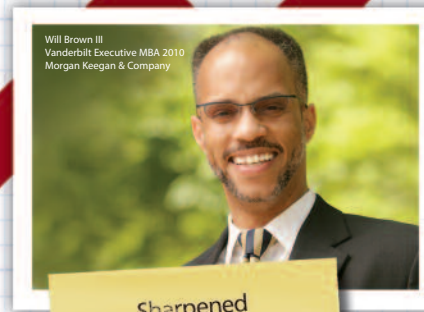
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