

spring 2008



# Echoes from the Holocaust

*"Many survivors were not able to put their lives back together. I was one of the lucky ones."*



PERSONENBESCHREIBUNG

Beruf *Kaufmann*  
 Geburtsort *Dresden*  
 Geburtstag *4.7.23*  
 Wohnort *Dresden*  
 Gestalt *wittel*  
 Gesicht *oval*  
 Farbe der Augen *grünblau*  
 Farbe des Haare *braun*  
 Besond. Kennzeichen */*

KINDER

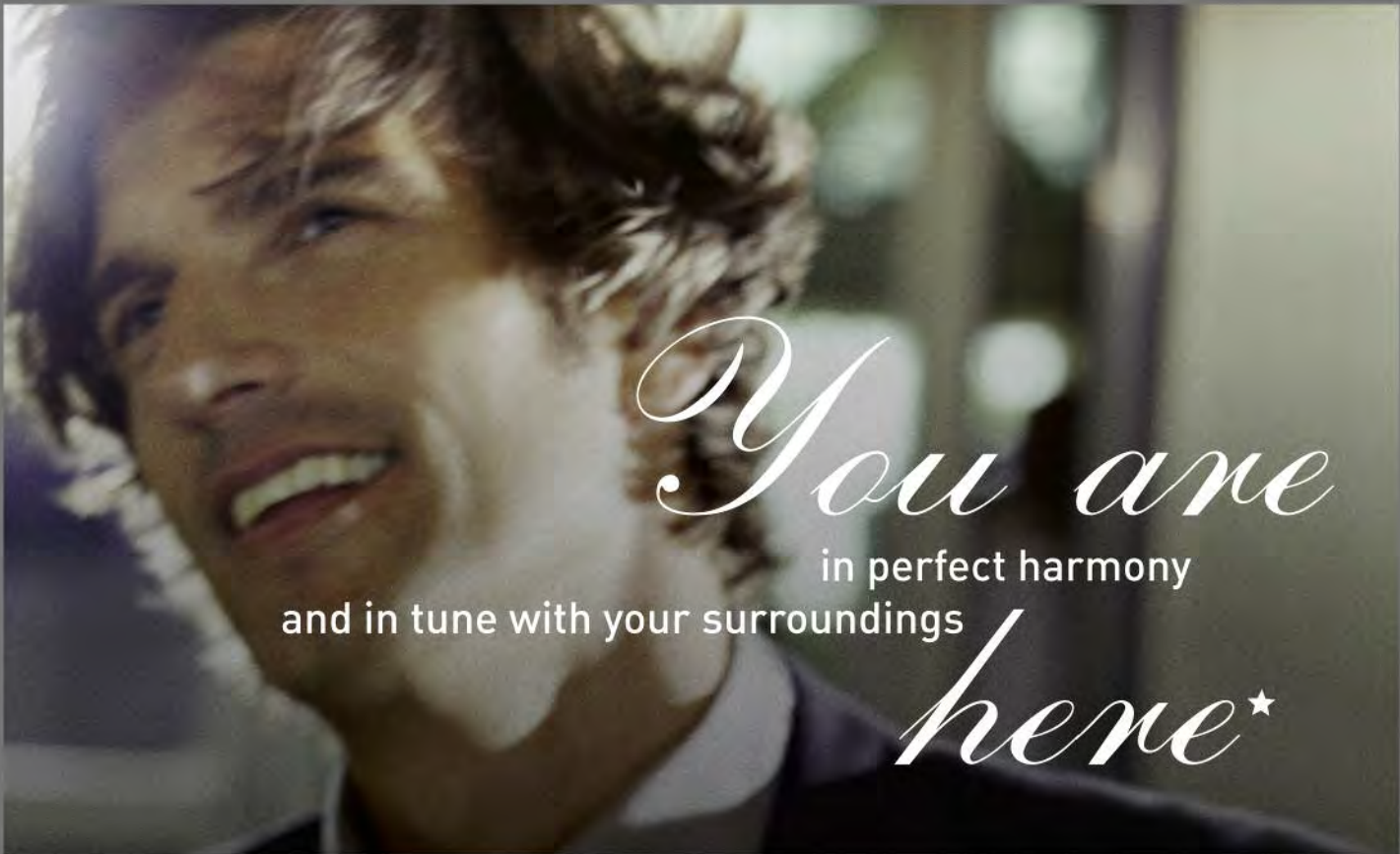
Name	Alter	Geschlecht
<i>/</i>		

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß der Inhaber die durch das obenstehende Lichtbild dargestellte Person ist und die darunter befindliche Unterschrift eigenhändig vollzogen hat.

Dresden, den *23. Aug. 1938*

*also:* Zeppos Named Chancellor Saving America's Dropouts Nanotechnology





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# Vanderbilt Chooses Eighth Chancellor

*Zeppos Exemplifies Scholarship, Innovation and Commitment*

Nicholas S. Zeppos was named Vanderbilt's chancellor March 1 following the Board of Trust's winter meeting. The unanimous election of Zeppos, who had served as Vanderbilt's chief academic officer since 2002 and interim chancellor since last summer, marks the first time in 70 years that Vanderbilt has chosen a chancellor from within the university.

"I always will consider myself a faculty member, a teacher," Zeppos said in accepting the appointment. "A university is the most vital institution in society because it is built on timeless values of truth, knowledge, discovery and healing."

"We wanted a chancellor who was a true scholar," said Dennis C. Bottorff, BE'66, chair of a nine-member committee that undertook a national chancellor search following the resignation of E. Gordon Gee last August.

Since 2002, Zeppos has overseen the university's undergraduate, graduate and professional education programs, as well as research in liberal arts and sciences, engineering, music, education, business, law and divinity. As provost and vice chancellor, he chaired Vanderbilt's budgeting and capital planning council, led fundraising and alumni relations efforts, and oversaw the dean of students and dean of admissions.

Zeppos has led a number of initiatives at Vanderbilt, including the planning process for The Commons; the Strategic Academic Planning Group; innovative efforts in undergraduate admissions and financial aid; and development of programs in Jewish studies, law and economics, and genetics, among others. He has led the university's current *Shape the Future* fundraising campaign, which exceeded its \$1.25 billion goal two years ahead of schedule and set a new target of \$1.75 billion by 2010.

Zeppos joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 1987 as an assistant professor in the law school, where he was recognized with five teaching awards. He served as an associate dean and associate provost before becoming provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in 2002.

From 1982 to 1987, Zeppos practiced law in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Department of Justice and at Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering. He has written



widely on legislation, administrative law and professional responsibility. He served as chair for the Scholars Committee, advising the Senate and the American Bar Association on the confirmation of Justice Stephen Breyer, and as chair of the Rules Advisory Committee of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

A magna cum laude graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Zeppos is married to Lydia Ann Howarth. They have two sons, Benjamin, 21, and Nicholas, 18.

"This great university has come so far, so fast," said Martha Ingram, chairman of the Board of Trust, "and the principal reason is Nick's enormous intellect, his great vision, and his tireless commitment."

Zeppos called his appointment the second best thing that happened that week. "Beating Tennessee was the best thing," he added. The Vanderbilt men's basketball team beat the No. 1-ranked University of Tennessee 72-69 on Feb. 29.

More about Zeppos and his vision for Vanderbilt will appear in the summer issue of *Vanderbilt Magazine*.

**Find out more: [www.vanderbilt.edu/chancellor](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/chancellor)**



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### **Outfitters to Wookiees and Warlocks**

Paul Bielaczyc, BS'02, MS'04 (standing), and his brother, Michael, only use their special powers for good, helping solve the age-old problem of what to wear to your next Renaissance festival or science fiction convention. The brothers create ogre masks, elf ears, faun pants, fangs, wounds, swords and more. For a girlfriend's-eye view of Paul's strange and wondrous world, see page 68. Photo by Chip Talbert.



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## 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 Nashville and recently has written for the Travel Channel, *Nashville Scene* and *Peabody Reflector*.

## Dwayne O'Brien

Dwayne O'Brien, MA'05, is a Grammy-nominated musician and songwriter. After earning a bachelor's degree in chemistry from East Central University, the Oklahoman moved to Nashville to pursue a music career. A founding member of the group Little Texas, he and the band have sold more than 6 million albums and topped the charts with 15 top-10 and three No. 1 hits. O'Brien was the first person to earn a master's degree in the communication of science, engineering and technology at Vanderbilt, where he is a regular contributor to *Exploration*, Vanderbilt's online research magazine.



## Claire Suddath



Claire Suddath, BA'04, worked three years at the *Nashville Scene* alternative weekly newspaper after leaving Vanderbilt. She currently attends Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and lives in a tiny apartment in New York City with her dog, Molly. When she's not writing, Suddath spends most of her time taking the wrong subway and getting yelled at by New Yorkers.

## Frye Gaillard

Frye Gaillard, BA'68, was born in the Deep South and has been writing about the region for almost 40 years. His latest book, *With Music and Justice for All: Some Southerners and Their Passions* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2008), is an anthology of some of his most compelling works, including several pieces originally published in *Vanderbilt Magazine*. Gaillard is writer-in-residence at the University of South Alabama and the author of 17 additional works of nonfiction.



## Lisa A. DuBois



Lisa A. DuBois has penned stories for newspapers, magazines, radio and video. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's degree in biomedical communications from Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. She recently completed a history of the founding of Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, *More Than a Place* (Providence House Publishers, 2007).

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# Dore Ways

## From the Editor

### *Age of Consent*

ONE OF THE FIRST FRIENDS I MADE after I began work at Vanderbilt in 1986 was Grace Zibart, then editor of *The Vanderbilt Lawyer* and associate editor of *Vanderbilt Magazine*. A native New Yorker, she had been assistant fashion editor at *The New York Times* before she married a Nashville boy, Carl Zibart, BA'29, at the close of World War II.

Carl and his brother, Alan, BA'31, owned and ran Zibart's Bookstore. Grace was hopeless on a computer or behind the wheel, but she was a peerless writer and a great friend to aspiring writers. She seemed to know everyone on a first-name basis—Allen Tate and Robert “Red” Penn Warren and Al Gore and David Halberstam, sculptors and chefs and nuns.

Being invited to Grace's and Carl's home for dinner was always an event. On one such occasion, I remember Carl declaring over cocktails—there were always cocktails—that he had reached the point in life where, if he got 100 pages into a book and didn't like it, he quit reading without guilt. He was past 80 at the time.

Grace died in 1999 and Carl in 2004. I've been thinking of them lately as my husband and I have been de-cluttering our own home, culling books we've accumulated during 30 years of marriage.

I've no qualms over giving up outdated travel guides, reference books made less essential by the Internet, and how-to books acquired back when I envisioned myself as someone who would make potpourri from my own roses and jam from my own peaches.

But what should I do with that stack in the corner of the loft, books I've started but never finished, a towering testimony to my failings as a reader? There's *Don Quixote*, started when we were working on a *Vanderbilt Magazine* profile about Cervantes scholar Edward Friedman (Fall 2005 issue). Holding up a 940-page book in bed gave me reader's cramp. There's Thomas Friedman's *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, abandoned after three chapters, in that corner longer than our troops have been in Afghanistan and Iraq. There's *The Satanic Verses*, bought after Salman Rushdie visited Vanderbilt last year. I made it to page 83 before I bogged down; now the characters of Farishta and Chamcha have become a muddle and I need to start over. You'd think a book that created such furor would be more interesting.

There are a dozen more volumes in the corner, too, their covers curled and forlorn, spurned in favor of books I found more readable. I will be married nearly another 30 years before I reach the age Carl Zibart was when he cut himself some slack and stopped reading past page 100. I don't think I have his fortitude. Cervantes and Rushdie are going into the Goodwill box; Friedman stays. The need to understand more about the Mideast isn't going away anytime soon.

—GayNelle Doll



JOHN A. RIZZO

## From the Reader

### Thumbs Up for Residential Education

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST Whitney Weeks' piece on the College Halls initiative [Fall 2007 issue, “Common Ground,” p. 52]. The article was informative and gave me a good overview of the entire College Halls vision. In particular, the sentence “Disengaged students make less of an academic contribution to Vanderbilt and become un-enthusiastic, disconnected alumni” struck a nerve.

Although somewhat of a loner by nature, I feel that my own experience at Vandy would have been greatly enhanced by the opportunities that seem available with The Commons and subsequent housing/learning facilities. Although the Greek system works well for many students, those outside that system will especially benefit from this new approach. Kudos to all those whose hard work is making this project a reality.

J. ERIC KINDBERG, BA'68  
Charlotte, N.C.

I'VE JUST FINISHED READING the article about The Commons and think the College Halls concept is a great idea by which to foster community among students and faculty.

As a Peabody alumna who lived in Memorial Hall (we called it UDC, of course) from September 1949 through May 1953, I've had special interest in watching the construction webcam as the new buildings took shape practically in my dorm's backyard. I was interested, too, to read that the old dorms (Memorial, East, etc.) have been gutted and refurbished as part of The Commons plan.

I have many happy memories of all my four years at Peabody, including living in the dorm—roommates and friends, impromptu social events, sunbathing on the roof, hamburgers at the Krystal—elements that helped make up my college experience.

Because of Peabody's small enrollment

A forum for exchanging ideas

at that time, I felt a sense of community that I hope the College Halls will create for students now and in the future. I send my best wishes to all those involved in this new-old concept — especially the students.

CAROLYN WHITAKER CROWLEY, BA'53  
Fort Worth, Texas

### Government-Run Health Care Isn't the Answer

I FOUND THE ARTICLE "Big Shoulders, Deep Pockets, Tightened Belts" [Fall 2007 issue, p. 30] interesting but misdirected. Health care in the U.S. is the best in the world thanks to facilities like Vanderbilt. The federal government is the worst place to put money decisions for my health care or anyone else's.

As a small business owner, I offer medical insurance to employees. They choose if they want it. I pay 50 percent of the premium. It is available for families, if they choose. I pay competitive prices for coverage that is better than average. I price my product and services so that I can provide this medical

insurance. I also pay worker's compensation, state medical and federal medical taxes.

Nowhere in the article do you discuss the pricing of health-care products or services. Health care is the only U.S. industry I know of that is not controlled or influenced by competitive price technology.

I am sorry for the suffering of individuals injured because of negligence or stupidity or carelessness. To suggest that government should pay for medical services because someone does not have health insurance is wrong. The Hippocratic Oath is clear. Doctors who take that oath are aware of what it says. I do not ask a doctor to pay for my individual judgments. Why should he ask me to pay for his?

As a final point, you buried an item about "uninsurable immigrants" in the middle of the article. Prohibiting illegal immigration would reduce the burden on the health-care system.

Providing health care for less than 15 percent of the population by raising taxes and wages for medical professionals who

chose the profession and reducing local control of the health system makes no sense.

DAN DEVORE, BA'68  
Atlanta

### Hatfield Roots

IMAGINE MY SURPRISE when I turned to page 24 of the Fall 2007 issue [The Campus, "Tumors May Have Fueled Hatfield-McCoy Feud"] to see a picture of my husband's grandmother and great-grandfather.

My husband, U. Grant Browning, MDiv'58, is the grandson of Betty Hatfield Caldwell and the great-grandson of [Hatfield clan patriarch] William Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield. Our daughter, Barbara Browning, BA'78, is the great-great-granddaughter of "Devil Anse." The feud is an interesting part of our family history, but I never expected to see a connection to Vanderbilt.

Thank you for an informative article.

ELIZABETH MEGGS BROWNING, MA'54  
Nashville

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IT WAS A PLEASURE to read the piece about Sylvia Hyman and her art [Fall 2007 issue, *The Mind's Eye*, "Stories Told with Fictional Clay," p. 61]. I first learned of the lady in 1967 when she was teaching in the ceramic studio next to my sculpture class. She had a love for clay and teaching that transcended her studio, and I changed my schedule the following term so I could benefit from her.

Her achievements as an artist are impressive, but they pale when compared to the devotion she gave to her teaching and her students. May she live forever!

JAMES ADAMS, MA'68  
Mankato, Minn.

## Tobacco, Nostalgia and Accountability

I GREW UP IN NORTH CAROLINA. The article "The Crop That Built Carolina" [Fall 2007 issue, *Southern Journal*, p. 88] brought tears to my eyes as I relived my growing up days. I have an appreciation for what so many gave to make life better for each future generation. I realize that tobacco has brought harm to many, which at the time was not common knowledge. Today my memories run deep of how the tobacco farm and the lifestyle in eastern North Carolina shaped the person I have grown to be. I wanted to move away and to pursue an education, which I did, and that was a good thing. I now view life on the farm as one of the best character-shaping experiences that one could ever have.

WILLA FRIDAY  
Cumming, Ga.

I WAS PRETTY STUNNED to read the *Southern Journal* in the Fall 2007 issue. We see a smiling picture of Mary Tom, who professes no guilt about her "hand" in making tobacco—a product that kills.

Her reasons: "It has been grown for centuries"—i.e., history makes it right; "using it is a personal choice"—i.e., it's your fault for smoking it; "I used the product for about 10 years"—i.e., I used to do it, so it's OK.

Did she know about the dangers of tobacco or even have a choice in her upbringing? No. But she should recognize that not feeling guilty because she benefited from the production of something that causes others to die is just a twisted rationalization.

She should know that it is OK for her to

feel guilty. It really is OK.

ANDREW GELLENE, MBA'94  
Baltimore

I FOUND "The Crop That Built Carolina" in the Fall 2007 issue nostalgic, not because I grew up on a tobacco farm, but because of my Vanderbilt experience.

When I was an NROTC midshipman during the '70s, one of our instructors was familiar with some tobacco farmers in the Nashville area. Each fall he would assemble a crew of midshipmen, and we would "volunteer" to help out with the "putting in." This seemed to happen in September or October.

As Ms. Bass pointed out, it was a labor-intensive process. I remember riding out of Nashville in the back of a pickup truck before dawn, working harder than I had ever worked, being fed a tremendous (and tremendously good) breakfast by the farmer's family, then working many more hours of intense labor before being fed an even bigger and better lunch, then working again until dark, and finally bouncing back into town, feeling every aching bone. I don't remember how much we were paid, but given the sorry state of food services at Vanderbilt in those days,

the meals were well worth it.

I recall us midshipmen being the "strongest and most agile of the young men" and hoisting the sticks into the rafters of the barn. That was fun. Those were the days.

Although I have never smoked, and don't really know why anyone does, I still have a fondness for the process of "putting in" as part of the tremendous variety of experience I obtained as an undergraduate at Vanderbilt.

MARK REDELSHEIMER, BE'77  
Newport Beach, Calif.

## The Simple Life

THE FALL 2007 ISSUE WAS THE BEST *Vanderbilt Magazine* ever. After almost 82 years in this fascinating world, it was refreshing to learn that all of the technical advances made in my lifetime can't bring us happiness.

I was thrilled to read that Logan Ward ["*American Rustic*," p. 42] chopped a chicken neck, slopped hogs, read by kerosene lamp, and canned the vegetables of his labors. 'Tis true we don't enjoy life's progress until we've been without.

Mary Tom Bass' story on tobacco [South-



ern Journal, "The Crop That Built Carolina," p. 88] was up my alley, too — bravo to Vandy for teaching us that you don't get it all from books, but rather through life's journey and those whose lives we touch.

I started at Vanderbilt in 1948 (the first experimental year for students going to both Peabody and Vanderbilt), joined American Airlines as a flight attendant, and continued going to the university. I received my degree on the run.

My son and his family are up-to-the-minute innovators — high-speed Internet, e-mail, iPods, you name it — but you will find me in the kitchen fixing chicken and dumplings. Living is an art, and the secret is to learn to live passionately.

PHILA HACH, BS'49  
Joelton, Tenn.

### Poor Publishing Decision

I CONTRIBUTED A PROFILE of Marie Wilson to the Spring 2007 edition of *Vanderbilt Magazine*. The article describes Wilson's long career — in the Civil Rights Movement, community churches, higher education, electoral politics, leadership of the

Ms. Foundation, and founding the White House Project.

For some reason, a reader named Daniel Gray used this piece to launch a nasty and false personal attack on me. For some reason, *Vanderbilt Magazine* Editor GayNelle Doll published the attack.

Gray calls me "a big supporter of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision." He writes of "an undeclared war that people like she [Ms. Wilson] and Mr. Euchner have waged against boys for several decades." He says I "must not be happy" to learn about positive efforts like a midwifery program or an effort to save Kenyan children for adoption, and that I "must not have been thrilled with" former Chancellor Gordon Gee's praise for a pro-life activist. Gray closes by expressing horror at "how many future Vanderbilt students have been eliminated" because of Roe — clearly implying that I would endorse such "elimination."

In fact, I have never publicly expressed an opinion on Roe, either pro or con. Like most Americans, I am ambivalent about this issue. I respect greatly people on all sides of the issue who honestly and com-

passionately seek the best answers to abortion and related issues (e.g., sex education, strengthening the family, child care, adoption).

Vanderbilt's decision to publish this nasty attack on me (and Marie Wilson) — false and defamatory in every way — was unconscionable.

I have urged Interim Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos to adopt a formal policy against publishing personal and libelous attacks in university publications. Vanderbilt has long celebrated its policy of open dialogue, which Chancellor Alexander Heard did so much to advance. Now Vanderbilt should embrace basic standards for honesty as well.

CHARLES EUCHNER, BA'82  
New Haven, Conn.

### 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*, VU Station B #357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or e-mail [vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu).

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--Ethel Battle, MSN'70

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## Copy, Paste, Plagiarize

Teaching scholarship to a generation of googlers requires prevention, detection and action. By MICHELLE MILLER SULIKOWSKI

A FEW YEARS AGO I TAUGHT a non-majors chemistry course at Vanderbilt. I wanted to make the class relevant, so I had the students write a paper about the application of chemistry to everyday things. Students wrote about Dead Sea salts, Gatorade, NASCAR tires, and the chemistry of love. It was exciting to read these nuggets. Some of the papers were so good that I wanted to use the material for future courses. So I googled the references, and there in front of me were paragraphs of plagiarized material. After three instances I began to look for the plagiarized material and was shocked at the enormity of the problem. Fully one-third of my class had handed in plagiarized papers.

What had I done as an instructor to make these students believe that the only way they could be successful was by cheating? What was my responsibility in this charade? Was the assignment clear? Was it meaningful? Did they really understand plagiarism? I was distraught because I felt that I had failed my students.

In its mild form, plagiarism is quite prevalent. Every student has a few sentences here and there that are inadvertently plagiarized or too closely paraphrased. However, it is widely believed that plagiarism is on the rise and, depending upon the institution, anywhere from 38 to 76 percent of students admit to the practice at least once during their college career.

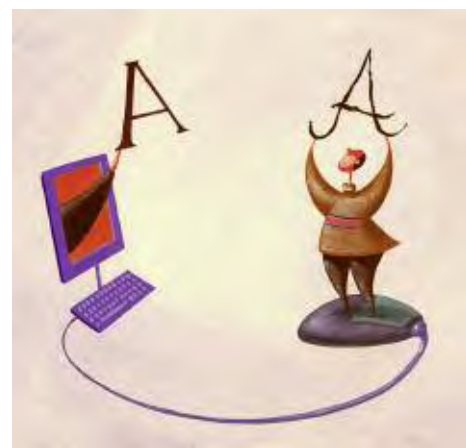
As recently as 15 years ago, gathering research information meant physically going to the library and searching through antiquated card catalogs, flipping three-by-five-inch

index cards for hours on end to find just the right book. As you searched for one item, you inevitably came across 10 more items that caught your eye. Getting information was hard work and required skills that had to be learned through trial and error.

Today every piece of information you can imagine is on the Web. Librarians and instructors have become tour guides of information. We are no longer the gods, the keepers of all information that is worth knowing and remembering. Our students now have access to all of the same information as their instructors. It is both wonderful and terrifying. One hour of Internet research is worth several days of old-style searching. Students now download papers directly onto their laptops, cutting and pasting important material into a Word document. The process is easier, more efficient—and more prone to inadvertent plagiarism.

At Vanderbilt we have begun using a tool called SafeAssign, an electronic plagiarism-detection technology available to all instructors. Students submit their work to the SafeAssign portal, and the technology crawls the Web in search of text that matches the submitted paper. The technology is not perfect, as it only accesses electronic material, not images and not books in print form. Several versions of SafeAssign are available, and each uses specific database search engines, so it is entirely possible that some plagiarized material will go undetected. An “originality report” is generated that shows any suspect material along with its source.

The question then becomes how to use the technology. We could be covert about it and attempt to catch cheaters by submitting



BRUNO BUDROVIC

their papers without their knowledge and then confront them when the report is generated. But students generally dislike this approach, and it promotes an adversarial relationship between the instructor and students. The best relationship between a student and instructor is one of trust, and this approach destroys that trust. On the flip side, others argue that if students are cheating, then they deserve to be caught, and it should not matter how they were caught.

What I choose to do in my Freshman Writing Seminar is to use SafeAssign as a teaching tool. I explain the purpose of SafeAssign to students at the onset of the course. We discuss its use as a deterrent to plagiarism, as a means to check for inadvertent plagiarism, and as a tool to teach about paraphrasing and the appropriate use of quoted work and referencing. Students submit their work to the SafeAssign portal and can then view an originality report and fix any problems without penalty. They resubmit their papers for a second and final time to the SafeAssign portal.

*continued on page 85*



# 1,000 Words

*One image frozen in time*





## Talk Among Yourselves

Sandy Besser, BA'58, shares his Santa Fe home with thousands of works of art, including Koi Neng Liew's "One Pretty Flower for Mr. Rabbit Man," shown here. "There's a story behind every single piece in this house, and I don't have favorites," Besser says. "They are all my babies." For more about Besser's collection, see page 64. Photo by Jane Phillips.





# The Campus

“The progress at Vanderbilt University over the past



SPEAR volunteers turn last year's leaves into next year's compost.

Vanderbilt hired Marcus Kerske, who with his family operates Nashville's Gardens of Babylon, a nursery and landscaping center based on sustainable practices.

“Our biggest challenge was getting enough oxygen into the leaves to allow the right decomposition,” says Kerske. An enormous single pile of leaves was reconfigured into a 90-foot row about 7 feet high, so that a front-end loader could turn it to expose all layers to oxygen.

The first batch of rich, dark compost was loaded into trucks recently and returned across campus to be spread under the trees that shed those leaves several seasons ago.

“Compost helps rejuvenate plants and trees in urban settings due to the richness of the microorganisms in it,” explains Kerske. “This is the first step toward rebuilding the soil structure in these beds.” The insulating layer of compost will also be helpful if last summer's drought conditions recur.

“The bigger concept each autumn will be to shred some leaves finely enough to fertilize our lawns without shading out the grass, to shred some onto bed areas under trees, and to haul enough leaves to the Natchez Trace composting operation to keep the cycle going in order to renew the vigor of our campus soil for future generations,” says Newbern.

## Enrollment Numbers Soar; Overall Applications Shatter Record

THE PERCENTAGE OF African Americans in the fall 2007 freshman class increased by 12.3 percent over the previous fall, placing Vanderbilt fourth among the highest-ranking U.S. universities, according to *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*.

“The progress at Vanderbilt University over the past decade has been extraordinary,” the journal observed in January. “In 1995 only 4 percent of all freshmen at Vanderbilt were black. This year the figure is 10.3 percent.”

Of the highest-ranking universities selected by *U.S. News & World Report*, Vanderbilt

## Compost Happens

VANDERBILT HAS MORE TREES than undergraduate students—an estimated 7,500 leaf-producing specimens on its 330-acre campus. Until recently, all the leaves collected from autumns past were stockpiled at Natchez Triangle because nobody could figure out what to do with them.

“The Grounds Department wanted to incorporate green

principles to compost the leaves for our own use on the grounds,” says Judson Newbern, associate vice chancellor for campus planning and construction. “But we had been unsuccessful at transforming the massive pile of leaves into usable compost.”

Working with Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Recycling (SPEAR),





# Spring 2008

decade has been extraordinary. ”

— The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education

ranks fourth in percentage of black freshmen, behind Columbia University, the University of Virginia, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Meanwhile, overall graduation rates have held steady.

“This is the result of a directed and purposeful approach to recruiting a diverse student body,” says Douglas Christiansen, associate provost for enrollment and dean of admissions at Vanderbilt. “We set out to achieve this because it means our students benefit from a cross-section of backgrounds and outlooks, as does everyone on campus.”

In the decade between 1997 and 2007, black freshman enrollment at Vanderbilt more than doubled, from 82 to 172.

This year Vanderbilt is also seeing a dramatic increase in

applications across the board. Students seeking admission to Vanderbilt’s fall 2008 freshman class rose 30 percent in one year. The university saw a comparable increase among diverse populations as well as rises in all geographic regions, with the largest increases coming from outside Vanderbilt’s own region.

“This is the most diverse, well-rounded and academically prepared applicant pool in Vanderbilt’s history,” Christiansen says. “Every measure of academic quality is up—standardized tests, class ranking, high school GPA, and the number taking Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and honors courses.”

This year a record of approximately 16,800 students applied to Vanderbilt (for 1,550 available freshman positions), compared to 12,911 in 2007—a 30 percent increase. The number of minority applicants increased by 28.7 percent, with the largest increase coming among Hispanics at 34 percent, followed by Asians at 29 percent, African Americans at 24 percent, and American Indians at 17 percent. Applicants from other countries and from U.S. territories rose 76 percent from 653 to 1,168.

**Enrollment of African American students has more than doubled in the past decade.**

## Growth Spurt

LIKE MOST 4-YEAR-OLDS, the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt is growing like a weed. Although the free-standing hospital was just completed in 2004, Vanderbilt in January obtained approval from the Tennessee Health Services and Development Agency to move forward with expansion.

“We have seen tremendous growth in the number of children treated at our hospital,” says Dr. Kevin Churchwell, CEO of Children’s Hospital. “This growth has led to our hospital being at full capacity most of the year.”

Since opening its doors the hospital has seen an increase in discharges of 37 percent, patient days of 31 percent, operative procedures of 53 percent, emergency visits of 31 percent, and clinic visits of 45 percent.

The total cost of the eight-story addition is projected to be approximately \$203 million, with groundbreaking in 2009 and construction completed in 2012. The expanded building will connect to the existing hospital to the east, including the adjacent block of Medical Center Drive and the space currently occupied by the Vanderbilt Dayani Center for



DANA JOHNSON

**Teacher Mary Laurens Seely helps Tyler Rowland with his studies at the Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital School, where young patients keep up with schoolwork.**

Health and Wellness, which is slated to relocate to the developing 100 Oaks campus.

The new building will house 190 new and relocated obstetrical, pediatric and neonatal intensive care beds. Obstetrical and NICU beds currently in the main hospital will be relocated to the new building.

The total number of licensed beds for the Medical Center will increase to 1,051.

## New Policy Halts Industry Perks

IN A MAJOR POLICY SHIFT, Vanderbilt University Medical Center will no longer allow faculty, staff, residents or students to accept personal gifts >>>





from industry, regardless of the nature or value of the gift. The policy is a response to patient concerns nationwide that medical decisions are influenced by drug companies.

“A colleague at another institution told me about a patient who was given a prescription and said to the doctor, ‘Are you prescribing this drug because that’s what’s printed on your pen?’ That says how powerful this issue is,” says Dr. Steven Gabbe, dean of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Drug representatives may continue to meet with physicians and to supply free samples through the outpatient pharmacy, but they may not attend conferences and continuing medical education classes.

The policy is being phased in over a six-month period, with July 1 as the target date for compliance. It focuses on nonresearch use of industry products and will not affect research relationships or activities.

“This policy is a practical guide for physician interaction with industry,” says Gabbe. “It will give the public great

assurance to know that our decisions are based on what’s best for them.”

VUMC’s executive leadership is soliciting feedback on the policy, available at [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/med-school/FOTO/docs/VUMC-Industry-COI-Policy.pdf](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/med-school/FOTO/docs/VUMC-Industry-COI-Policy.pdf).

## Gifted Kids Get SAVY

NOT EVERY CHILD would want to spend Saturdays in school. But these aren’t your average kids, and SAVY isn’t your average school. Beginning in January and continuing through early March, gifted students in kindergarten through eighth grade had the chance to expand their academic horizons in a new program created by Vanderbilt and held at the nearby University School of Nashville.

To qualify for the Saturday Academy at Vanderbilt for the Young—SAVY—students had to test at the 95th percentile and above on either verbal or quantitative reasoning sections of academic achievement tests or IQ tests.



**The Saturday Academy at Vanderbilt for the Young raises the bar for top students.**

Each class was limited to 12 students, led by teachers trained and experienced in working with the gifted. Classes ranged from “The Deep: The Wonderful, Watery World of the Oceans” for kindergartners to “Going Nuclear: The Solution for Our Energy Needs?” for seventh- and eighth-graders.

Moms and dads also got in on the act. “Parents are among the most important forces in the development of special talents while also fostering

balance and healthfulness,” says Elizabeth Schoenfeld, director of the Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth. “We are offering classes for SAVY parents while their children are in class.”

To learn more about Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth, including SAVY, Weekend Academy at Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt Summer Academy, and the new Med School 101, visit [www.ptv.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.ptv.vanderbilt.edu) or call 615/322-8261.



# Virtual Vanderbilt

## [www.youtube.com/vanderbilt](http://www.youtube.com/vanderbilt)

Vanderbilt has launched its own channel on YouTube, the wildly popular video-sharing site. The channel features a broad range of offerings, including lectures, concerts and news pieces, and content straight from the classroom. Vanderbilt is one among just a handful of universities nationally with a branded YouTube channel.



## Vaccine Research Receives \$24M Booster Shot

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY Medical Center will receive nearly \$24 million from the federal government over the next seven years to continue evaluating innovative vaccines for pandemic flu, malaria and other infections. Vanderbilt's Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Unit is one of eight in the country funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"Obtaining funding for this contract is remarkable, especially in light of shrinking federal budgets for research," says Dr. Jeff Balser, associate vice chancellor for research. "Vaccine development is a powerful tool to fight disease on a broad public scale."

Over the years Vanderbilt's unit has morphed from a small vaccine clinic serving children to a testing center of national importance, beginning when swine flu hit in 1976. The VTEU was the basis for establishing Vanderbilt's HIV Vaccine Testing Unit in 1988. Its long history of responding quickly to the microbial hot topic of the day has made Vanderbilt an international leader in vaccine research.

"The contract will allow us to address growing challenges in this area of research," says

the unit's principal investigator, Dr. Kathryn Edwards, professor of pediatrics and director of the Division of Pediatric Clinical Research. Among the challenges: how to increase the number of participants in these important studies.

"Those folks who have already participated in pandemic flu trials will not be eligible to participate in another round of these trials. We need new volunteers."

Edwards says the VTEU will also work to increase racial and ethnic diversity "so that if there were a pandemic flu, we would have vaccine that would work for all."

Some of the funds will support development of substances that can enhance the strength of the vaccines and thus reduce the amount and number of doses needed.

"That might mean, in the case of pandemic flu, that we can protect our population and others in developing countries that do not have the potential to make vaccines," Edwards says.

Vanderbilt researchers also are working on cytomegalovirus (CMV) prevention, new types of seasonal influenza vaccines and, in collaboration with colleagues at Stanford University, an innovative malaria vaccine that uses a malaria protein carried in the common cold virus.



**Kathryn Edwards works to find a vaccine that would protect everyone from a pandemic flu.**

## Top Picks



STEVE GREEN

### Sevin Awarded Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit

Dieter Sevin, professor of Germanic languages and literatures and chair of the department, has been awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is the only order awarded by the president of that nation.

"For almost 40 years [Sevin] has taught German language and literature at Vanderbilt," said Lutz H. Görgens, the Atlanta-based consul general of the Federal Republic of Germany, in presenting the award. "His entire career so far has been dedicated to promoting the knowledge of German language and literature and culture in the United States."

Sevin, who arrived in the U.S. as a teenager nearly 50 years ago, has published hundreds of articles and books, including one of the most widely used German college texts, *Wie geht s?: An Introductory German Course*, authored with his wife, Ingrid Sevin.

### Cancer Researcher Receives Accolade

Dr. David H. Johnson received the Association of Community Cancer Centers' annual Clinical Research Award last October. Johnson, a professor of medicine, is director of the Division of Hematology/Oncology and deputy director of the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. He was honored for his research, leadership, and commitment to individuals with lung and breast cancers. Johnson's clinical research interests focus mainly on management of thoracic malignancies and experimental therapeutics.



HARRISON MCCLARY

### Swain Joins Humanities Council

President Bush has nominated Carol M. Swain, Vanderbilt professor of political science and law, to the National Council on the Humanities, an appointment that was confirmed in January by the U.S. Senate for a six-year term. The council is the advisory board of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Swain, whose area of academic interest centers on race relations and representation, immigration and black leadership, was appointed in 2007 to the Tennessee Advisory Committee of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

# Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

## Extreme Makeover, Commodore Edition

*Clothes may make the mascot, but it's tradition that gives him his swagger.*

By JASON SILVERS AND NELSON BRYAN, BA'73

IT WAS QUITE THE CONUNDRUM. Mr. Commodore, the “face” of Vanderbilt athletics, had gone missing. Somewhere between the end of football season and the beginning of SEC basketball play, he vanished. AWOL? Unthinkable. Why, the Commodore had been a fixture in Vanderbilt athletics since 1898 when newspaperman and alumnus William E. Beard first labeled the athletes “the Commodores.”

A series of short videos leaked by the Vanderbilt sports marketing group hinted at his whereabouts. He was undergoing a mascot makeover. There was footage of him—always shot from behind—working out under the tutelage of a strength and conditioning coach, and consulting with a Vanderbilt plastic surgeon. And there was the repeated cryptic message: “See the New C 12.1.07.”

Sure enough, on Dec. 1, 2007, in a men's basketball game against Georgia Tech, Mr. C (as he is fondly known) made his return. The crowd erupted with a roar as Mr. C burst onto the court, tall, buff and impeccably groomed. He wore a traditional naval uniform and waved a polished sword that glistened in the lights of Memorial Gymnasium.

Yes, that Mr. Commodore is quite a guy.

Actually, he's three guys. Mr. C is inhabited on a rotating basis by freshmen Mike Fagan and Sam Newman and a third student who prefers to keep his identity a secret. They were named to the Mr. C squad after going through tryouts.

“I did not come to Vanderbilt knowing that I wanted to be the Commodore,” Newman says. “In fact, I had no idea what the mascot was when I picked Vanderbilt. I had zero past experience as a mascot or anything like it. . . . Apparently, the shenanigans I pulled during tryouts were slightly less unfunny

than the rest of the competition's. A day or two later, I was the mascot at the Alabama game, with no instruction about what to do other than the fact that I couldn't do anything obscene or touch the opposing players.”

“When I came to Vanderbilt and saw Mr. C and how he got

the crowd going, I knew I wanted to do that,” says Fagan. “I love the tradition that comes with wearing that suit.”

The Mr. C tradition includes two national titles for mascots: the National Cheerleaders Association championship in 2003 and the Cheerleaders of America championship in 2005.

Today's Mr. Cs attended and worked all

home football games, and each got to attend an away game. “My game was South Carolina, which was an incredible experience,” Newman says of Vanderbilt's 17–6 road win. “The enjoyment I got from running around all over the USC end zone after each of our touchdowns was absolutely amazing. Flying on a charter plane, eating insane amounts of free and delicious food, and staying in a gorgeous hotel weren't too bad, either.”

Two of the Cs usually work the basketball games, alternating between Mr. C and his inflatable sidekick, Big C. They all agree that the new costume looks good, but it's also hot in there. “I wear a fleece muscle suit under the traditional outfit,” Newman says. “It is meant to be the kind of suit that a Disney character would wear, to take pictures with little kids.”

After honing their skills through regular workouts and practices, the three Cs went into action. “Being Mr. C doesn't entail that many duties other than being at the games and getting the fans pumped,” Fagan says. “The latter can be hard, especially if we are losing, but that's what being Mr. C is all about. You have to be pumped all the time, no matter what.

“Interacting with fans is my favorite part. I love the older fans with their usual greeting of ‘Mr. Commodore!’ They remember and respect Mr. C. I also love the little fans with their greetings of ‘Who's that?’ or just a blank stare—but once you put out your hand for a high five, they are more than willing to oblige.” ▼







The three faces of Mr. C are Sam Newman (in gold), Mike Fagan (in black), and a third student who prefers to hide behind the anonymity of the Commodore mask.



Wide receiver  
Earl Bennett



## Football 2007

The 2007 version of Commodore football finished with a 5–7 record, but that was good enough to earn All-SEC honors for four players and attract a suitor for the head coach.

Four Commodores were named to the All-Southeastern Conference team by the league's 12 coaches. Junior wide receiver Earl Bennett and senior offensive tackle Chris Williams were named first-team All-SEC while senior linebacker Jonathan Goff and sophomore defensive back D.J. Moore were named second-team All-SEC.

"I'm extremely pleased for these four young men," commented Coach Bobby Johnson, "and I'm glad that the coaches around our league took notice of their production this season. Chris and Jonathan really blossomed here at Vanderbilt and truly finished off their careers in outstanding fashion. What can I say about Earl—his production during the last three years is unmatched and simply remarkable. And I think the league is just beginning to see how good a player D.J. can be."

This season Bennett became the league's all-time leading receiver finishing with 236 career receptions, 28 more than the previous record holder. He also became the first receiver in Southeastern Conference history to catch at least 75 passes for the third

consecutive season. No other player in SEC history has managed even two consecutive seasons of 75 catches.

Williams is the first Commodore offensive lineman elected first-team All-SEC since Will Wolford in 1984. Goff finished his collegiate career with 304 total tackles, third among active SEC players. Moore finished the season tied for second in the SEC with six interceptions and led all SEC cornerbacks with 63 solo tackles and 83 tackles overall.

Bobby Johnson returns as head football coach for his seventh season after putting down an attempted coaching coup by Duke University. Johnson withdrew his name from consideration for the Duke head coaching vacancy in early December. "I have a deep sense of loyalty to Vanderbilt," Johnson said of his decision. "We've enjoyed some successes in recent years, but all of us want to see more success in the future. That's the goal as I go further in this position."

Since the 2005 season began, Johnson's Commodores have notched 14 victories, tying for the most wins in a three-year span since 1982–84.

"We truly believe Bobby and his staff are an ideal fit for our university," says David

Williams, vice chancellor for university affairs. "Duke correctly identified our coach as an excellent candidate to turn their program around. They saw what we see every day: a man going about his business in a very professional manner."

Vanderbilt awarded its own team honors at the annual postseason football banquet. Senior Hamilton Holliday, a two-year starter at offensive lineman, received the Dedication Award from Coach Johnson, the only award selected by the coaching staff. Marcus Buggs, a senior outside linebacker, received the Captain's Award from the team's three permanent captains. Broderick Stewart, a sophomore defensive end, won the Commodore Hustle Award by a vote of his teammates.



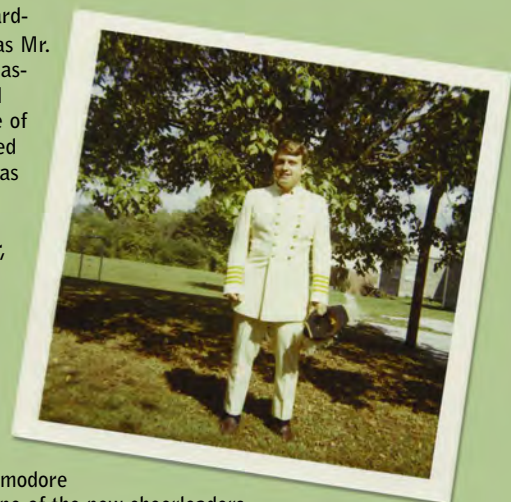
Head Coach Bobby Johnson and linebacker Jonathan Goff

## Where are they now?

**Kenny Diehl, BS'75**, took to the hardwood courts of Memorial Gymnasium as Mr. Commodore in the days before mute mascots with huge foam heads and comical antics—and was one among a long line of cheerleaders who donned the chivalrous costume as the vocal leader of the Commodore faithful. Kenny was a yell leader, leading cheers over the microphone, and in the '71-'72 season he inherited the uniform.



"Brent Blue [BA'72] passed the job to me," he says. "I fit the uniform. We had an old admiral's uniform that was white with yellow ribbons and double breasted. One of the duties of Mr. Commodore during basketball season was to take one of the new cheerleaders and shake hands with the opposing players." Still an avid supporter of Vanderbilt athletics, Kenny is a senior vice president with the Nashville engineering firm of Smith, Seckman and Reid in charge of the civil and environmental engineering groups. Kenny and his wife, Patty Pangle Diehl, MS'76, live in Nashville and have two sons.





# Sports Roundup

## Soccer: Three Named to All-SEC Team

Junior Katie Schulz and freshmen Molly Kinsella and Mary Rachel Reynolds were named All-SEC players in the fall. Schulz, a midfielder, was a second-team pick as selected by the conference coaches. That's her third All-SEC honor, after being named to the All-Freshman team in 2005 and being named first-team All-SEC last year. Both Kinsella, a forward, and Reynolds, a defender, were named to the All-Freshman team. The Commodores finished the season with a 6-10-3 overall record and 3-6-2 in league play.

## Cross Country: Jorgensen, Williamson Earn Top Honors

Vanderbilt's cross country teams named their most valuable players in December. Rita Jorgensen, a freshman from Memphis, Tenn., earned MVP honors for the women's team as a top finisher in five out of six races. Austin Williamson, a senior from Des Moines, Iowa, earned the MVP honor after leading the men's team in three of five races in 2007.

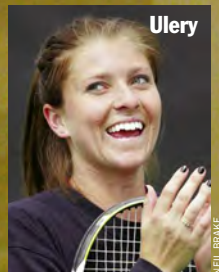
## Golf: Rudolph Cup Established

The Vanderbilt golf programs have established an annual award in honor of Mason Rudolph, the former men's coach and PGA veteran. The Rudolph Cup will be awarded annually to the individual who makes the greatest contribution to Commodore golf. The first recipient of the Rudolph Cup was Mason Rudolph himself, who coached the men's team for five years before serving as director of golf.

Graduate student Karthik Subramanian keeps his eye on the birdie as president and player with the Badminton Club.

## Women's Tennis: Finish Fall in Fine Form

At the end of the fall tennis season, the women's team logged solid performances highlighted by singles victories in the Fall SEC Coaches Classic. Junior Courtney Ulery finished with a perfect 13-0 record, defeating senior teammate Taka Bertrand in the finals of the singles B flight. Sophomore Catherine Newman won the singles A flight. "It was a solid tournament for all involved," said Coach Geoff Macdonald. "Everyone had good wins throughout the weekend." Going into the spring season, four players have been ranked in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's Southeast Region singles poll: Newman at No. 6; senior Amanda Taylor at No. 7; Ulery at No. 10; and Bertrand at No. 19. The double tandem of Newman and Bertrand were ranked at No. 8, and Taylor and Ulery were ranked at No. 12.





# Collective Memory

Vanderbilt's roots revealed

## Silent Partner

*With apologies to the Commodore, it was another 19th-century robber baron who made the greatest impact on Vanderbilt University.*

By CINDY THOMSEN

AT THE END OF THE 19TH century, vast personal fortunes were created in the United States. Industrial advances made from 1870 to 1900 opened opportunities in railways, oil, banking and manufacturing. Savvy businessmen with names like Carnegie, Vanderbilt, Morgan and Rockefeller accrued enough wealth to ensure a life of ease for generations to come.

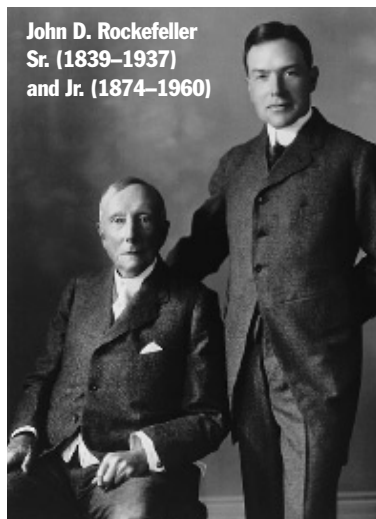
With these riches they built “cottages” like The Breakers in Newport, R.I., and country homes like Biltmore in Asheville, N.C. They took their new money into old homes and mingled with the Edith Wharton-esque characters of the Gilded Age. These so-called robber barons spent on a lavish scale—jewels, travel, and Worth gowns from Paris. But they also revolutionized philanthropic giving in the United States.

Hospitals, museums, opera houses and libraries all benefited from their largesse—and so did Vanderbilt University.

In 1873 Cornelius Vanderbilt agreed to donate \$1 million to endow the university that bears his name. However, the name of the family that has given the most money over the years isn't found anywhere on campus—not on a building or statue or even a

classroom door. When the final accounting is done, the Rockefeller family may have had a far greater impact on Vanderbilt than its namesake.

John D. Rockefeller Sr. founded Standard Oil Co. in 1870 and ran it until he retired in the late 1890s. He is often maligned and charged with the same unscrupulous business practices that ran rampant in the latter years of the 19th century. It is true that he



John D. Rockefeller Sr. (1839–1937) and Jr. (1874–1960)

built his fortune by buying out his competitors. Those who were reluctant to sell were often forced into bankruptcy by the larger Standard Oil. But those who did sell usually found themselves very wealthy—especially when shares of Standard Oil were included in the deal.

As America's dependence on gasoline grew, Rockefeller's stock value—and wealth—grew accordingly. He was easily the richest person in the world and is regarded by some as the richest person ever. A staunch Northern Baptist, he gave 10 percent of every paycheck to his church from the time he was 16. Over the years Rockefeller and his heirs

funneled money to Vanderbilt in three ways—through the General Education Board (GEB), the Rockefeller Foundation and individually.

The GEB was created in 1902 and chartered by Congress in 1903. Its mission was to promote education throughout the United States “without distinction of race, sex or creed.” Specifically, the GEB focused on the education of African Americans in the South. The secretary of the new organization was Wallace Buttrick—a name that's familiar to Vanderbilt alumni and friends. Chancellor James Kirkland quickly formed a relationship with Buttrick when he realized the possibilities that existed within the GEB.

Over the years the GEB donated more than \$23 million to Vanderbilt—including, in 1928, the funds that built Garland, Buttrick and Calhoun halls, and more than \$17 million to the medical school between 1914 and 1960.

In 1910 Abraham Flexner, a Kentucky schoolteacher and principal employed by the Carnegie Foundation to visit and report on medical schools in the United States and Canada, published a document focusing on the sorry state of medical education. The impact of the “Flexner Report” was felt around the country and resulted in the closure of many medical schools.

In 1912 Flexner moved to the GEB to serve as secretary under Buttrick, who had been named president. By 1917 the GEB





had committed \$50 million to improving medical schools, especially in the South. Together, Flexner, Buttrick and Kirkland envisioned a new Vanderbilt Medical School with a research-oriented faculty attuned to meeting the special needs of the mostly poor, mostly rural South. In 1919 Kirkland secured \$4 million to build the new facility—the GEB’s largest grant to a university up to that time. In just 10 years the GEB would invest another \$10 million in the medical school.

In 1913 John D. Rockefeller Sr. created the Rockefeller Foundation with a mission to “promote the well-being of mankind throughout the world.” His son, John D. Rockefeller Jr., was one of the original leaders of the foundation.

One of the foundation’s lasting legacies was the funding it provided to the Vanderbilt School of Nursing. The school was created in 1908 but was not considered a part of Vanderbilt’s overall educational mission. At that time—especially in the South—nursing sometimes meant little more than housekeeping and was not a career of choice for prominent young women.

By 1925 Canby Robinson, dean of the

medical school, envisioned a much-improved nursing school to complement the new medical school. He turned to the Rockefeller Foundation, which gave two grants—one to upgrade the existing school



and one (shared with Peabody College) for a joint public health nursing program. The foundation made other significant contributions to the School of Nursing in 1930 and 1937.

Individually, the Rockefellers have also been more than generous when it comes to Vanderbilt. Today’s Divinity School benefited greatly from a gift John D. Jr.

**Above: Vanderbilt’s new medical center, opened in 1925, housed the medical school, hospital and research laboratories under one roof. The building is now part of Medical Center North. Left: Nursing school class in Mary Kirkland Hall shortly after the building’s 1925 completion, with funding provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.**

made to the School of Religion in 1925. Winthrop Rockefeller bequeathed \$500,000 to Vanderbilt upon his death. And countless other gifts have impacted the university. From research advances to scholarship support to the physical beauty of the campus, Vanderbilt is much indebted to the Rockefeller family.

John D. Rockefeller Sr. is credited with helping to shape philanthropy in America as we know it today. His systematic approach of identifying targets through various foundations has had a major effect on medicine, education and scientific research. During his lifetime it is estimated that he gave away \$550 million. So while Vanderbilt owes its origins and its name to the Commodore, it certainly owes a much larger debt to a man whose statue or portrait is nowhere to be found. ▽



# Bright Ideas

“This shows for the first time that aggression,

## Sex, Food, Drugs and a Slugfest

1. RESEARCH FROM Vanderbilt shows for the first time that the brain processes aggression as a reward—much like sex, food and drugs—offering insights into our propensity to fight and our fascination with violent sports like boxing and football. The research was published online the week of Jan. 14 by the journal *Psychopharmacology*.

“Aggression occurs among virtually all vertebrates and is necessary to get and keep important resources such as mates, territory and food,” says Craig Kennedy, professor of special education and pediatrics. “We have found that the ‘reward pathway’ in the brain becomes engaged in response to an aggressive event and that dopamine is involved.”

“It is well known that dopamine is produced in response to rewarding stimuli such as food, sex and drugs of abuse,” says Maria Couppis, who conducted the study as her doctoral thesis at Vanderbilt. “What we have now found is that it also serves as positive reinforcement for aggression.”

For the experiments, a pair of mice—one male, one female—was kept in one cage, and five “intruder” mice were kept in a separate cage. The

female mouse was temporarily removed, and an intruder mouse was introduced in its place, triggering an aggressive response by the “home” male mouse. Aggressive behavior included tail rattle, a sideways stance, boxing and biting.

The home mouse was then trained to poke a target with its nose to get the intruder to return, at which point it again behaved aggressively. The home mouse consistently poked the trigger, which was presented once a day, indicating it experienced the aggressive encounter with the intruder as a reward.

The same “home” mice were then treated with a drug that suppressed their dopamine receptors. After this treatment they decreased the frequency with which they instigated the intruder’s entry.

In a separate experiment the mice were treated with the dopamine-receptor suppressors again, and their movements in an open cage were observed. They showed no significant changes in overall movement compared to times when they had not received the drugs. This was done to demonstrate that their decreased aggression in the previous experiment was not caused by overall lethargy in response to the drug, a problem that had confounded previous experiments.

The Vanderbilt experiments are the first to demonstrate a link between behavior and the activity of dopamine receptors in response to an aggressive event.

“We learned from these experiments that an individual will intentionally seek out an

aggressive encounter solely because they experience a rewarding sensation from it,” Kennedy says. “This shows for the first time that aggression, on its own, is motivating, and that the well-known positive reinforcer dopamine plays a critical role.”

Kennedy is chair of the special education department in Peabody College and director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development’s Behavior Analysis Clinic.

Couppis conducted her research in affiliation with the Vanderbilt Brain Institute. She is also affiliated with the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and the Vanderbilt Center for Integrative and Cognitive Neuroscience.

## Why Do Women Earn Less?

2. WOMEN HAVE made their way into every aspect of the workforce and comprise 46 percent of employees. Yet they consistently earn less than men.

In separate research studies a Vanderbilt economist has found a disappointing answer to the age-old wage debate regarding pay inequity, and also has pinpointed which professions are best and worst at pay parity. Research by Joni



JUPITER IMAGES



on its own, is motivating

—PROFESSOR CRAIG KENNEDY

Hersch, professor of law and economics, found that even when taking into consideration characteristics that might affect wages—such as choices over household and child-related responsibilities, market characteristics, working conditions, occupational segregation (field dominated by one sex or another), experience or job turnover rates—sex discrimination remained a strong explanation for the gender pay gap.

“If the unexplained pay disparity sometimes favored women and sometimes favored men, there would be no reason for concern,” says Hersch. “But systematically and without exception, finding that women earn less than men raises some questions.”

Hersch’s research found that there is little difference between men and women when it comes to the amount of time they stay in a job. “Although women quit more often for family-related reasons, men quit more often to move to another job,” says Hersch.

What about family and housework? Hersch found some evidence that the presence of children lowers women’s earnings. “But overall the evidence is mixed,” Hersch says. “Any effect varies by education and over the life cycle.” Hersch’s research found that,

contrary to popular belief, family and housework responsibilities are not the major causes for the gender pay gap. She also found that women are almost as likely as men to take high-risk jobs.

“Coupled with recent class-action sex-discrimination litigation involving the securities industry, grocery stores and now Wal-Mart, it’s hard to continue attributing the remaining disparity to intangibles like effort and motivation, and ignore the possibility of discrimination,” she says.

Does education help level the playing field? Not necessarily, says Vanderbilt Associate Professor of Economics Malcolm Getz. Getz’s research found earnings of women at every level of education are lower than the earnings of men. Despite this, Getz found female enrollment in college grew from 32 percent in 1950 to 57 percent in 2004.

“Some argue that, on average, women place a greater value on the nonmonetary rewards from education than men do—the opportunity to choose careers for their intrinsic satisfaction, a greater sense of serving broader civic goals and cultural advancement, the pleasure of learning for its own sake. In this view, education pays higher dividends for women than for men even if it doesn’t necessarily lead to

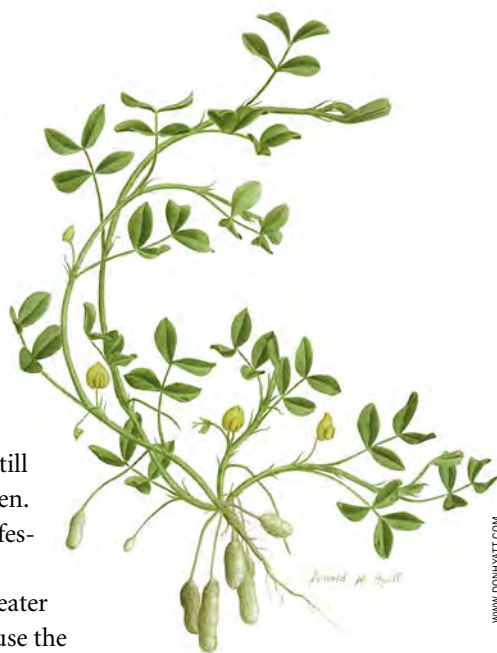
financial parity,” says Getz.

Getz’s research found that, in general, women yielded a higher economic value after earning an advanced degree, even though they still earned less than men. “The payoff of professional degrees for women is much greater than for men because the earnings they can expect in other careers are so much lower,” Getz says.

Getz used data from the U.S. Census’ Current Population Survey 1996–2002 to show the sometimes huge financial gaps between men and women. He found pay disparities are greatest in the fields of accounting, insurance, finance and marketing.

On the plus side, Getz found that female police officers and engineers earned about the same as their male counterparts, even though there are far fewer women in these fields. He also says the law profession is getting closer to pay parity.

Hersch’s research was published in *Foundations and Trends in Microeconomics*. Getz’s research on salaries and the economics of education is included in his new book, *Investing in College: A Guide for the Perplexed*.



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## Early Farming Sowed Seeds of Massive Change

**3** ANTHROPOLOGISTS working on the slopes of the Andes in northern Peru have discovered the earliest-known evidence of peanut, cotton and squash farming, dating back 5,000 to 9,000 years. Their findings provide long-sought evidence that some of the early development of agriculture in the New World took place at farming settlements in the Andes.

The research team made its discovery in the Ñanchoc Valley, which is approximately 500 meters above sea level on the lower western slopes of the Andes in northern Peru. The discovery was published last year in *Science*.

“We believe the develop-





ment of agriculture by the Nanchoc people served as a catalyst for cultural and social changes that eventually led to intensified agriculture, institutionalized political power, and new towns in the Andean highlands and along the coast 4,000 to 5,500 years ago,” says Tom D. Dillehay, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at Vanderbilt and lead author of the publication. “Our new findings indicate that agriculture played a broader role in these sweeping developments than was previously understood.”

Dillehay and his colleagues found wild-type peanuts, squash and cotton as well as a quinoa-like grain, manioc, and other tubers and fruits in the floors and hearths of buried pre-ceramic sites, garden plots, irrigation canals, storage structures and on hoes. The researchers used a technique called accelerator mass spectrometry to determine the radiocarbon dates of the materials. Data gleaned from botanists, other archaeological findings, and a review of the current plant community in the area suggest the specific strains of the discovered plant remains did not naturally grow in the immediate area.

“The plants we found in northern Peru did not typically grow in the wild in that area,” Dillehay says. “We believe they therefore must have been domesticated elsewhere first and then brought to this valley by traders or mobile horticulturists.”

“The use of these domesticated plants goes along with broader cultural changes we believe existed at that time in this area, such as people staying in one place, developing irriga-

tion and other water-management techniques, creating public ceremonies, building mounds, and obtaining and saving exotic artifacts.”

The researchers dated the squash from approximately 9,200 years ago, the peanut from 7,600 years ago, and the cotton from 5,500 years ago.

## Cockroach Just Isn't a Morning Insect

**4** IN ITS ABILITY TO learn, the cockroach is a numskull in the morning and a genius in the evening. Dramatic daily variations in the cockroach's learning ability were discovered by a new study performed by Vanderbilt University biologists and published last fall in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

“This is the first example of an insect whose ability to learn is controlled by its biological clock,” says Terry L. Page, the professor of biological sciences who directed the project. Undergraduate students Susan Decker and Shannon McConaughy also participated in the study.

The few studies that have been done with mammals suggest their ability to learn also varies with the time of day. A recent experiment with humans found that people's ability to acquire new information is reduced when their biological clocks are disrupted, particularly at certain times of day. Similarly, several learning and memory studies with rodents have found that these processes are modulated by their circadian clocks. One experiment with rats found an



association between jet lag and retrograde amnesia.

In the current study the researchers taught individual cockroaches to associate peppermint—a scent they normally find slightly distasteful—with sugar water, causing them to favor it over vanilla, a scent they find universally appealing.

The researchers trained individual cockroaches at different times in the 24-hour day/night cycle and then tested them to see how long they remembered the association. They found that the individuals trained during the evening retained the memory for several days. Those trained at night also had good retention. During the morning, however, when the cockroaches are least active, they were totally incapable of forming a new memory, although they could recall memories learned at other times.

“It is very surprising that the deficit in the morning is so profound,” says Page. “An interesting question is why the animal would not want to learn at that particular time of day. We have no idea.”

Most previous studies of

circadian rhythm have focused on the visual system. “The advantage of eyes becoming more sensitive at night is so obvious that people haven't looked much at other sensory systems,” says Page. “The fact that our study involves the olfactory system suggests that the circadian cycle could be influencing a number of senses beyond vision.”

In the study the researchers used cockroaches of the species *Leucophaea maderae*.

The discovery that the cockroach's memory is so strongly modulated by its circadian clock opens up new opportunities to learn more about the molecular basis of the interaction between biological clocks and memory and learning in general. Much of the new information about the molecular basis of memory and learning has come from the study of other invertebrates (animals without backbones) such as the sea slug (*Aplysia*) and the fruit fly (*Drosophila*).

“Studies like this suggest that time of day can have a profound impact, at least in certain situations. By studying the way the biological clock modulates



learning and memory, we may learn more about how these processes take place and what can influence them,” Page says.

The study was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

## Betty’s Brain Motivates Learning

**5** ANYONE WHO HAS ever helped children with homework knows how much they resist checking their answers. Now a new animated computer program created by Vanderbilt engineers is showing students that self-checking is an effective—and enjoyable—way to learn.

Teachers in Nashville and California public school classrooms are using a program called “Betty’s Brain” to teach fifth- and sixth-grade students about river ecosystems. But “Betty’s Brain” teaches much more than middle school science content. It also teaches students how to learn.

Supported by \$2.5 million in joint funding from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, a team of researchers from Vanderbilt and Stanford universities—headed by Gautam Biswas, Vanderbilt professor of electrical engineering and computer science—has demonstrated that students learn science content much better by using “Betty’s Brain.” Studies at middle schools in Nashville and California show that the students also carry over that learning into new subjects, practice

monitoring themselves along the way, and have fun in the process.

Using a simplified visual representation called a concept map, the students teach a cartoon character named Betty about river-ecosystem processes, such as the food chain, photosynthesis and the waste cycle. Then they test her to see if she has learned her lesson. Unless the students periodically check whether Betty understands the concepts and their relations, she will refuse to take the test. In checking her, the students are really checking themselves and discovering that self-monitoring is an important strategy that applies to all learning situations.

“In order to teach, they first have to learn,” Biswas says. “Students are much more

a sense of responsibility.

Because they are teaching her, they want her to do well.”

At the bottom of the computer screen is an animated cartoon of Betty. A shared concept map, which represents what Betty and the student have learned, is in the middle of the screen. Using speech and animation processes, Betty can demonstrate how she reasons and answers questions with that information.

“The program’s strongest effect is on student reasoning processes,” says Rod Roscoe, a research associate in computer science whose field is the psychology of learning. When students are introduced to new science concepts weeks or months after using “Betty’s Brain,” studies show that they carry over those learning

and simulations that provide animated pictures of what happens to fish in a river if food, sunlight, microorganisms and wastes increase or decrease.

The system gives science teachers tools for incorporating the program into regular classroom activities. Teachers have access to the students’ concept maps, which can be projected on a screen for classroom study and discussion.

The teacher can view each student’s progress, identify where problems are occurring, and receive suggestions on how best to help each individual. “It helps struggling students see that they are not alone, and they learn from each other,” says teacher Sharon Melton.

Biswas, whose field of expertise includes modeling and analysis of complex systems, describes himself as “an engineer or computer scientist who knows cognitive science.” Several years ago he helped design the successful “Adventures of Jasper Woodbury” interactive videodisc series, which focused on mathematics and problem solving. Now he and his colleagues from the fields of cognitive science and science education are working on developing software to teach reading to elementary school students and introductory computer science to college students. ▼

Learn more about “Betty’s Brain”: [www.teachableagents.org](http://www.teachableagents.org)



Middle school students teach a cartoon character and then test her comprehension.

motivated to monitor someone else, but in the process they are actually monitoring themselves. It’s more entertaining for the students, and they feel

strategies in mastering the new material.

Student tools include Mr. Davis’ Library, which contains text explaining the concepts,

For more research stories, visit Vanderbilt’s online research journal, Exploration, at <http://exploration.vanderbilt.edu>.



# InClass

*A spotlight on faculty and their work*

## **Biology, Behavior, and the Tools of Law**

*At the intersection of two disciplines, Owen Jones explores how the law might help humans defy the old adage that biology is destiny.*

By WHITNEY WEEKS, BA'94

**A** CHILDHOOD FASCINATION with animal behavior led Owen Jones on a path to becoming one of the country's foremost experts in the field of law and behavioral biology. Today he is one among a handful of academics in the country holding faculty appointments in law and biology and conducting significant research in both fields.

"Everything law does depends on some model of human behavior," says Jones, professor of law and professor of biological sciences. "And yet our models of human behavior are fairly incomplete and lack a robustness that could be increased by adding insights about behavior that flow from biology."

A consideration of biological factors does not mean "my brain made me do it" becomes a handy legal defense—any more than the height of a child's parents predicts with absolute certainty how tall that child will be in adulthood. "Biology makes understanding human behavior more complex, rather than more simple," Jones explains. "Behavior doesn't come prepackaged in either environmentally influenced or genetically determined potentiality. These things intersect, and they intersect in complex ways that are biologically and evolutionarily influenced."

The intersection of biology and behav-

ior has been of interest to Jones as long as he can remember. A great collector of books on the subject of animal biology, he was also a keen observer of animals and their behavior.

"As a child I remember a mockingbird that used to jump up and display at larger birds, like crows. But I also noticed that it

airplane—that results in a waste of time and energy."

Building on his early interest in biology and behavior, Jones used his undergraduate and law school years to combine a passion for science with an equally intense interest in making the legal system as efficient and effective as possible. As an undergraduate at Amherst College, Jones diversified his interests rather than limiting his focus to animal behavior. The exposure to policy analysis and academic research as well as laboratory work led to his study at the intersection of law and biology and to Yale Law School.

Determined to enter the legal academic market, he completed a judicial clerkship, several years of work with a well-known law firm in Washington, D.C., and published a number of papers in academic journals. His work paid off, and he was offered a position at Arizona State University, home to the oldest program in law, science and technology in the country. Though he was initially appointed to the law school faculty there, his interest and work in biology also earned him a tenured position in biology.

Rather than relying solely on the disciplines traditionally consulted for answers by legal policymakers in the last few decades—psychology, sociology, economics, philos-



TODD DAVIDSON

displayed to distant airplanes, of the same apparent size as the nearer birds," says Jones. "This was a conflict between a behavior that would ordinarily work very well for the bird and a behavior now bumping up against a novel environmental feature—an



Jones: "Behavior doesn't come prepackaged in either environmentally influenced or genetically determined potentiality. These things intersect, and they intersect in complex ways that are biologically and evolutionarily influenced."



ophy—Jones believes the fields of evolutionary biology and neuroscience can provide new, more scientifically sound perspectives.

His research attempts to answer questions related to legal efficiency by asking—through a joint legal and neuroscience lens—how the tools of law could be used to help people behave more like they should and less like they shouldn't. What sort of environmental changes could the legal system encourage, in light of what is becoming known about the brain, that could lead to positive changes in human behaviors? How could law be used to better help people overcome their own evolutionarily, neurologically influenced irrational behaviors?

exploring how neuroscience might transform the legal system prominently featured the work of Jones, his many Vanderbilt colleagues, and the world-class imaging institute led by John Gore. More recently, the field made news when the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced a \$10 million grant to fund the national Law and Neuroscience Project. Jones was tapped to co-direct one of three areas of study within the project.

Through the Law and Neuroscience Project, more than 30 researchers at nearly two dozen universities around the country are divided into three networks dedicated to exploring topics of addiction, brain abnormalities and decision making as they relate

from the Law School, the College of Arts and Science, the Medical School, and the Vanderbilt Institute of Imaging Science. The prospect of working on projects such as the one funded by the MacArthur Foundation brought Jones to Vanderbilt, where he credits a collegial and collaborative atmosphere for making traditional academic boundaries almost arbitrary.

“Disciplines should be linked so that a problem, rather than a subject area, is truly at the forefront,” he says. “You can walk into another department at Vanderbilt and talk to colleagues and get them excited about the prospects of collaboration. That’s not true everywhere. Being transinstitutional enables the university to be aca-

Jones’ team is interested in risk assessment and its role in criminal behavior: What is the chance I’ll get caught? What is the chance I’ll be punished? What might my punishment be? Is the punishment I might receive worth what I might gain if I commit the crime?

“The more you can understand about how and why the brain prompts us to behave the way we do, the better equipped you are to understand the resulting behavior—and to think about ways to effectively and efficiently guide the behavior towards constructive outcomes,” says Jones.

The study of that point where law and science intersect is not particularly new. Forensics testing, expert testimony from psychologists and physicians, and federal regulations regarding genetically modified foods are all examples of ways in which science and its findings are intertwined with the legal system.

Even within behavioral biology, however, neuroscience is a newer addition to the law and science mix. It is within this specific realm that Owen Jones now works and studies. What happens here does not attempt to overlay scientific knowledge onto the existing legal system, but instead calls for a careful examination of how people’s biological capacities interact with our current system of laws and punishments.

During the past year this intersection of law and neuroscience has attracted more widespread attention. A *New York Times Magazine* cover story (March 11, 2007)

to the law. Jones will help lead the decision-making network, which includes Vanderbilt collaborators René Marois, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience; Jeffrey Schall, E. Bronson Ingram Professor of Neuroscience, director of the Center for Integrative and Cognitive Neuroscience, and director of the Vanderbilt Vision Research Center; and Erin O’Hara, professor of law and director of Vanderbilt Law School’s Law and Human Behavior Program.

Jones and colleagues’ team will examine how and why choices are made related to breaking laws. They are particularly interested in risk assessment and its role in deciding whether to engage in criminal behavior: What is the chance I’ll get caught? What is the chance I’ll be punished? What might my punishment be? Is the punishment I might receive worth what I might gain if I commit the crime?

Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanners, their work will also examine the neuroscience of decision making as it relates to determining guilt versus innocence and severity of punishment.

Jones’ highly collaborative work relies on the availability and interest of colleagues

demically nimble in making new discoveries. We are doing exciting theoretical work as well as empirical work here that simply isn’t being done elsewhere.”

That emphasis on collaboration spills over to Jones’ teaching. Last semester he partnered in the classroom with neuroscientist Schall, offering a course in law and neuroscience that enrolled 35 students from graduate programs in law, psychology and neuroscience. Like their teachers, the students worked together on interdisciplinary projects, with the goal of designing new neuroscience research that could be executed at the intersection of law and neuroscience.

“This was an opportunity to get graduate students in neuroscience and psychology in the same room with law students, and it was the first time here we offered a course like this,” says Schall. “It was very exciting, and there was tremendous energy and enthusiasm.”

The course allowed third-year law student Anna Henderson to gain exposure to the field of neuroscience within the context of her own academic work. “I call Professor Jones a true teacher because he loves engaging with students,” says Henderson.

“His favorite thing seems to be stimulating young minds—in conversations, in the classroom. He’s attuned to detail and quality work from himself and in drawing it out of his students. He makes you do better work.”

As to potential effects of his research on decision making, risk assessment and the legal system, Jones takes a long view. “Right now my colleagues and I are mainly trying to generate sufficient momentum in the legal academy so that some of the thinking will roll over into aspects of legal policymaking,” he says. “This is ultimately about how we use the tools of law to shape the environments in which people behave.”

He is encouraged by what he sees as the growing exploration of the field of law and neuroscience. Ten years ago he founded a scholarly association dedicated to interests in the intersection of law and biology. Today the Society for Evolutionary Analysis in Law (SEAL) has more than 400 members from 24 countries. They include legal thinkers, economists, philosophers and

biologists. The number of articles written on the subject of law and behavioral biology grows each year. Articles in other fields citing these papers also have increased in number. All of this—including popular media coverage by such publications as *The New York Times* and the recognition that comes from securing the MacArthur Foundation grant—contributes to a growing academic and public awareness about the field of study for which Jones is so passionate.

“The brain is not a black box but a highly developed, highly algorithmic, evolved, condition-dependent, environmentally sensitive information processor that is designed to skew the probabilities of certain behavioral outputs given certain kinds of behavioral inputs,” says Jones. “Any explicit recognition that all behavior of interest to law comes from the brain, I think, will move us in the direction of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of certain areas of law.” ▼

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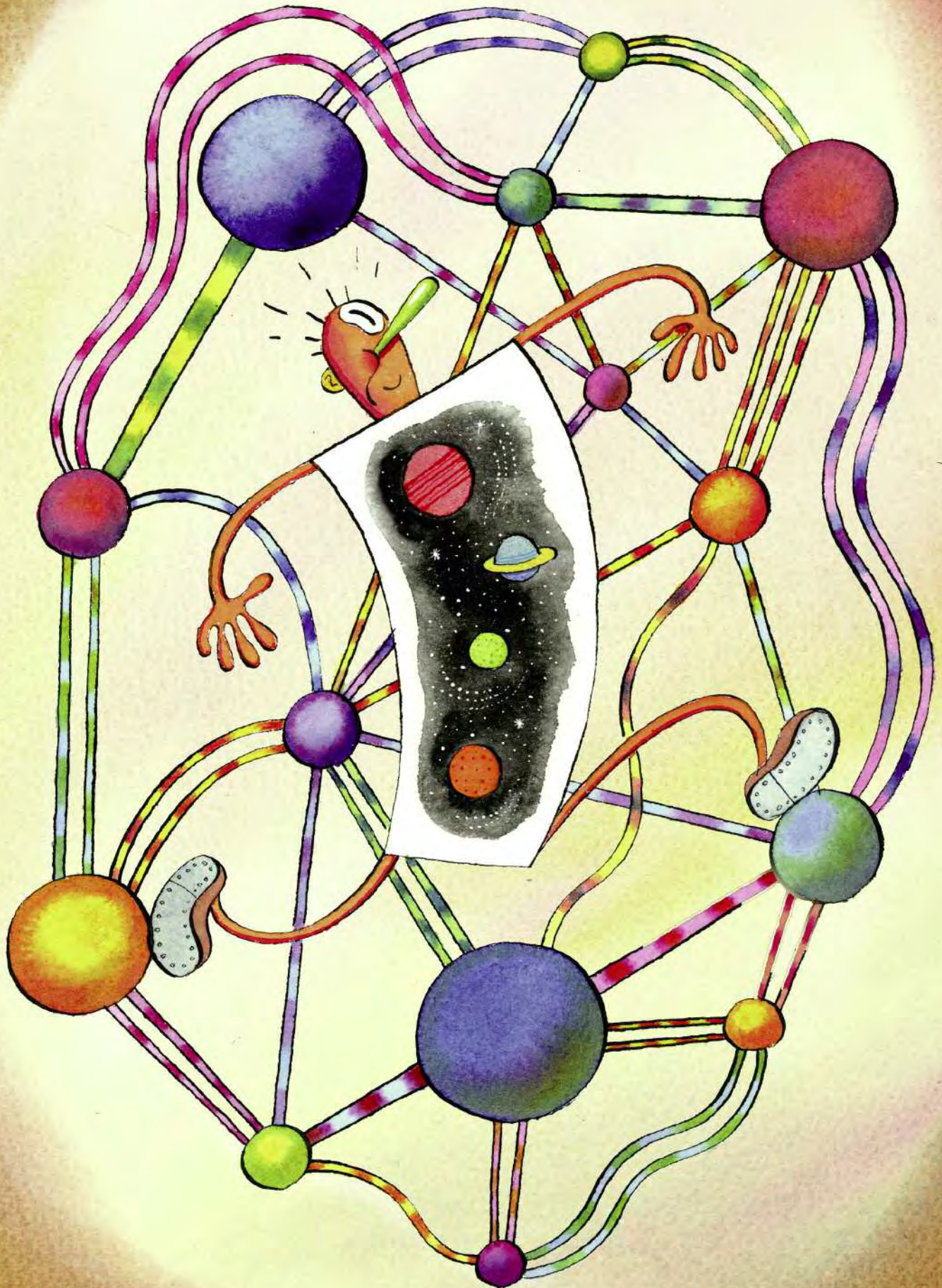
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S M A L L

# wonder

*Nanotechnology is tiny, weird, and the next big thing.*

**I**n 1959 renowned Caltech physicist Richard Feynman pondered the possibilities of just how small technology could get in his seminal lecture, "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom." He foresaw a world of extremely small machines manufactured at the atomic scale—from the bottom up—by direct manipulation of atoms.

While devices like semiconductors have shrunk exponentially in the nearly 50 years since Feynman challenged the next generation of scientists and engineers to dream small, thus far the reality has fallen far short of what Feynman described.

But now the burgeoning field of nanotechnology is offering a tantalizing universe of possibilities. Imagine concrete that is virtually indestructible, lighting that requires one-tenth the energy of conventional sources, cancer detection when only a few cells are present.

Nanotechnology promises all this and more. Vanderbilt is one of the nation's leading institutions in nanotechnology research, having received 10 percent of all National Institutes of Health funding for nanotechnology in biology and medicine.

At the heart of the effort is the Vanderbilt Institute for Nanoscale Engineering (VINSE): a community of chemists, biologists, physicists, physicians and engineers that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and creativity. Since its inception in 2001, VINSE has garnered more than \$47 million in federal funding to explore the structure, novel properties and applications of nanomaterials.



## What Is Nanotechnology, Anyway?

“Nano” (from the Greek *nanos* for “dwarf”) means one-billionth. Measurements at this scale are made in nanometers (nm), or one-billionth of a meter. To put this in perspective, a human hair is some 90,000 nm wide, and 1 nm is the width of just 10 hydrogen atoms. We’re talking small.

We’re also talking weird. Materials this small just don’t behave like they do in the macro world. At these scales the familiar laws of physics are left behind, and you enter the realm where quantum mechanics holds sway. Materials take on new and often strange properties. These novel properties have convinced researchers that small is the next big thing.

“That’s the great thing about nano and why it’s so fascinating,” says Sandra Rosenthal, associate professor of chemistry, physics and pharmacology and director of VINSE. “You get down to the nanometer-size regime, and you don’t know what you’re going to get. If you make a new nanomaterial, it’s going to have properties that you may not

have predicted, and it’s those properties that lead to fantastic applications.”

## Solid-State Lighting

Right now 30 percent of the electricity generated in the United States goes to lighting, the bulk of which is incandescent and only 5 percent efficient. One area of Rosenthal’s research involves the chemical synthesis of semiconducting nanocrystals—also called quantum dots—in sizes less than 6 nm. Because they are semiconductors, they behave

like current white-light LEDs are expensive to make, and their light is actually bluish—not an attractive option for home or office lighting.

“So what’s great about the nanocrystals is that—for not a lot of money—we already exceed the Department of Energy’s 2025 standard for color quality because the white light they emit is so beautiful,” says Rosenthal. “The Department of Energy estimates that solid-state lighting could save U.S. consumers more than \$10 billion per year in

**“This is as close to off-the-shelf nanotechnology as a scientist can get. We’re not talking about five or 10 years down the road. We’re talking today.”**

— Professor David Wright

like solid-state light-emitting diodes, or LEDs. Her lab has been making smaller and smaller nanocrystals and studying their light-emitting properties.

“As you make the nanocrystals smaller,” Rosenthal says, “they go through the colors of the spectrum: The big ones are red, and it goes just like a rainbow through orange, yellow, green, to blue. We made them so small that we thought they were going to be blue, but when we put them in front of a laser, the room lit up in this beautiful white light.”

It turns out that at the magic size of 1.5 nm, the nanocrystals, which normally emit only a narrow wavelength of light, emit the entire spectrum, producing almost perfectly white light.

“My graduate student, Mike Bowers, demonstrated that by coating the surface of a cheap blue LED with a urethane mixture containing these nanocrystals, you can convert the blue light into white light,” says Rosenthal.

The impact of a solid-state white-light emitter could be huge. LEDs consume only one-tenth of the electricity for the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb, and they last much longer.

The Department of Energy would like to see the United States transition to solid-state lighting by the year 2025. The prob-

lem is that current white-light LEDs are expensive to make, and their light is actually bluish—not an attractive option for home or office lighting.

## Early Virus Detection

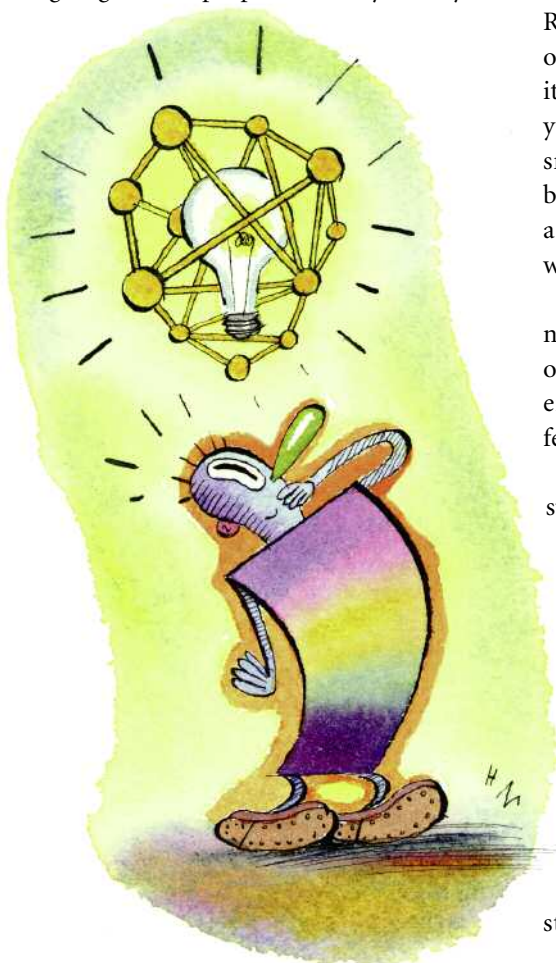
A few doors down from Rosenthal’s office, David Wright is interested in the application of quantum dots to help solve a common medical dilemma.

“Everyone who has a child is familiar with late nights, high fevers, and not knowing why their child is sick,” says Wright, who is assistant professor of chemistry and associate professor of pediatrics. “Parents wonder if they should call the doctor at 2 a.m. or go to the emergency room.”

Unfortunately, many times after children are admitted to the hospital, their fever can break. They’re well on the way to getting better before any diagnosis can be made, and even then it can be inconclusive.

“The question we were interested in was how to figure out what your little one was sick with,” says Wright. “Nanotechnology offers not just one way, but several ways to do it.”

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is the leading cause of lower respiratory tract infections in babies and children. Its symptoms make it difficult to distinguish from the common cold, yet RSV can lead to pneumonia, bronchiolitis and other serious ill-



nesses.

Wright and his collaborators use quantum dots of different sizes and bind them to the two proteins that respiratory syncytial virus uses to attach and fuse to the host cell. One size quantum dot binds to the attachment protein and emits red light, the other to the fusion protein and emits green. When the sample is viewed under the clinical lab's plate reader or optical fluorescent microscope, the colors are easily identifiable. Where the colors overlap appears yellow and indicates a colocalization of the proteins, confirming that the cell has been infected.

"In typical clinical culture assays, it can take three days before you have a high enough concentration of protein to detect with an organic dye and allow a diagnosis," Wright says. "With quantum dots we can get positive results within one hour of infection. We can use more dots and test for several viruses simultaneously with one tiny sample. Whether the test is positive or negative, the child spends a fraction of the time in the hospital bed waiting for results."

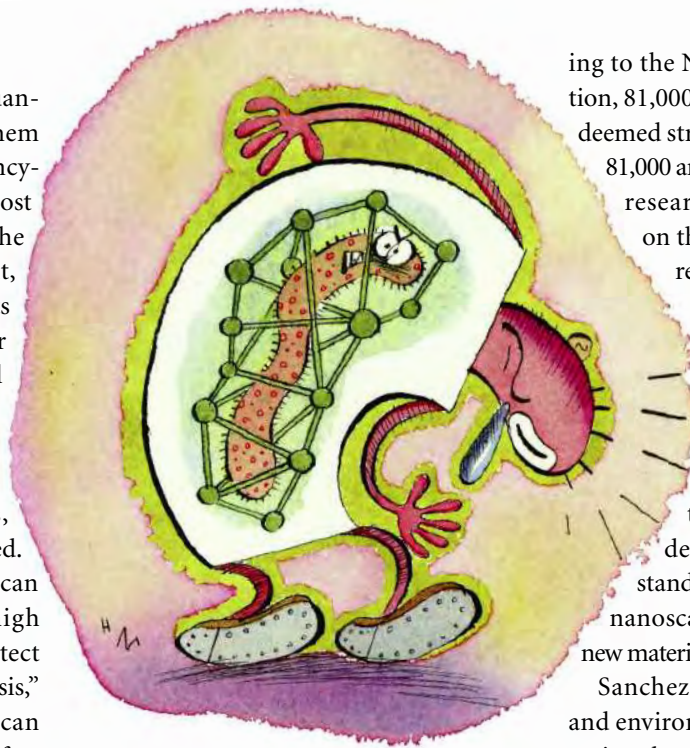
Wright is adamant that this technology could be implemented very quickly. "This is about as close to off-the-shelf nanotechnology as a scientist can get," Wright says. "These quantum dots are commercially available, the antibodies are available, and the clinics have the equipment."

"We're not talking about something that can be done five years or 10 years down the road. We're talking today."

### Early Cancer Detection

Over in biomedical engineering, Todd Giorgio is part of a team that has received international recognition for its work using nanomaterials to detect cancers at the earliest stage, when only a few cells are present.

"We use quantum dots that we engineer to bind to proteins that are exclusively associated with cancer," says Giorgio, who is chair and professor of biomedical engineering and professor of chemical engineering. "We start with a suspension of quantum dots that are much too small to see individually. Then we add the cancer protein, and the particles bind to it, form-



ing a clump or aggregate. We can see these aggregates with a flow cytometer, which is standard equipment in every clinical lab."

Because quantum dots are available in many different colors, each color could be used as a marker for a different protein. "So you could take one sample of blood, add the quantum dots, use a flow cytometer to look for the different proteins associated with a cancer, and get a yes or no answer."

Another strategy Giorgio is exploring involves the use of iron-oxide nanoparticles engineered to bind to cancer cells. "The survival rates of primary cancers are quite good if the patient comes in with only a primary tumor," Giorgio says. "If the cancer has metastasized, the survival rate drops dramatically."

These metastases are extremely hard to spot by MRI. But the iron-oxide nanoparticles bind to the metastases, increasing their contrast and making them much more visible.

"Physicians could better identify patients with metastases and change their treatment from Day One," Giorgio says.

### Stronger, Lighter Concrete

The tragedy of the Minneapolis bridge collapse on Aug. 1, 2007, brought the nation's aging infrastructure into sharp focus. Accord-

ing to the National Highway Administration, 81,000 bridges in the United States are deemed structurally deficient, and another 81,000 are functionally obsolete. Nanofiber research could have a major impact on the next generation of repair and replacement of these aging structures.

"Cement is one of the oldest and most common building materials in the world. It's everywhere," says Florence Sanchez. "The problem is that the cement we use nowadays degrades. We're trying to understand and modify this material at the nanoscale level to see if we can make a new material that is stronger and lasts longer."

Sanchez, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, is investigating the use of nanofibers in concrete to improve its strength and durability. "I'm very interested in the way the material degrades or weathers over time," she says. "If we can make the concrete strong enough, then we might be able to do away with steel reinforcing rods—rebar—which are major sources of degradation."

Modification of concrete also could expand its abilities. "Concrete itself doesn't conduct electricity," says Sanchez. "But if you add carbon nano- or microfibers that do conduct electricity, then you have a material that is going to conduct electricity, which opens up new applications—like roads that warm themselves up in the winter."

### What's Next?

Other applications of nanotechnology being researched and developed at VINSE range from ultra-thin coatings for hypersonic (think super-supersonic) vehicles to the generation of electricity from the proteins in spinach cells. While it is unclear just *how* nanotechnology will impact your life and standard of living in the very near future, it is a certainty that it will. New materials lead to new properties and new applications, which in turn lead to more questions. And so it goes.

There's still plenty of room at the bottom.





By LISA A. DUBOIS

*Twenty years ago America had the most educated populace on the planet. Now millions of high school dropouts face a bleak future.*

**C**all them “the disappeared.”

Last year 1.2 million American students dropped out of high school without receiving their diplomas.

Only they didn't really disappear. According to “The Silent Epidemic,” a recent study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, many of them joined the ranks of the unemployed and impoverished. They became single parents, swallowed up state and federal dollars for welfare and food stamps, and, in too many cases, committed crimes and went to prison.

# LOST



**in America**



The U.S. system of public education, it seems, is failing its children. But not all of them. Hundreds of high schools are graduating nearly 100 percent of their students and sending them out to universities far and wide, fully prepared to take on the rigors of higher education. Those left behind on the bottom rung of the achievement gap tend to be minority boys and girls from low-income neighborhoods, often in urban areas, and often attending massive comprehensive high schools of several thousand students.

Today nearly one in three high school students will leave school without a diploma. For white and Asian American students, the graduation rate is estimated at between 70 and 80 percent. For blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans, the rate plummets to around 50 percent. The situation is even direr in certain school districts. The graduation rate in the Detroit city schools, for example, was only 21.7 percent in 2006.

Some media sources have tagged the problem with catchy labels, calling the United States “Dropout Nation,” and failing schools “dropout factories.” Yet those terms may actually mask the real issue—that millions of teenagers and young adults feel so alienated in an academic setting that they ultimately pack it in and give up.

Although many of the contributing factors seem insurmountable—lack of resources and parental involvement, poor housing and high mobility, state and federal mandates on testing, teacher inexperience and burnout—researchers, including those at Vanderbilt, are doggedly chipping away at the problem, trying to come up with solutions that address the issues on at least a neighborhood and local level.

Here’s why: The education dilemma is a ticking time bomb. According to some experts, our economy is losing hundreds of billions of dollars in wages alone over the lifetimes of these dropouts. America, which only 20 years ago had the most educated populace on the planet, now ranks anywhere from seventh to 18th in comparison to other nations in terms of relative effectiveness of its educational system. Performance in math and science among U.S. students in fourth through 12th grades is steadily declining; one study has American eighth graders tied with students in third-world Zimbabwe in mathematics. As America moves from a man-

**The system is a vinyl LP in the iPod era. The post-World War II concept of monolithic neighborhood high schools that track youngsters into academic or vocational classes may need a wholesale do-over.**

ufacturing-based economy to a globalized service- and technology-based economy, it is not producing a workforce educated enough to handle jobs that will keep the country clicking.

Despite decades of education reform, educators and legislators now face the hard reality that the system itself is a vinyl LP in the iPod era. The post-World War II concept of teaching children in monolithic neighborhood high schools that steer youngsters into

## At YES, Failure Is Not an Option

Never underestimate the power of a good dose of outrage. About 12 years ago Chris Barbic got angry—really angry. In 1992 Barbic had graduated from Vanderbilt and signed on through Teach for America as a sixth-grade math teacher in the Houston inner-city schools. Finding the experience rewarding, he decided to teach for a few more years before starting law school.



He’d stayed in the system long enough to realize that many low-income minority children who excelled in the sixth grade were flunking out and dropping out once they reached middle school. The downward spiral continued for those who made it to high school.

All that well-intentioned educational energy was going down the drain once these students became adolescents.

“Part of the problem was the size of the school,” he says. “They were leaving an elementary school

that had a total of 400 kids and going into a middle school of 1,500 students. With that many kids that age together, a culture gets created. And it’s tough to tip the scales into a positive culture once a negative one has been established—especially in low-income neighborhoods.”

As they moved into middle school, students were hitting a wall built of low expectations, family issues, and mediocre, burned-out teachers. Many of their parents could not speak English and, convinced that a failing school was not the

vehicle to raise their families out of poverty, they believed their children were better off working a minimum-wage job.

Incensed, Barbic and another Teach for America colleague drew up a plan for teaching high-poverty youth, lined up a carpool convoy of 300 concerned inner-city parents, and drove to a meeting of the Houston Independent School Board.

“Basically, we told the school board that we weren’t leaving until they approved our program,” Barbic says, “which they did.”

The government agreed to pay the usual per-child educational expenses, but Barbic would have to raise all facility costs for his program from private funds. So the young man borrowed a million dollars, purchased 11 modular classrooms, set them up in an empty parking lot in one of Houston’s urban neighborhoods and, in 1998, established YES Prep, a seventh- through 12th-grade charter public school. Within two years *Newsweek* ranked YES Prep as one of the 100 best public schools in America.

YES (which stands for “Youth Engaged in Service”) is based on the premise that students

**Chris Barbic, BS'92, is founder and head of YES College Preparatory Schools, ranked one of the top 100 public schools in America.**



JOHN RUSSELL

will buy into learning if they believe they are contributing to something greater than themselves and are part of a community where adults care about them. The YES schools (there are now five campuses in disadvantaged Houston neighborhoods) tend to be small—about the size of most elite private academies—with around 100 students per grade. Classes meet from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., plus one weekend per month when students participate in community service projects in their neighborhoods.

Many YES teachers are pulled from the young, energetic flock of Teach for America enlistees. The faculty sets high standards for academic achievement, and the school provides a support system to make those goals attainable. Parents are required to participate in school programs.

To get a high school diploma, every student must be accepted into college. Each student must apply to at least three post-secondary schools: an out-of-state-school, an in-state Texas school, and a Houston-based college. Of the seven classes that have graduated, 88 percent of YES students went on to post-secondary schools, equally distributed

among those three options.

By buying into the YES model, children are availed of possibilities most would never experience in a typical public school. “We’re giving them opportunities to travel, to visit college campuses, to meet people they would never meet. We even take them to a restaurant to teach them etiquette,” says Barbic.

“We give families hope. Families who come to YES in sixth grade know that their kids will go to college. If you give kids in low-income neighborhoods access to the same resources and opportunities that kids in great private schools and suburban public schools have, they’ll achieve at the same level and the outcomes will be exactly the same.”

His goal is to have 10,000 children in Houston’s neediest areas enrolled on 13 campuses, with each school serving no more than 750 students.

He and his faculty recently launched an even more ambitious goal: to design a system of reinforcements so that students don’t merely go to college, but they graduate. “If you look at the national average, only about 15 percent of low-

income minority kids who start college graduate with a degree. Our goal is for 90 percent of those who go to college to graduate with a degree,” Barbic says. “The kids who don’t complete college usually do so not because they couldn’t cut it academically, but for two reasons: finances, or tremendous family pressure to come back. In many cases these kids are the glue holding fragile families together.”

His staff is working with universities to create mentorships and support networks to catch first-generation college students before they drop out.

Because charter schools like YES Prep are essentially “competing” with Houston public schools, they raise the bar for academics across the city, Barbic says. They alone cannot remedy the nation’s poverty, crime, housing or immigration woes, but he believes they may address the underbelly, the genesis of most of those issues.

“You actually can solve a lot of these problems,” he insists, “if you get the education piece right.”

— LISA A. DUBOIS





Vanderbilt professor Billy Hudson's program provides laptop computers to Arkansas students with long school-bus commutes.

## One-Room Schoolhouse on Wheels

**B**illy Hudson is living testament to the power of teachers. Hudson, who once seemed destined to spend his life working in the cotton fields of Arkansas, is an internationally known scientist who helped discover the molecular underpinnings of autoimmune and hereditary kidney diseases.

Now 66, the Elliot V. Newman Professor of Medicine and professor of biochemistry at Vanderbilt University Medical Center has returned to his roots—rural Grapevine, Ark.—with a plan to enrich math and science education for at-risk students.

Last April, Hudson passed out Vanderbilt-donated laptop computers for middle and high

school students to use during their 60- to 90-minute bus rides to and from school every day. Equipped with broadband Internet access via cell-phone towers, their bus has been transformed into a 21st-century version of the one-room schoolhouse.

"I'm hoping the kids will see a path that will lead them to become doctors and dentists and

veterinarians and scientists and engineers," Hudson told a Little Rock TV station during the official launch of his Aspirnaut Initiative, "but they must be exposed to that way of life."

The three-year pilot project includes online tutoring, webcasts, and summer research experiences for teachers and students on the Vanderbilt campus hosted by the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach. If the initiative is successful, it will be offered to more students and perhaps throughout the country, he says.

Hudson's own path began on Garden Seed Road, which cuts like a gravel-covered scar through the red clay of south central Arkansas. He was raised in a farmhouse that, for most of his childhood, lacked electricity and running water. His

either academic or vocational classes may need a wholesale do-over. In a high-tech, information-laden society such as ours, everybody from professors to mechanics needs a fairly advanced academic skill set.

## Early Action Is Crucial

Carolyn Hughes, professor of special education and human and organizational development in Peabody College, believes that creation of inner-school “small learning communities” is one place to start. Studies by the Gates Foundation and other organizations reveal that, in most cases, the decision to drop out of school is a long, gradual, cumulative process. It often begins in middle school as students become disengaged from schoolwork and disenfranchised from higher-achieving peers. Once they reach high school, these students see no connection between what they’re learning and their own lives. They begin acting out, missing class, and slowly falling through the cracks. Many times teachers are too overwhelmed to notice.

“We are realizing that the impersonal nature of attending a huge high school with little time for teachers to mentor adolescents is probably not healthy for kids,” says Hughes. “We have come to ask ourselves, are freshmen ready for this?”

The Small Learning Community (SLC) is a way to address the new “Three R’s” of education—relevance, relationships and rigor. In this model, ninth graders enter a separate academy and teachers follow a set group of students throughout their high school careers, challenging them to think and linking academic content to their real-time life experiences.

“The idea is to create schools within the big school to increase rapport and relationship-building among students and teachers, and to

increase the relevance of the school day,” Hughes says. “A small learning community results in greater parent involvement. That leads to a lower dropout rate. A smaller academy also leads to greater accountability and more peer-to-peer connections.”

Because they know the students well, teachers in the small learning community can help students set goals for life after high school. They can be attuned to students dealing with profound family and personal problems. Because truancy is the primary precursor to dropping out, they notice and take action when someone has missed too many days of school.

When researchers break down students into male/female and into various ethnic groups, they find that the high schooler most at risk for dropping out is the African American male. The problem begins with low expectations for black males, says Donna Ford, Betts Chair of Education and Human Development and professor of special education, whose research focuses on gifted and talented poor and minority students.

“You see an over-referral of black males in special education classes,” Ford says. “Plus, negative peer pressure is real. If you are a high-performing African American student, you face a strong possibility of being accused of ‘acting white.’”

Gilman Whiting, assistant professor of African American and diaspora studies, agrees, explaining that studies show a correlation between the number of friends a teenage boy has and his grade-point average. “The more friends you have, if you’re a white male, the more likely you are to have a high GPA. It’s the reverse for African American students. The more friends you have, the lower your GPA,” Whiting says.



DANA JOHNSON

father, a logger with a fourth-grade education, beat his children with a green tree branch so forcefully that their backs and legs were often raw and bloody. By his junior year, Billy Hudson decided to escape. He planned to quit school to work on a cotton farm.

A history teacher and basketball coach got wind of Hudson’s plan and offered him an alternative. He enrolled the boy at Henderson State Teachers College (now Henderson State Univer-

sity) in Arkadelphia. With one year of college under his belt, Hudson was awarded his high school diploma.

A chemistry professor encouraged Hudson, who had never had a math or science course in high school, to do remedial work while he was taking college-level courses. The workload was grueling, yet Hudson, who earned his bachelor’s degree in 1962, remembers thinking that “this is a wonderful

life, compared to where I’ve been.”

A year later, at the University of Tennessee, he completed his master’s degree and then followed his mentor to the University of Iowa, where he earned his Ph.D. in biochemistry. As a post-doctoral fellow he studied at Harvard Medical School, and after a brief stint on the Oklahoma State University faculty, Hudson landed at the University of Kansas Medical School in Kansas City, where he would eventually chair the Depart-

ment of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He’s also an entrepreneur who co-founded two biotech companies to bring to market a potential treatment he developed for diabetic kidney disease.

No matter how far his career has taken him, Hudson has never really left Grapevine. When he heard from friends about their grandchildren’s long bus rides to school, he rode the bus to see for himself, and soon an idea was taking root.

The Sheridan Schools superintendent needed little coaxing to join the Aspirnaut Initiative after he saw Hudson’s photos of children sleeping on the bus before the sun rose. Hudson has recruited family members, friends, prominent scientists, politicians, school officials and community leaders to the cause with an infectious eagerness.

“You plant a seed, and it grows,” he says. “I know the value of being pulled out of one environment into another. It’s nurture as much as nature.”

— BILL SNYDER



**Terry Grier, EdD'83, is about to depart North Carolina for California, where he will head the second-largest school system in the nation's most populous state.**



WILL & DENI MCINTYRE

## Middle College High Schools Offer a Second Chance

**T**erry Grier, superintendent of 71,000-student Guilford County, N.C., Schools (which serves Greensboro/High Point), doesn't claim to have solved the dropout problem, but he is making headway—and earning national attention for his efforts.

Grier, EdD'83, has made keeping students in school his top priority, instituting a number of innovative dropout-prevention programs that are being duplicated across the country. Since he joined GCS in 2000, the district's annual dropout rate has fallen from around 6 percent to less than 3 percent. Guilford's dropout numbers are some of the best among big-city school systems in the country. "It's that way because we focus on it," Grier says.

The cornerstone of Grier's dropout-prevention efforts is "middle college" high schools. Located on college campuses, the middle colleges are small—100 to 150 students. They target students who are in danger of dropping out, either because they are struggling academically or because they don't fit in socially at traditional high schools. Middle colleges offer far more personal attention and intimacy than a large high school: Staff members know every student by name, and if a student is absent, the teachers

notice. Enrollment is voluntary, but the concept has been so successful that Guilford County has a waiting list for its six middle colleges.

"The feedback that school board members get about the middle colleges from parents has been amazing," says Grier, who was named North Carolina Superintendent of the Year last November. In 2005 the National Dropout Prevention Center presented GCS with its Crystal Star Award of Excellence in Dropout Recovery.

Other North Carolina districts have created middle colleges after seeing Guilford's success. School officials from as far away as the United Kingdom have visited the campuses to learn more.

Grier has also instituted an "all hands on deck" dropout recovery program at the beginning



WILL & DENI MCINTYRE

of each school year. Additionally, the district focuses on students who are failing and at risk of dropping out by offering them intensive tutoring and the chance to make up credits and graduate on time with their peers. For high school students who work during the day, Guilford offers evening classes.

Not all of Grier's ideas have been universally embraced. Critics, including some parents and school board members, have said the superintendent's dizzying array of new programs and changes undermine schools' stability. But Margaret Arbuckle, executive director of the

Guilford Education Alliance, an independent, nonprofit group that promotes education initiatives, says Grier deserves credit for his success in keeping more kids in school.

"There is increased attention to changing the community culture from one where it was OK to drop out of school ... to a community culture that expects students to be ready to enter the 21st-century workforce," Arbuckle says.

Grier credits Vanderbilt with "transforming my career in education. When I got my doctorate from Vanderbilt, it paid for itself five times over." He has held superintendent jobs in Texas, South Carolina, California and Ohio.

The current school year is Grier's last in North Carolina. In January he accepted the job of superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District. The school system there is the second largest in California, and nearly twice the size of the one he leaves.

San Diego's student population comprises more than 15 ethnic groups and more than 60 languages and dialects. It includes a large number of low-income students who speak English as a second language.

Dropout prevention, he says, will remain at the top of his to-do list. "I think this is our most important work."

— BRUCE BUCHANAN

Black men are the least likely among all groups to go to college. Among all students who do go to college, they are the most at risk for quitting before completing their degrees.

It's a different story for African American females. While their high school graduation rates are lower than for white students, black females are more likely to attend college than black males. At Vanderbilt, which has a very high completion rate in general, black females are the *most* likely among all groups to complete their coursework and receive their degrees. In other words, not only is the achievement gap between African Americans and other racial groups growing ever wider, but so is the achievement gap between African American women and men.

"People talk about fear of failure, but for females, particularly for African American females, there is fear of success, as well," observes Ford. "Females face that fear factor that if you're too intelligent or too studious, you risk not getting a boyfriend. You're going to be by yourself."

The answer, Ford and Whiting insist, is to raise the bar for minority male students in particular, beginning in middle school and carrying all the way through college. The change starts by developing what Whiting calls a "scholar identity," meaning that black and Hispanic boys view themselves as academically capable, studious, intelligent and talented in the school setting—and that being well educated is both cool and empowering.

To that end, Whiting, Ford, and a group of service-minded African American professionals known as the 100 Kings established the Scholar Identity Institute, a two-week summer program for fifth- through 10th-grade boys from low-income urban neighborhoods. The boys come to Vanderbilt's campus and engage in games and lectures to stoke their interest in academics and to change attitudes about school and learning.

"We don't focus on your test scores, your GPAs, your school attendance. We focus on the need for the right attitude so that you do well in school," Whiting says. "Even if you think what you're learning is boring and trivial, you'll listen and you'll do the homework. Even if your mom is not involved in your school, even if you think your teachers hate you, you still need an education. So despite your unfortunate situation, what can you do to persist and be resilient?"

## The Great Divide

A generation or two ago, a high school dropout could get an entry-level job at the nearby plant or factory with health insurance and benefits, and retire 30 years later with a decent pension. Those days are over. Most manufacturing has left low-income neighborhoods, having shut down or moved overseas. Where businesses still operate, even entry-level jobs call for a high school diploma or two years of vocational or community college. The options for dropouts are menial, minimum-wage employment or public assistance.

Yet study after study shows that students start out believing in the American dream. Around 90 percent of ninth graders say they plan to go to college. But something happens between ninth and 12th grades, between intention and reality. Sometimes it's family finances, sometimes it's poor academic performance. Sometimes it's detachment from the grind of studying.

Whatever the cause, it has produced an intellectual sinkhole. Right now, for example, only 22 percent of Tennesseans over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or above. Because a person with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn over his or her lifetime a million dollars more than someone with a high school diploma or less, the disparity foreshadows the emergence of a new aristocracy.

To keep big-dreaming students on the track for college, some schools have instituted university-based mentoring programs (see sidebar articles) and grant programs like AVID and GEAR UP. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is designed to help selected students from underrepresented populations, often first-generation college-goers, navigate the college application labyrinth.

Though Carolyn Hughes approves of the program, she says it's not enough. "The AVID kids are the lucky ones. They get individual attention that helps them go through the process," she says. "But a lack of resources and counselors in high-needs schools means that only a few kids will be able to take advantage of the AVID college-prep services.

**"Even if you think what you're learning is boring and trivial, you'll listen and do the homework. Even if your mom is not involved, even if you think your teachers hate you, you need an education."**

—Professor Gilman Whiting

Everybody should be able to access services like AVID, everybody should get the college prep courses, even if they're going to trade school. The bar needs to be raised across the board for our high school kids."

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federal grant program that provides college-prep services for students from seventh grade through high school in school districts where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-priced lunches. The goal is to help students make the transition into a post-secondary school. GEAR UP in Tennessee focuses on rural, low-income school districts where high school graduation rates are comparable favorably to the state as a whole, but where relatively few go on to college.

Parents in rural families may not want their children to go off to college because they fear they won't return to the community after they graduate, says Erin O'Hara, director of planning and research for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Students feel pulled in two different directions, between loyalty to family and personal ambition. The commission is planning a study to confirm if it's true that rural students who go away for college don't come back once they're ready for professional employment.

With all these disparate problems and dynamics fueling the under-education of our nation's youth, it would help if legislators and researchers could base decisions on a model school system that seems to work, one where school conditions cut against socio-demographic factors that contribute to the risk of dropping out. Claire Smrekar, associate profes-





Michael Ainslie, BA'65, with scholars from New York, is chair of the Posse Foundation Board.

## Where Leadership Counts More Than SAT Scores

**F**ifteen years ago Michael Ainslie, then president and CEO of Sotheby's Holdings, learned about an effort to help inner-city kids succeed in college. "It was so simple and so beautiful and so obvious," he remembers thinking. "Young people coming from some of the worst high schools to some of the best universities in the country need support to succeed."

The fledgling program was the brainchild of Deborah Bial, "a bright, idealistic young social entrepreneur with a big idea but no experience building a board or setting up a nonprofit," Ainslie says. Bial, president and founder of the Posse Foundation, was inspired to do something after she watched too many promising inner-city students drop out of college—including one who said he would have succeeded if only he'd had his "posse" with him for support.

With Bial as president and founder and Ainslie,

BA'65, as board chair for the past 15 years, the Posse Foundation has become the leading college access program in the country, sending more than 1,800 inner-city students to college. Posse Scholars enter with SAT scores typically below the norm of the rest of the class, yet more than 90 percent complete college. And 75 percent of Posse Scholars serve as presidents of at least one organization on their campuses.

Vanderbilt was the first university to partner with Posse, beginning in 1989 when it brought

five students from New York City to Nashville on full-tuition scholarships. Today Posse has 28 university and college partners and draws students from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C.

"We want to look ahead in a few years and see a country where the people sitting in the CEO's chairs and heading our hospitals and universities are as diverse as the rest of the country," says Ainslie. "We're not looking for the obvious kids who got 1400 on their SATs. We're looking for the kid who's got real spark, real leadership ability."

Posse students are selected in groups of 10 from the same city, and all attend the same university together. After they are chosen in the fall of their senior year of high school, they go through a 36-week curriculum that helps them polish study and writing skills, discuss race and gender issues, and work on being leaders.

"By the time they start college, they have

sor of public policy and education, may have unearthed that model system in the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) schools, which are located at American military installations around the world for the children of military personnel. African American and Hispanic students at DoDEA schools (some of the most racially integrated schools in the world) are achieving some of the highest assess-

**“Particularly for African American females, there is fear of success: If you’re too intelligent or too studious, you risk not getting a boyfriend. You’re going to be by yourself.”**

—Professor Donna Ford

ment exam scores in the nation. Smrekar began a series of evaluations to uncover factors in their success and find out whether that information could benefit public schools.

In many ways the DoDEA community mirrors a high-risk public school system. Children tend to come from families of the working poor because enlisted military members greatly outnumber officers. Most of their parents do not have college degrees, and many joined the military as teenagers. Since parents are often transferred to other bases or are deployed overseas, students experience a high degree of stress related to transience, separation and family instability.

Yet DoDEA children typically perform well in school. “We found a deep commitment to education and training. Although the parents tend to hold a high school diploma only, they want more for their

kids,” Smrekar says. “Instead of conditions of disengagement, we found instances of integration, support, and a seamless webbing between school and home.”

DoDEA schools tend to be smaller than comparable public schools, particularly middle schools, where adolescents usually begin to fall away. “Faculty members have this incredibly deep level of professionalism and dedication,” Smrekar says. “There’s an exceptional sense of community in these schools, so kids can’t be anonymous. They can’t get lost.”

Counselors are available for children and parents to help them cope with separation and loss. Peer-buddies and mentors are built into the system to help students who enter mid-year quickly adjust to a new setting. Teachers have discretion to adjust lesson plans and activities. DoDEA schools set high academic standards, maintain discipline, and prepare students for post-secondary study. DoDEA graduates tend to handle the demands of college successfully.

Smrekar believes DoDEA schools offer a roadmap for public education systems that face similar problems.

It all begins with caring, says Hughes, who has started a new mentoring program where Vanderbilt students meet with at-risk high schoolers at a neighborhood community center or a local branch library—sites that are neutral and not intimidating to teenagers—to talk about college and help them acquire tools for getting through high school.

“We’re not going to throw up our hands and say this dropout problem is too overwhelming,” Hughes insists. “We can’t beat the system, but we can work within it and have a positive and powerful effect.” ▼

probably spent 100 hours with their ‘posse.’ They know each other, trust each other, and in some cases have had fights with each other just like a family,” says Ainslie. “They come to college with the advantage of a really tight bond.”

At college, Posse students stay in touch with their trainers by e-mail, phone, and through



JOHN RUSSELL

trainer visits to the campus. Each university with a Posse program also funds a mentor. Potential academic or social problems are identified early, while they’re still fixable.

What does the university get in return? Whether the school is a research university like Vanderbilt or Brandeis, or a liberal arts college like the University of the South or Grinnell College, “they probably have a homogeneity problem,” Ainslie says. Bringing in student leaders from diverse

backgrounds helps attract other students.

“One of the training elements we provide Posse kids is in intercultural communication to get people to open up and talk about important issues.”

A president of the student body while he was at Vanderbilt, Ainslie draws deep satisfaction in the fact that two of Vander-

bilt’s Posse Scholars also have been student presidents.

“I was a small-town East Tennessee kid,” he says. “We did not have a lot of money, and I came to Vanderbilt only because of scholarships.” Now chair of Ainslie Ventures Inc. and a member of Vanderbilt’s Board of Trust since 1991, he is stepping down as Posse chair, “purely because I’ve been chair for too long,” he says. “I’m going to continue on the board.”

“I don’t know where the Posse Foundation would be today were it not for Michael. He’s been an incredible steward of the organization,” says Bial. “Because of his inspired leadership, Posse has been able to develop strong roots and will continue to serve deserving students well into the future.”

Nowadays, the organization frequently turns away universities that would like to be a part of Posse. Ainslie takes particular pride in the fact that Vanderbilt helped start it all.

“Vanderbilt has made huge progress in diversity during the last 15 years,” Ainslie says. “And having a university of Vanderbilt’s stature sign on as a partner was absolutely pivotal to the success of Posse. Other universities look at our list to see who our partners are. Vanderbilt has been there from Day One, starting with [former Chancellor] Joe B. Wyatt, and remains as a partner. That’s been an enormously valuable calling card.”

—GAYNELLE DOLL



# IN THE FACE OF DESTRUCTION

*Against all odds, these Holocaust survivors and refugees held fast to dreams for an education.*



When Walter Ziffer applied to Vanderbilt University in 1949, he was a 22-year-old man with only six years of formal education and six high school credits on his transcript.

Ziffer's youth had allowed little room for childhood, let alone school. The Nazi war machine overtook his town in Czech Silesia at the start of World War II. When Ziffer emerged from the war, having survived seven slave labor and death camps, he was 18 years old and weighed 87 pounds.

His body, he says, healed long before his spirit did, but he was determined to reclaim his life. In 1948 he left Europe to live with an uncle who had escaped to Nashville before the war. He quickly enrolled in high school, graduating in less than a year. Ziffer then appealed to Fred Lewis, dean of Vanderbilt's engineering school, to take a chance on him. Lewis did.

Ziffer, BE'54, believes his education transformed his life. Inspired by his liberal arts courses—he still talks about the spark he felt in Professor Samuel Stumpf's philosophy classes—he went on to graduate from Vanderbilt and then earned advanced degrees from the School of Theology at Oberlin College and from the University of Strasbourg.

"Vanderbilt was a life-changing experience for me," he says. "It is a sad fact that after World War II, many survivors of the Holocaust were not able to put their broken lives back together because of the damage inflicted upon them by their Nazi captors and torturers. I have been one of the lucky ones."

Ziffer was one of more than 300,000 Jewish Europeans who made their way to the United States between 1933 and 1952. Some had escaped Germany's reach before the war broke out.

Others had been forced to fight for their lives in the crucible of the Nazi genocide. Many were young people whose childhoods had been destroyed by war. But for Ziffer and others, despite all obstacles, education remained a cherished goal and a crucial step on the path back to a better life.

Each year fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors and refugees remain to tell their stories. We thank the alumni interviewed here for sharing theirs. In the face of cruelty and destruction, they chose to create and rebuild. Pushed toward despair, they sought meaning. Through their commitment to education, they answered barbarity with civilization. We also thank the Tennessee Holocaust Commission and the Western North Carolina Center for Diversity Education for sharing many of the photos that accompany this piece.

**Clockwise from top: Max Notowitz is the first boy standing on the left end of a group of Jewish boys wearing Star of David armbands as they shovel snow; Notowitz (in white suit) with a friend before the war; Fred Westfield's identity card; Inge Smith in 1936; Star of David armband worn by Walter Ziffer.**









*“You were supposed to surrender and be killed, but I didn’t follow the rules.”*



Max Notowitz,  
BA’52

On a shelf across from his desk, Max Notowitz keeps a photograph taken in Kolbuszowa, Poland, more than 70 years ago. It is of his cheder, the Jewish religious school he attended in the afternoons. Notowitz, about 9 years old, sits smiling in the middle of the first row. There are several dozen boys and teachers around him. Only four, including Notowitz, survived the war.

Notowitz still can repeat from memory religious lessons he learned as a little boy. He remembers reciting them while perched on his father’s arm.

Notowitz is matter-of-fact as he talks about this, as he is when he holds out a picture of his father taken at Auschwitz. Osias Notowitz was murdered there in 1941, one day after Max’s 14th birthday. Less than a year later, the Germans imprisoned Max in a labor camp and executed his mother, brother and sister at the Belzec death camp.

“I tell this story simply because



it happened to me, and because I witnessed it,” Notowitz says. “I’d much rather it hadn’t happened to me.”

Notowitz’s story is overwhelming in sadness and cruelty. Yet he tells it gently, in a soft, kind voice. It almost defies belief that he could survive such horror with any impulse toward gentleness intact. In 1942, Notowitz escaped the labor camp with 41 other prisoners. Only eight lived through the end of the war. Many were murdered while foraging for food.

“I saved my life by devious means,” Notowitz says. “I didn’t follow the rules. You were supposed to surrender and be killed, but I didn’t follow the rules.”

After the war Notowitz worked hard to find a way out of Europe. He earned money as he could, again not following the rules. In 1947, using false papers, he secured a visa to the United States. Once in New York City, he worked at a hand-bag factory by day and studied at night. He was a 20-year-old in fifth grade.

“I asked myself, ‘How long do I have to be in fifth grade?’ Others encouraged me to stick with the factory work—that it was a steady, dependable living—but I noticed they did not want it for their children,” Notowitz says. “I had in the back of my mind a letter I got from my mother when I was in the camp. I think she knew she would never see me again. She wrote, ‘I hope to be able to see you again, but if the good Lord denies me that, I want you to do one thing for me. Promise me that if you have a chance, you will get an education.’ This thing stuck with me. My mother said education was the best way to make your way in the world. That was my dream.”

Notowitz held fast to this dream. He found a cousin in Memphis, Tenn., who took him in and sent him to private high school. Less than two years later, despite his lack of credits, he applied to Vander-

bilt.

“At Vanderbilt nobody asked me where I came from, what I did. And I didn’t talk about it. But my work was recognized,” Notowitz says. He graduated in three years, a member of both the Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa honor societies. “Vanderbilt gave me something that I really had to earn. By the time I graduated, I was established.”



Though their years at Vanderbilt overlapped, Notowitz never knew Walter Ziffer, who also survived the Holocaust as a teenage boy.

“I always wondered if there were other survivors at Vanderbilt,” Notowitz says. “I never met any.”

Notowitz found success in the insurance industry and, after a stint with U.S. military intelligence in Germany, settled down in Memphis with his wife, Fannie. They have four children and two grandsons. He has embraced his roles as philanthropist, active Jewish community member and Holocaust educator.

In 1997, Notowitz returned to Kolbuszowa with Fannie and his 14-year-old grandson. They went to visit the man who, on the night of the escape from the labor camp, turned to Notowitz and asked, “Are you coming?” After the war Notowitz gave this man, Janek, a photo of himself, writing on the back, “To the man who saved my life.” Janek still had the picture.

“When we got to the town, we had a lot of trouble finding his house,” Notowitz says. “He’d met a Polish girl, converted, and become a sexton in the church. But when we finally found him, his granddaughter said to us, ‘You should have asked where the Jew lived.’

“He has died since then. With him died the last Jew in the town.”



**Opposite page, top: Max Notowitz (near center of front row, wearing white collar) with schoolmates at Hebrew School in Kolbuszowa, Poland, before the war. This page, top: Notowitz before imprisonment in a labor camp where his mother, brother and sister were executed. Bottom: Notowitz’s father before the war and at Auschwitz shortly before his death.**





*“My father always told me, material things can be taken away, but what you have in your mind—no one can take that from you.”*

## Inge Meyring Smith, BA'65, MA'67, EdS'74

Inge Smith believes that her father's dedication to her education saved her life.

When the Nazi regime seized his silk wholesale business in Dresden, Germany, Walter Meyring no longer had a way to support his family. But he was just as devastated by her expulsion from school because she was Jewish. He resolved to leave Germany.

“My father raised me to believe that education was of foremost importance,” Smith says. “What was going to happen to his child? My father's friends—friends who had connections in the Nazi regime—told him it was not going to get better.”

Meyring had a nephew in the United States who sponsored the family. Two nights before they boarded a ship in Hamburg, in November 1938, Kristallnacht raged across Germany. During the rioting, thousands of Jewish businesses and synagogues were attacked. Tens of thousands of Jews were arrested. Meyring, who

had gone to say goodbye to his mother, spent the night hiding in her apartment. He would never see his mother again; she was too old to qualify for a visa. Smith's family learned after the war that to avoid deportation, she had been euthanized by a doctor and family friend. Most of Smith's extended family died in Auschwitz.

The Meyrings arrived in New York City at Thanksgiving. The following Monday, Meyring enrolled his 15-year-old daughter in school.



Her father, once a successful businessman, took whatever work he could find. In order to go to the opera, which they had attended regularly in Dresden, her parents worked nights at the Metropolitan Opera. Her mother sold candy there.

“We came to the U.S. with \$15 between us. That's all they would let us take,” Smith says. “The Council of Jewish Women helped us with so much. We would have starved to death without them.”

In the meantime, Smith became Americanized. She studied hard. She took her textbooks home, translated the lessons into German, did the exercises, and translated them back to English. After graduation she worked as a secretary and went to night classes at City College of New York.

Then she fell in love. “We had nothing in common,” Smith says. “Paul came from a farming community in western Tennessee. I was a big city girl.” Nevertheless, they married six weeks after he finished his Army service.



When Paul Smith took a job in Franklin, Tenn., his young wife panicked.

"I loved New York City. I adored my job. My family was there. All my friends were there. I loved going to school," Smith remembers. "But my father said, 'You are married now. You have to go.' It was very hard."

Smith spent her first few years having children and adapting to her new home.

"It's a wonder they didn't run me out of town," she says. Her faux pas included going to the liquor store and taking her baby out for walks in the winter. "People would say to Paul, 'You want to know what Inge did this time?' They would say, 'Oh my goodness, that poor foreigner.'"

Church was an important part of life in Franklin. Smith and her husband, who was not Jewish, joined a Presbyterian congregation, to which she still belongs. Smith remembers choosing it because she heard it had the best Sunday school in town.

Smith had left much behind in New York City, but not her passion for education. In 1952 she founded Franklin's first kindergarten in her church's basement. She took her own children to work with her.



"None of us had any money," Smith remembers. "Families only had one car. I learned to drive so I could go around town picking up children for school."

In 1958, after Inge's mother died, Inge's father came to live with her family. He helped her to build a small school adjacent to her home. The bustling Smith Preschool, with lovely tree-shaded playgrounds in the backyard, still serves about 55 children a year.

Then, with money and babysitting, her father helped her return to college. She earned three degrees from Peabody College, including an educational specialist degree. Her career blossomed. She helped to launch Tennessee's Head Start program and supervised early childhood educators across the region. She helped to establish Franklin's Harpeth Academy, an elementary school that has since merged with a larger institution. Smith headed the school until her retirement in 1991. She loved her work.

"My father always told me, material things can be taken away from you from one day to the next, but what you have in your mind—no one can take that away from you," Smith says.

"Going to Peabody was a very special time in my life. Without my father's help, I couldn't have gone back. My father saved my life twice. He fulfilled his promise to give his daughter an education so she could become the woman she was meant to be."

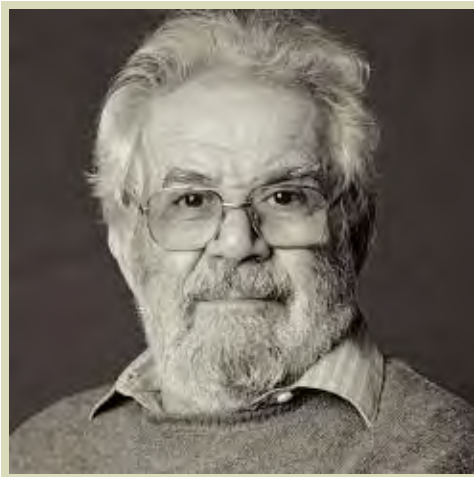


**Opposite page: Inge Smith in 1936, bottom photo, and two years later with her parents shortly before emigrating, top. This page, top: with Paul, a Tennessee native who began corresponding with Inge after seeing a photograph she'd sent to another U.S. soldier during the war. Left: first grade at Inge's girls-only school in Dresden, with Smith in the center of the back row (wearing white collar).**





*“How can the rest of the world let this happen, stand by this obscenity of obscenities, reenacted hundreds of thousands of times?”*



Walter Ziffer, BE'54

In the decades following World War II, Walter Ziffer wandered physically and spiritually.

His journey started in his hometown of Cesky Tesin, Czechoslovakia, where he, his parents and his sister reunited after liberation. All four had survived years in Nazi slave labor and concentration camps. Ziffer was 18.

“I was afraid of everyone,” Ziffer remembers. “Four years in the camps had really set me back. It was a rough time.”

By 1947, Ziffer knew he could not stay in Czechoslovakia. Communist takeover of the country was imminent, and the military draft loomed. Ziffer left for France, where he spent almost two years, all the while hoping to join his uncle in Nashville.

Not everything turned out as Ziffer planned. He made it to Nashville, and at Vanderbilt he became an engineer just as he had hoped. But he also began a spiritual journey that would estrange him from his uncle’s family and set him on a completely new path.

“My friend Burton Grant, whom I met in class, was going away to study. He asked me to move in with his mother to help take care of her in his absence,” Ziffer says. “Through Mrs. Grant I was exposed to the Churches of Christ, and I converted.”

Ziffer also married. He had met Carolyn Kinnard, BA'52, in an introductory social science class. After graduation they moved to Ohio, where he had taken an engineering job with General Motors, only to find himself drawn toward a life in the ministry.

“At GM I dealt in car parts, but through church contact I became interested in people, in educating,” Ziffer says. “I wanted to improve the world a little bit.”

Religious study also spoke to Ziffer's profound need to make sense of what he had witnessed during the war.

In a Holocaust Remembrance Day speech he gave in Florida last April, Ziffer described in graphic detail a murder he had witnessed in the Brande labor camp:

"The blood streams in rivulets from the man's mouth, nose, ears and body wounds. I see the man's eyes being beaten from their sockets ... The Kapos lift Rabinowicz from the blood-, urine- and excrement-drenched floor and carry him out. They dump the body into the coal bin. ... I, 14 years old, stand there, unable to move, sick to my heart and stomach. My feelings? They have gone dead. I am paralyzed ... ashamed, speechless, motionless ...

"How can a 14-year-old, witnessing this unspeakable brutality, survive and then go on with his life, even though the picture of that murder often haunts him in waking and sleeping hours? How can the rest of the world let this happen, stand by this obscenity of obscenities, reenacted hundreds of thousands of times all around Germany and its occupied lands? And finally, question of questions, where was God in that moment at Brande?"

After Ziffer completed two master's degrees at Oberlin College's Graduate School of Theology, he resumed his wandering, family in tow. Working as a minister and educator, he never stayed more than five years in one city. He took jobs in France, Belgium and the United States. In 1982 he retired with Carolyn to Nova Scotia. It did not last. They moved to Maine, where Ziffer continued research that he had started in Canada.



"I had become interested in anti-Semitism," Ziffer says. "I'd run into it all the time in my years as a minister—not against me, but in front of me: anti-Semitic jokes, remarks about the Holocaust. I set out to do some research, which resulted in a book, *The Teaching of Disdain*, about New Testament attitudes toward Jews. And then I realized that my place was with the Jewish people."

After more than 25 years as a minister, Ziffer converted back to Judaism and became active in synagogue life. He moved once more,

in 1993, to a town near Asheville, N.C. This year he will have lived there longer than he has lived anywhere else in his life.

Now divorced and remarried, he turns 81 this year and continues to teach as an adjunct professor of Jewish studies at Mars Hill College in North Carolina. He published *The Birth of Christianity from the Matrix of Judaism* in 2000.

After years of study, teaching and searching, Ziffer seems to have found some of what he sought. At the end of his speech in Florida last spring, he was able to offer an answer to his question of questions about God's presence in the world. He quoted a rabbinic interpretation of God's words to Israel in the book of Isaiah: "When you are my witnesses, I am God. When you are not my witnesses, I am not God."

"What does that mean?" Ziffer asked the audience. He answered with conviction. "The miraculous is for us to achieve. By witnessing to God—by practicing kindness, compassion, justice and love—we, you and I make God present. When, on the other hand, we turn our heads away in an effort not to see and not to get involved, God is truly absent."



**Opposite page, top right: Walter Ziffer with George Loeffler, his best friend during the two years between the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia and deportation. George, whom Ziffer remembers as "a lovely boy with big blue eyes," died in a concentration camp. This page, top: Walter with his sister and parents. Above: Ziffer's family in late 1930s Czechoslovakia, with young Walter in knee socks. Of those pictured, two uncles, a great-uncle, a cousin and two aunts perished in Nazi concentration camps; Walter survived seven slave labor and death camps.**





*“Every night I doubted whether I would ever see my parents again.”*

## Fred Westfield, BA'50

The realities of refugee life dampened Fred Westfield's faith that he would attain a college education.

He and his family escaped Germany before World War II started, but not all at once. Westfield's older brother, Erich, was the first to obtain a U.S. visa. He joined his uncle Robert in Nashville in 1936, when he was just 15.

In January 1939, 12-year-old Fred was sent to England as part of the Kindertransport, the famed rescue effort that relocated 10,000 German, Austrian and Czechoslovakian Jewish children to Great Britain in the late 1930s.

“Every night I doubted whether I would ever see my parents again,” Westfield says. He was placed with a foster family of Polish Jewish immigrants in London.

Westfield's parents managed to secure visas to England in the summer of 1939. They were helped by money that Westfield's uncle Walter had smuggled out of Germany. It was painful for them to have to use it.

“Uncle Walter was arrested two weeks after Kristallnacht. He was an art dealer, and they accused him of smuggling art and foreign exchange violations, because he'd been sending dollars to my uncle Robert in Nashville,” says Westfield. “He was tried, imprisoned, his art auctioned off to pay his fine.”



Walter was in prison for two and a half years. At the end of his sentence, the Nazis deported him to concentration camps. He died in the death chambers at Auschwitz.

Westfield and his parents were allowed to immigrate to the United States in 1940. They joined Erich in Nashville. Another of Westfield's uncles, the artist Max Westfield, also escaped to Nashville with his wife and two children.

Nashville's community of German Jewish refugees was small, but strong. Many were somehow related to each other and to families that had emigrated from Germany decades earlier. But life was difficult for Westfield's father, Dietrich, who was already in his 60s. He had been a well-regarded lawyer before the Nazis rose to power. He had served as a judge advocate in World War I, for which he received the Iron Cross. In Nashville he was without a profession and penniless.

"He didn't want to use my Uncle Walter's money," Westfield remembers. "How would you feel using your brother's money—a brother who's been imprisoned and later murdered? My father took odd jobs. He sold cola at the Mays' hosiery factory. My mother worked, too."

Westfield wanted to do his part.

"The summer before I turned 16, I took a job," Westfield says. "There was a program where you could go to school an hour early and then get out in the afternoons to work, with the idea that you were learning a trade. My father—with all that was happening to us—I think he liked the idea of a Jew on the move learning a trade. I became a watchmaker and sold jewelry. I was good at it. I thought that is what I would become."

The Army changed all that. Westfield served as an instructor at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, applying his watchmaking skills to the repair of optical instruments used in weaponry. After his service, Westfield used the G.I. bill—

which included an extra stipend for those who were supporting parents—to go to college. He chose Vanderbilt, as had his brother, Erich, BE'43.

Like Erich, who had earned the Founder's Medal for the School of Engineering, Westfield excelled. He completed his economics degree, magna cum laude, in only three years. He did his graduate work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studying with some of the greatest scholars in the field, including Paul Samuelson and Robert Solow. After earning his Ph.D. there, he became a professor at Northwestern University. In 1965 he accepted a professorship from his alma mater and came home to Vanderbilt. Now retired, he is professor of economics, emeritus.

Besides Fred and Erich, who lives in Oklahoma, there were others in the family who came to Vanderbilt, too—their cousin Hannah Westfield Kahn, BA'48, who lives in New Jersey; Hannah's late husband, Charles Harry Kahn, BA'46; and another cousin, the late Gerd Michael Westfield, BA'49.

Dietrich Westfield, who was an intellectual at heart—in his 70s, he started reading the classics in Greek—was proud of his sons' academic and professional achievements. He had lost much in the war. But his sons had found their way in a new country. ▼



**Opposite page, top:** Twelve-year-old Fred Westfield as his train departs Germany en route to England, where he would stay with a foster family. **This page, top:** Fred was born Fritz Meinhard Westfeld, but German officials added "Israel" to Jewish males' names and "Sara" to Jewish females' names when they issued identity cards. **Right:** A 1936 portrait at the family home in Essen, Germany, includes Fred, at the front and to the left of his cousin, Gerd Michael Westfield, BA'49, with brother Erich, BE'43 (wearing breeches), and cousin Hannah Westfield Kahn, BA'48, at the right end of the back row.



#### Vanderbilt's Holocaust Lecture Series

Each fall Vanderbilt invites the community to participate in what has become the longest-running Holocaust lecture series at any American university. Begun in 1977 by Beverly Asbury, then Vanderbilt University chaplain, it provides a forum for diverse perspectives on the Holocaust and other genocides.

Find out more:

[www.vanderbilt.edu/religiouslife/holocaustlectures.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/religiouslife/holocaustlectures.html)



# Long Day's Journ

*Brilliant and driven,  
Elyn Saks was a Founder's Medalist  
and a Marshall Scholar.*

*But then the voices in her head swelled to a cacophony.*

**E**lyn Saks feels right at home on the University of Southern California campus. There is something about the leafy-green trees and ivy-covered walls, the slate-roofed buildings, and the perpetual warmth of the California climate that has put her at ease almost from the start. But even here in this academic cloister, where her office is cluttered with her legal research, where she holds an endowed professorship of law, and where she has earned the admiration of her peers, the same old voices keep drifting in. She hears them two or three times a day, bearing messages that she would rather keep at bay.

*You are bad. You are evil. You have killed thousands of people with your thoughts.*

She has been receiving these messages for much of her life, certainly since her days at Vanderbilt, where she graduated first in her class but sometimes alarmed her friends and fellow students with behavior that seemed far more than peculiar. She didn't yet know, when she was still an undergraduate, that she was falling into the grip of schizophrenia, and that her "journey through madness," as she would later put it, would be unbearably painful and long.



**ey into N I G H T**



There was the night at Vanderbilt, for example, a frigid winter evening when the ground outside was covered with snow. Saks was talking with a visitor in her dorm, when suddenly and without any warning, she grabbed a blanket and rushed outside. She ran manically across the lawn, spreading her arms and pretending to fly.

“No one can get me!” she shouted in a frenzy. “I’m flying! I’ve escaped!”

Later she said it was all just a joke, just a moment of silliness that had swept her away. But the episodes grew worse over time, particularly after she left Vanderbilt in 1977 and entered the master’s program at Oxford University. She had won a Marshall Scholarship to study in England, but something was unsettling about the move, and soon she found that she was losing her grip. She began handing in papers that were masses of gibberish, and muttering to herself as she walked through the town: *I am a bad person; I deserve to suffer. People are talking about me. Look at them; they’re staring at me.*

She soon wound up in a mental hospital, and many years later she wrote down her memories of those times: “In my fog of isolation and silence, I began to feel I was receiving commands to do things—such as walk all by myself through the old abandoned tunnels that lay underneath the hospital. The origin of the commands was unclear. In my mind, they were issued by some sort of beings. Not real people with names or faces, but shapeless, powerful beings that controlled me with thoughts. . . . *Walk through the tunnels and repent. Now lie down and don’t move. You must be still. You are evil.*”

All of that was nearly 30 years ago, and in the time since then Saks has pulled herself from the cold and terrifying depths of her illness to build a distinguished career as a scholar. She is happily married and surrounded by friends, and a visitor to her office at the University of Southern California will encounter little evidence of the agony she’s endured. But she recently decided to write it all down, to create a memoir of her own psychosis, believing that it might give hope to other people. Her powerful book *The Center Cannot Hold* was published by Hyperion in the summer of 2007, and within a few weeks the praise was pouring in.

*Publisher’s Weekly* called the book “engrossing.” *The Washington Post* praised Saks’ “lucid-

ity and intelligence.” *Time* magazine selected her story as one of the 10 best books of 2007. But at least as important in Saks’ own mind was the warm response of her colleagues and friends. She had felt she was skating where the ice was thin, where the people she knew might easily be repelled, and where the university that had nurtured her career might find her revelations embarrassing. But none of that happened. Instead, people praised her honesty and courage, and marveled at the simple power of her story. And her memoir does have a strength all its own—a journey of suffering and a road to recov-

life often triggered major problems—a powerful feeling of dislocation that would degenerate into a break with reality.

Sure enough, within two weeks of her arrival at Yale, as she walked among the great gothic buildings with their stained-glass windows and drafty hallways, she began having thoughts that were not her own, and began seeing people who were not really there. One of them was a bearded man with a knife who was ready to kill her. On an autumn weekend in 1982, with her symptoms getting worse, she made her way to the student health center, babbling wildly to anyone

Such a diagnosis was more like a death sentence  
or, more precisely, the prediction of a life  
without any hope.  
Whenever her symptoms spiraled out of control,  
there would be no choice but to tie her down,  
fill her full of drugs, and wait  
for the terrible moment to pass.

ery that will probably never quite come to an end; a passage through a schizophrenic nightmare that is far more common than many people know.

But hers, in the end, is a story of hope—of “a brilliant mind,” as *Time* magazine put it, that with love and therapy and the right kind of medicine finally, painfully learned to heal itself. There was a time, however, when it was hard to believe that such a triumph could occur.

The worst of it came when she entered law school.

After four years of study, she had received her master’s degree from Oxford and decided to take on the challenges of Yale. Her illness, at best, was still unresolved. She had already spent months in a mental hospital, and then in intensive psychoanalysis. But in between her bouts of psychosis, she managed to do well enough in her studies to be accepted at the law school of her choice, which turned out to be Yale. She arrived in New Haven accustomed to academic success, but knowing also that changes in her

who would listen. *There’s the killing fields. Heads exploding. I didn’t do anything wrong. They just said ‘quake, fake, lake.’ I used to ski. Are you trying to kill me?* The doctors tried to reassure her, but she pulled away and crawled under a desk, moaning softly as she rocked back and forth. *They’re killing me. They’re killing me. I’ve got to try. Die. Lie. Cry.*

They sent her off to another mental hospital, where she lay for 30 hours on one of the beds, her arms and legs bound by restraints and a net tied over the rest of her body. She found that she couldn’t move at all, and no matter how desperately she begged for relief—“Please,” she cried, “it’s not necessary”—the doctors assured her that this was really best.

A quarter century later she remembers that medieval moment as clearly as if it had just happened to her, and her anger still ripples through the pages of her memoir: “As frightened as I was, I was equally angry, and frantic to find a way to show defiance—not an easy task when you’re in four-point restraints and pinned under a tuna net. I



was bound ... but not gagged! So I inhaled as deeply as I could, and started belting out some beloved Beethoven. Not, for obvious reasons, *Ode to Joy*, but Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. BA-BA-BA BA! BA-BA-BA BA! Look, there, see how he created such power out of those four simple notes! It echoed nicely down the halls, so I did it again."

Her brother, Warren Saks, came to visit her a few days later, and he was stunned to see how awful she looked—gaunt and wild-eyed with her hair all askew, and so thin it was startling. She had always been tall, nearly 5-foot-10, and sometimes under-weight, but nothing prepared him for the pain in her face.

"It was frightening," he remembered. "It was really clear how sick she was."

For a younger brother who had always loved and admired his sister, who was astonished by her brilliance and moved by the warmth she showed to other people, it was nearly too painful to see her this way. And yet even then, he couldn't really

grasp the depths of her agony or the fundamental gloom of her official prognosis: "Grave," one doctor wrote at the time. "Chronic paranoid schizophrenia with acute exacerbation."

For much of the medical community in the 1980s, such a diagnosis was more like a death sentence or, more precisely, the prediction of a life without any hope. Her condition was one that didn't have a cure, a chemical malfunction afflicting her brain that would sever her ties to the rational world, in a sense to the world of physical reality, where most of the human population lived.

She might well spend her life under lock and key, and whenever her symptoms spiraled out of control—when she began to talk about killing or tried to run away—there would be no choice but to tie her down, fill her full of drugs, and wait for the terri-

ble moment to pass.

Such was the view of her doctors at Yale.

The fact that Saks has defied those predictions is a testament in part to her stubbornness and will. But it was a facet of her character often played out in double-edged ways—in a refusal at first to believe she was sick, which sometimes made her resistant to treatment, even as it kept her from ever giving up. She was determined, for example, during her slides into madness, not to let go of her academic work, her studies of philosophy and the law, and later her teaching, writing and research. She had grown up in Miami in a strong Jewish family, among people who managed to build meaningful lives, and it seldom occurred to her not to do the same.

It was true periodically that the agony of her illness would sweep her away, that the voices and thoughts taking hold of her mind would become so powerful and so terrifying that she was reduced to desperation and despair. But when the antipsychotic drugs did their job, turning down the volume to give her some relief, she would find a part of herself still intact—still determined to find fulfillment in her work, and still tied to her family and her circle of friends.

And yet, for Saks, the issue of her medication was a problem. It was clear to her doctors that she simply had to have it, for that was the nature of schizophrenia itself: a chemical imbalance affecting her brain. But Saks saw pharmacology as a crutch—a view that may have been a throwback to the anti-drug messages she had listened to in high school. In those days of chemical experimentation, when she and her peers were getting into trouble, Elyn accepted the mantra of drug counselors that a person had to have the strength to stay clean. It was a matter of will more than anything else. And later in her life, when schizophrenic notions invaded her brain, her greatest fear was not that she was ill, but that she didn't have the strength to repel them.

"I truly believed," she would write in her memoir, "that everyone had the same scrambled thoughts that I did, as well as the occasional breaks from reality and the sense that some unseen force was compelling them to destructive behavior. The difference was, others were simply more adept than I at masking the craziness and presenting a healthy,



**Top: Elyn Saks (left) with her brothers and cousins during a family beach vacation. Middle: At her 1977 Vanderbilt graduation, with philosophy professors Donald Sherburne (left) and John Lachs (right) and their wives, Elizabeth Sherburne and Shirley Lachs. Above: Elyn with her parents.**



competent front to the world.”

And others, of course, managed to do it without the help of medication.

Eventually, however, after years of suffering, her resistance wore down. Again and again, whatever her doctors’ choice of drugs, she would try to wean herself from their prescriptions. And again and again she would fall apart. But finally in California, she was introduced to clozapine, a drug developed in part through the studies of Dr. Herbert Meltzer of Vanderbilt, and it has worked well for her—for the most part, keeping her psychotic symptoms at bay.

Through it all, she also has relied on psychoanalysis, which she says is not typical of schizophrenic patients. Many psychiatrists, Saks explains, believe her particular form of mental illness is basically “a random firing of neurons,”

producing jumbled thoughts that are beyond the reach of any kind of rationality. And indeed, when Saks began seeing an analyst in Oxford, the first few sessions were downright scary. As she remembered it later, despite the fact that she had never been violent, she carried a box cutter inside her purse, as well as a kitchen knife with a serrated blade, and warned the analyst that she had better watch her step.

“You are an evil monster,” Saks hissed, “perhaps the devil. I won’t let you kill me. You are evil, a witch. I’ll fight.”

But the analyst was calm, and session after session, day after day, she pushed Saks to confront her most frightening thoughts. For Saks the effect was strangely reassuring, a gradual discovery that she had found a safe place to deal with her illness. Thoughts that she had simply tried to repress were now being dissected and robbed of their power—and her analyst, always firm and

professional, never seemed to be repelled. Even today, with her life going well, she sees an analyst five mornings a week, sometimes sorting through psychotic thoughts, other times talking about ordinary things, the routine ups and downs of her life.

“I’m a lifer,” she says of her therapy. “I’m



**Saks, now married and a cancer survivor, with a *Time* magazine Top-10 nonfiction book to her credit and an associate deanship at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law**

DANIEL DUBOIS

retrospect there were a few things that might have made him wonder. Saks seemed extraordinarily shy and delivered her lectures in class sitting down, as if she didn’t want to call attention to herself. But she was brilliant in her course on mental health and the law, and in all her discussions with her students and peers, Altman was struck by what he later called “her careful, thoughtful intellectual contributions.”

He knew that she worked exceptionally hard. Between 1989 and 2002, before she started writing her personal memoir, she published three scholarly books and contributed chapters to at least three more, all the while writing more than 30 different articles for legal, psychiatric and medical journals. For all of that she was rewarded by the University of Southern California with a special appointment as Orrin B. Evans Professor of Law and Psychiatry and the Behavioral Sciences. But to her friends in California, the most impressive thing about Saks is something from a more everyday realm: her simple ability to be a friend.

“Elyn makes many friends,” explains Altman, “and usually keeps track of them forever. She is very funny and laughs easily at other people’s jokes. But in difficult times, when people

around us go through deaths, divorce or cancer, Elyn is almost always the most aggressive about reaching out. She visits people in the hospital or whatever, and never shies away from those circumstances.”

For all of those reasons, Altman and others took it in stride when they encountered one of Elyn’s psychotic breaks. They were becoming less frequent by the time she arrived in Southern California, but then one day in 1999 she learned in the course of a routine physical that she had breast cancer. The irony of it was, the diagnosis came as she was getting engaged. She had met Will Vinet, a law librarian at the university and a man of optimism and talent, who wore his hair in a ponytail and loved to play music, cook gourmet dinners, and build fine furniture with his own hands. Elyn had made many friends through the years, but after meeting Will she realized she had never been in love.

### **Elyn Saks at Vanderbilt**

Elyn Saks delivered a talk as part of the Chancellor’s Lecture Series at Vanderbilt on March 20. See a podcast of her lecture at [www.vanderbilt.edu/news/lectures](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/news/lectures).



## Newer Drugs Improve Outlook for Schizophrenia

Dr. Herbert Meltzer understands as well as anybody the terrible, crippling power of schizophrenia. The Vanderbilt professor of psychiatry and pharmacology, a prize-winning researcher in the field of schizophrenia, says it afflicts about 1 percent of the U.S. population. Of those who suffer from its effects, only about 15 percent “are able to work at all.” Those who function as well as Elyn Saks, people who have built for themselves a highly successful and deeply satisfying life, represent “probably less than 1 percent,” he says.

Schizophrenia, Meltzer explains, is a brain disease marked by delusions and hallucinations that come and go and, in many cases, by a more enduring impairment of memory, cognition and motivation. The delusional symptoms are the most dramatic, but the easiest to treat. For the most part—despite some occasional problems with memory—Saks’ illness has consisted primarily of her periodic breaks with reality. As terrifying as these episodes can be, she has found herself able to function in between.

Her episodes have grown shorter and less severe as she has aged, partly because that’s the nature of her illness, but also because of the drug clozapine, on which Meltzer has done extensive research. Meltzer, who has an undergraduate degree from Cornell, an M.A. from Harvard, and an M.D. from Yale, came to Vanderbilt in 1996. He had been studying clozapine since the 1980s, and in 1989 his work led the Food and Drug Administration to approve its use in the United States.

As he continued to study the drug, Meltzer proposed a new theory about how it works—“its mechanism of action.” The theory, he says, “was valid enough to lead to the new generation of clozapine-like antipsychotic drugs, such as risperidone and olanzapine, which are now the most widely used drugs in the treatment of schizophrenia.” In 1993 he reported research results that showed clozapine was the first antipsychotic drug to improve some of the cognitive impairment in schizophrenia. Additionally, he reported, clozapine could reduce the risk for suicide attempts and completed suicide among people with schizophrenia by about 85 percent. Suicide claims the lives of about 5 percent of all people with schizophrenia.

The downside of the drug has been its potential to damage white blood cells, which can be fatal, so it requires careful monitoring. But Meltzer is pushing ahead with his studies.

“Our basic research,” he explains, “is leading to an understanding of why clozapine improves cognition and the classical antipsychotic drugs do not. About 5 percent of patients with schizophrenia use clozapine. It is not more widely used because of its side effects. It is, however, the most widely used antipsychotic drug in China.” Meltzer’s new research is leading to the possibility of achieving the benefits of clozapine with other drugs, or using lower doses of clozapine and augmenting its key pharmacologic feature with another drug he has helped to develop, pimavanserin.

As the case of Elyn Saks demonstrates, Meltzer’s research offers an ongoing hope in the treatment of this debilitating illness.

—FRYE GAILLARD

And now at the pinnacle of her own good fortune, she was suddenly confronted with the possibility of death. When she heard the diagnosis, something snapped inside her, and she began to babble once again in a free association of schizophrenic thoughts.

*Fleeces and geeses and astronomical proportions with people growing tumors. It’s a growth industry.*

As it happened, a friend was in the doctor’s waiting room, a Los Angeles psychiatrist named Esther Fine. She took Elyn into her arms and told her gently, “Oh, honey, it’s going to be all right. You’re in good hands.”

The psychosis passed more quickly this time, and after surgery and radiation, the cancer also has remained in remission. Elyn married Will, who remains a stabilizing force in her life, which is, she says, richer and better than it has ever been. But she also knows, probably better than most, that things can always blow at any seam.

It is a December morning in Southern California, and Saks is working alone in her office. As always, there are the stray and random schizophrenic thoughts—*You are evil. You have killed many people.* But she has learned over time to take them in stride, to treat them merely as the symptoms of an illness, no longer as crippling as they were in the past. She is focused instead on her legal and psychiatric scholarship, surrounded everywhere by mountains of paper. She has embarked on a study of high-functioning people with schizophrenia, searching empirically for the keys to their success, and she wants to study ways to help mentally ill people seek treatment.

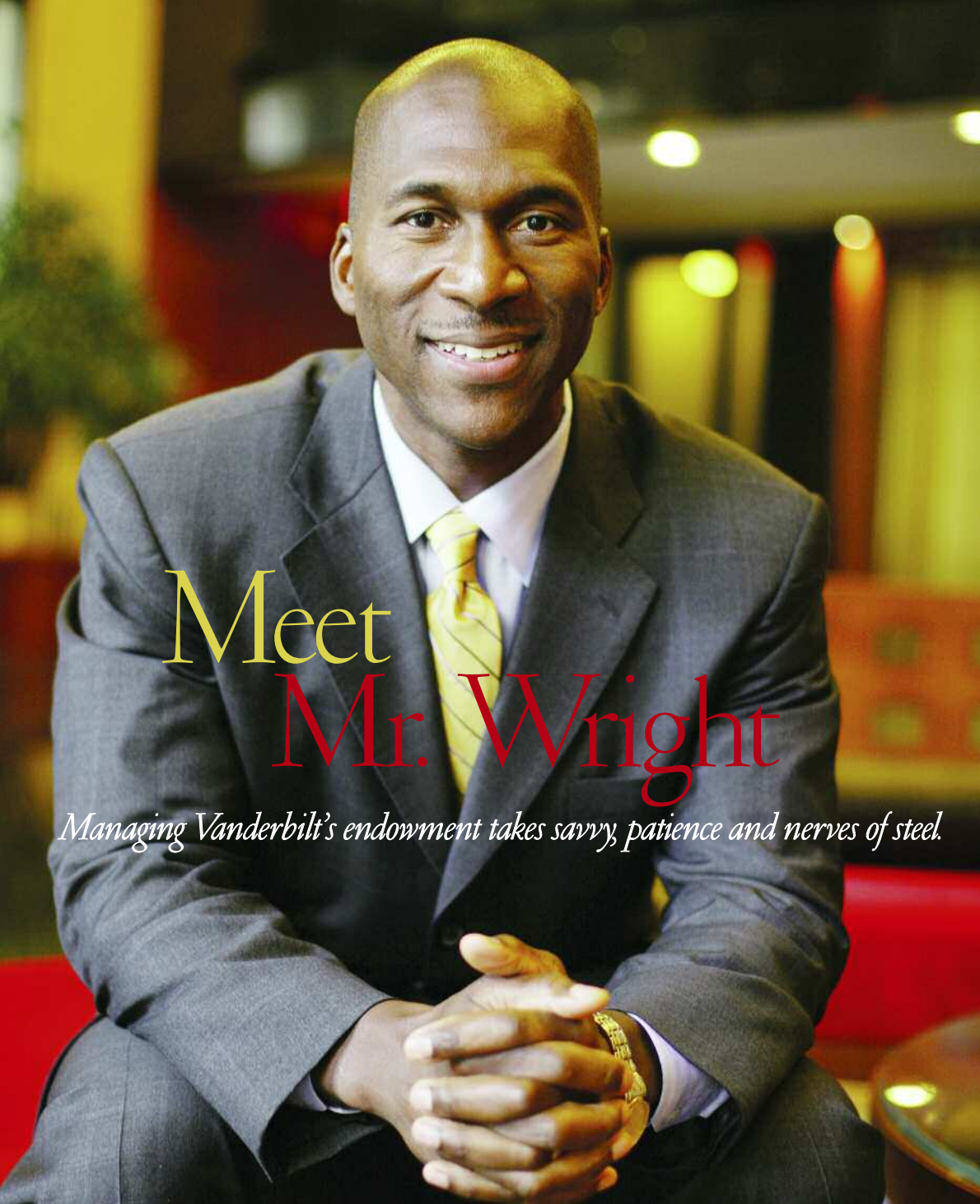
There are also issues of mental health and the law—the use of physical restraints in hospitals, the right of patients to refuse medication—and all of these studies add a feeling of structure and purpose to her life. Most weeks, in fact, she works every day,

chipping away at her projects, but taking frequent breaks to call her friends on the phone. She talks every day to Stephen Behnke, with whom she wrote her first book, and to her LA friends like Janet Smith and Esther Fine. And of course there is Will.

“My true love,” she calls him. “He gives my life a meaning that I never thought possible.”

But there is also the haunting reality of her illness, a reality, she knows, that will never go away. “I feel sad,” she admits. “So many years of so much pain.” And yet she believes her story offers hope, and she is now happy to have shared it with other people. There is a sturdy consolation in that—for her, another source of meaning and strength, still another reason to keep pushing on. ▼





# Meet Mr. Wright

*Managing Vanderbilt's endowment takes savvy, patience and nerves of steel.*

Few people have a greater impact on Vanderbilt than the person who manages the university's \$3.5 billion endowment. Last summer Philadelphia native Matthew Wright, then just 39, left his position as director of investments at Emory University to become vice chancellor for investments at Vanderbilt, succeeding Bill Spitz, who retired after 20 years at the university. Recently, Wright talked with *Vanderbilt Magazine* Editor GayNelle Doll about his work.

Everything changed shortly after I accepted by a tremendous outpouring of support. You made the decision to come to Vanderbilt at a point in time that turned out to be eventful for the university and for the financial markets. What have your first few months been like?

Vanderbilt's offer. While I was still at Emory, Gordon Gee decided to return to Ohio State University. The same day Chancellor Gee's decision was announced, I received calls from several people who had been involved in recruiting me to Vanderbilt. They said, "We still want you to come. We think it's a wonderful opportunity for Vanderbilt and for you." Any anxiety we may have had related to Gordon's announcement was quickly quelled

In hindsight that experience served to confirm our decision. My wife and I had visited Nashville, walked around campus, and taken in some community events, and we knew this was a wonderful opportunity to raise our two daughters in a positive environment. I thought I owed it to myself, my family and to all those who aided me over the years to step up to the challenge of being Vanderbilt's chief investment officer.

Then, just after I arrived at Vanderbilt, the market went into turmoil after having an incredible run. It's this type of environment

— when the market is moving up and down and there's panic in the streets and in the papers — that presents opportunities for long-term investors.

Although it sounds perverse, I welcome the uncertainty. It gives us the opportunity to evaluate wonderful situations that we hope will pay off within the next three to five years.

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*How do you approach investing?*

We look for opportunities that are undervalued or unrecognized. We have the luxury of being able to step back and take a very long-term view.

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*How many people are involved in investing for Vanderbilt?*

We have 15 individuals—nine or 10 are investment professionals, and the others provide support. We outsource probably 90 to 95 percent of our investments, so our primary job is hiring experts. Instead of buying individual stocks and bonds, we hire firms that uncover opportunities within a specific area. Our job is to monitor them and understand what they're doing. If we hire them, we need to have a relationship with them. People halfway around the world want to hear the same voices, see the same faces, and we want to follow up and have continuity.

So it's important that we build a team that will have a long tenure at Vanderbilt. That means compensating competitively, providing the tools to make good decisions and, most important, fostering an environment that is creative and dynamic. We reinforce the notion that they are partners with the university whose decisions will impact the institution for generations to come.

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*In the years you've been managing universities' assets, the importance of global investments has increased considerably. How has that changed your job?*

It has made a tremendous difference. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, if you made an investment in Europe or Japan you were thought of as being on the frontier. Now there are not only more strategies—stock and bond strategies, hedge fund strategies, venture capital strategies, energy, technology, real estate—there's also global expansion. That pushes the edge of the envelope. It forces us to be diligent in our processes and hire people with cultural fluency—not only language skills but openness to new ways of doing things and new dynamics.

We have to travel more, follow more strate-

gies and spread out more. We are segmenting ourselves into developed markets, including the U.S., Europe, and developed markets in Asia; and emerging markets such as China and India and Russia and Brazil. We're also looking at markets such as the Persian Gulf countries and sub-Saharan Africa.

Right now roughly 25 to 30 percent of our portfolio is invested overseas. We will probably get to the point where that's about 50 percent, across the entire portfolio.

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*How much of the move to greater global investment is due to optimism about the world economy, and how much of it is owing to pessimism about the domestic outlook?*

I would phrase that differently. There are things in this country we need to correct, but we're in good shape. We're the wealthiest nation in the world, and it's going to take a long time for that to change. There is huge growth in markets overseas. Many of them have adopted models of democracy or migrated toward capital-driven markets, and there's growth associated with that. We view foreign markets as a very wide pool of opportunities, and our migration to overseas markets is a function of that.

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*How closely does the size of a university's endowment correlate with its academic ranking?*

There is correlation between endowment size and the success and caliber of the institution, but it's not always a direct correlation. With a larger endowment, you can seize the opportunity to recruit academic talent and students. You attract high-caliber people, and as they become successful out in the workforce, they'll be in a stronger position to give back to their institutions and allow the endowment to grow.

If you look at an institution such as Harvard, one of the oldest universities in the country, it has an incredibly successful alumni base, and that alumni base gives back. It's a circular arrangement that keeps the endowment growing.

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*A number of universities have been under pressure recently to spend a greater proportion of endowment money on tuition.*

*Is that a reasonable expectation?*

Vanderbilt's entire endowment portfolio has 2,300 individual endowments, and each has the same spending rate of 4.5 percent. That rate was established in the late 1990s and is periodically reevaluated.

We don't have full discretion to say, "Let's spend more." We have to distinguish between unrestricted endowments and restricted endowments designated by the donor. Those dollars have been allocated to specific scholarships, professorships, chairs or programs. The individuals who made the gifts stated how they are to be used. They rightly expect stewardship and governance, and we abide by that.

We do have an academic venture capital fund that allows spending on specific program initiatives, which effectively increases our total spending to slightly above 4.5 percent, however.

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*What do you consider the best investment you've ever made?*

At both Emory and Vanderbilt, I've invested in a Latin American trade finance fund. The fund makes short-term loans to provide working capital to small farmers who grow beans, fish meal, cattle, or a variety of other commodities for export. It has a very attractive return, and the risks are mitigated by a number of factors including different types of crops, different harvesting cycles, the size of the loan—all denominated in U.S. dollars—and the insurance behind the shipment. It's diversified in a number of ways.

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*Do you invest your own personal assets, or does someone do it for you?*

I'm just an index guy for a couple of reasons. I don't have much time to go around picking stocks on my own. I make a few asset allocation decisions from time to time, but basically I have a long-term, low-cost strategy approach and I monitor my statements periodically just like everybody else.

▼



# The Minds

“Arts hold a mirror up to ourselves, but audiences today do not want the

Rehearsing and performing with the José Limón Dance Company was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Vanderbilt Dance Program students.



## Dance:

### Students Dance in First-Ever Residency

FOR A UNIVERSITY that doesn't offer a dance major or minor, Vanderbilt attracts its fair share of dancers. In fact, more than 800 dancers from the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities take part in Vanderbilt Dance Program classes in ballet, jazz, modern, hip-hop and more. The thriving program, founded in the mid-1970s, serves as the main outlet for students wanting to train in dance while at the university.

“We have students who are very serious about pursuing a professional dance career, and we have students who simply want to satisfy their interest in dance while pursuing a Vanderbilt degree,” says JoEl Logiudice, director of the Office of Arts and Creative

Engagement. “The dance program is a way to bridge those two worlds—their passions with their careers.”

When the renowned Limón Dance Company was added to last fall's Great Performances lineup at Vanderbilt, it provided an unprecedented opportunity for a full-fledged dance residency, allowing selected students to audition, train and perform alongside company members for a performance of Limón's *Missa Brevis*.

The José Limón Dance Company was founded in 1946 by Limón, a Mexican immigrant who specialized in a style of modern dance that was related to ballet, but used strong movements to express emotion and tell stories in abstract and unique ways. *The New York Times* called Limón “the finest male dancer of his time.”

Limón created *Missa Brevis* (it means “short mass”) after a 1957 trip to Poland, where he witnessed the Polish people's ongoing efforts to rebuild after the devastation of World War II. A National Endowment for the Arts grant supporting the reconstruction of American dance masterworks at the nation's universities enabled Vanderbilt to bring Limón's *Missa Brevis* to campus.

Limón Dance Company's artistic director, Carla Maxwell, traveled to Nashville to conduct auditions, which included a two-day workshop to orient students in the Limón technique. Auditions yielded five students to dance the roles of *Missa Brevis*' “corps,” or chorus, and two understudies. For more than two weeks, the students trained under Clay Taliaferro, a former Limón principal dancer, with four to five hours of rehearsal

# Eye

*tough truths that art wants to tell us about ourselves.* ”



Vanderbilt senior Aimee Casey's oil painting "Explosion" was featured at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in December.

—Chancellor's Lecturer EDWARD ALBEE

several times during the week plus eight more on weekends.

Arts and Science senior Julia Byrd, a biology and pre-med major who has been dancing since age 10, says the long rehearsals felt like lengthy private lessons. "It was great to be at that level of professionalism."

"The most valuable thing I learned is to 'make the movement make sense.' Clay repeated this phrase over and over in rehearsals," says Schwannah McCarthy, a third-year law student chosen for the residency. "I have a tendency to get very cerebral when performing a dance, but the reality is, when you initiate movement in one part of the body, then another part of the body moves naturally in response. I learned to let go and trust that my body is 'on the job.'"

Limón Dance Company members spent a week rehearsing with students, culminating in public performances by the full ensemble on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1.

"The great thing was that students were not an opening act or a separate piece," says Bridgette Kohnhorst, assistant director of art and cultural programs and curator of the Great Performances Series. "They were enveloped into the ensemble of professional dancers, dancing side by side in the true spirit of a residency."

—Kara Furlong

## Music:

### The Art of Accompaniment

TO MANY MUSICIANS the piano accompanist is the equivalent of a second-string player, a backup to the real star. In fact, this couldn't be further from the truth. Accompanying provides the definitive service to musicianship. It is an art form unto itself.

Daphne Nicar is among the cadre of accompanists who lend their talents to the Blair School of Music on a regular basis. For

the past eight years, Nicar has been playing the piano primarily to accompany singers—soloists, choral groups and opera performers. Each of these genres requires a specific technique, Nicar says.

"When you're doing an opera rehearsal, the job of the accompanist is not to follow the singer, but to follow the conductor—and that is harder for me, in a way," she says. "In opera you have to change your focus. Your leader is the conductor."

Professor Robin Fountain conducts many of Blair's operas. His method is to work with Nicar and the singers during the first week of musical rehearsals and early staging. He then leaves while the cast continues to work on the music only. Once the singers have learned all the music, Fountain returns to begin the staging rehearsals. The accompanist's challenge is to follow the conductor's directions whether or not he's in attendance.



JOHN RUSSELL

Nicar

Along with opera rehearsals, Nicar also plays the orchestral reductions (music originally written for other instruments and rescored for the piano) for students participating in concerto competitions. That, too, is its own animal. "You're trying to imitate what an orchestra would do, to be the oboe, the strings or the horns. There's a lot of tremolo and rumbling to make the piano sound like a full orchestra," explains Nicar. "Playing orchestral reductions requires a completely different technique than playing music specifically composed for piano and singer. It's not as physically pianistic, and it doesn't necessarily fit the hand."

Much of her work at Blair entails working with specific students on ensemble pieces in preparation for a recital. In those cases Nicar begins by sitting down with the singer and sight-reading the selected piece so they both share a feeling for its content and direction. After the singer has practiced on his or her own for a period of time, Nicar then begins discussing phrasing, tempo and breathing. An accompanist must give a singer time to breathe.

Nicar says, "From there we'll work on the shape of phrasing and word emphasis. Then after we've finished rehearsing, I'll tell them what consonants and vowels I couldn't understand, where we need to work on tempo—how fast and how loud. We'll discuss whether we've hit the mark stylistically. If it's a romantic song, there will be a lot of give and take in the tempo."

In other words, the accompanist is an active partner, not a sideline participant, in a musical performance. The skills of an accompanist are deemed so important that all Blair keyboard majors take classes in accompanying, during which they receive feedback and advice as they perform with an instrumentalist or vocalist.



Nicar says the beauty of accompaniment is that it is the consummate continuing education. "I wish more students wanted to do accompanying," she admits. "From the time I left college, I learned more about musical ideas and interpretations from my experience accompanying other musicians and singers than I ever learned as a soloist."

—Lisa A. DuBois

## Books and Writers:

### An Accent on Fiction

IF YOU'RE HAVING A CONVERSATION with Elizabeth Spencer, MA'43, the first thing you'll notice is her accent. It's one that is increasingly—and sadly—rare these days. To say that it's Southern is merely scratch-



Spencer

ing the surface. It is old-fashioned, to be sure. Sophisticated. Educated. And certainly not heard in movies or on TV.

The second thing you'll notice is that she often tacks a question onto the end of her sentences: "Don't you agree?" or "Do you think so, too?" It's an effective tool that draws whomever she is speaking with into the conversation in much the same way that her prose draws you into her stories. She uses words the way an artist uses paint—creating stunning images that are easy to imagine with the mind's eye.

Here she describes a scene at a café in Florence from one of her most famous works, the novella *The Light in the Piazza*:

"A couple of retired German tourists, all but harnessed in fine camera equipment, sat at the foot of Cellini's triumphant Perseus, slumped and staring at nothing."

At last count Spencer had authored nine novels, seven collections of short fiction, a memoir and a play. She is also the latest recipient of the prestigious PEN/Malamud Award for Short Fiction, adding her name to a list that is peppered with Southern writers, including Peter Taylor and Eudora Welty. The award celebrated her most recent collection, *The Southern Woman*.

"The award just descended on me. It was for my whole body of work," Spencer says.

Although she is Southern to the core, Spencer has lived in other places, including Italy, where she traveled on a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and Montreal. While in Canada, Spencer taught and was writer-in-residence at Concordia University.

"I don't think that writing can be taught, but as somebody once said, 'It can be learned,' and I think that's a good way to put it. If you have a good teacher who can discern things, it's a great stimulation to a person who wants to write."

Spencer left Canada in 1986 for Chapel Hill, N.C., where she was the visiting professor of creative writing at the University of North Carolina until 1992. She still makes her home there.

Spencer names Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren and William Faulkner among her favorite Southern writers.

"I think that Southern writers are different. The culture creates the person, and I think the South has had a different history and different culture. That may be fading now; we may all belong to one culture," she says. "But I think a lot of the modern Southern writers sound very Southern still. You can't ask an Irish writer to be anything like an English writer. It's the same in the South. It's a long tradition."

While Southern literature is where Spencer made her mark, it's certainly not the only genre she reads.

"I do my best to keep up, but then I'm drawn back into reading older things that I really love from the past. I read mystery stories sometimes, and I've been plowing my way through Proust. I read Proust and then I start all over again."

Even though she's in her 80s, Spencer isn't done with her writing yet.

"I don't write as much as I used to. I've done some stories, and I'm sort of gnawing away on a novel that doesn't want to finish,

but I try to keep going."

—Cindy Thomsen

## Visual Arts:

### Collective Impulses

SANDY BESSER, BA'58, has enjoyed a successful career in investment management, while earning national recognition as an art collector. Both pursuits took root almost simultaneously at Vanderbilt.

"I don't recall taking art courses or going to galleries," says Besser. "But I did have an art epiphany when I took a class in investment management taught by David Steine." Steine, then professor of business administration,

and his wife invited Besser to their house for dinner one evening, and the original art works displayed throughout the

home made a lasting impression on the young student. "I remember it as being floor-to-ceiling art—and I became enamored of the idea of owning art myself if possible."

Not only did Besser find that owning art was possible, but it became a passion that informed his life from then on. A voracious collector since childhood (butterflies, postcards and swizzle sticks, to name a few), Besser's first art acquisition was a pair of drawings of ballet dancers he bought at an antique store in San Francisco after college. At about \$5 for the pair, the drawings were overpriced, he now observes wryly. They were also drawn on such poor-quality paper that they eventually disintegrated.

But from these works, Besser developed a love for drawing that continues today and began to develop the philosophy that has made him one of the most respected art collectors in the country. "I will only buy a better piece than what I already have," he says. "I always trade up, not down."



CRAG SMITH

Scott Schoenherr, "Times Totem," Diane and Sandy Besser Collection, Arizona State University

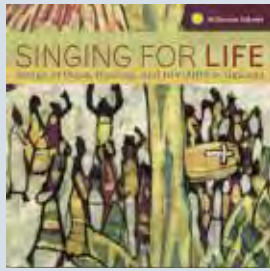
Over the years Besser's quest led him and his late wife, Diane, to amass a collection of 10,000 pieces of art. That number has dropped in recent years as Besser donates various pieces and whole collections to such prestigious museums as the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, Besser's home since 1997. His appetite for art is as varied as it is hearty, and Besser has collected extensively in several areas, including Asian, African and Latin American tribal art, contemporary-art teapots, contemporary Hispanic art, contemporary drawings and figurative ceramics. The latter two categories are the only ones in which Besser still actively collects.

Besser describes the art in his collection as "dark, challenging, and about what goes on in the world today." He has been honored as one of the top collectors in the country by *Art & Antiques* magazine and is credited with helping scores of new artists gain recognition in the competitive world of contemporary art.

More impressive than Besser's knowledge and patronage of art, however, is his obvious love for each piece he owns and each artist whose career he has supported. His home in Santa Fe is filled, like his Vanderbilt mentor's house, with art. "I guess I have about 1,500 pieces in my home right now," Besser says. "I've never stored art, and there are no pieces in the closet." There is, however, a hall of teapots with specially built shelves displaying the surreal and stylized ceramic vessels Besser loves, as well as other built-for-art areas of the home. There's nothing sterile or museum-like about the way all the art fits together—or the way in which it fits into Besser's life.

"There's a story behind every single piece in this house, and I don't have favorites," he says. "They are all my babies."

—Angela Fox



## African CD Nominated for Grammy

**Greg Barz**, associate professor of ethnomusicology in the Blair School of Music, was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Traditional World Music Album category for his album *Singing for Life: Songs of Hope, Healing, and HIV/AIDS in Uganda*.

*Singing for Life*, released last February by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, features uplifting music from Uganda compiled by Barz. The CD shares the *Singing for Life* title with a 2006 book he wrote about the role music and storytelling is playing in efforts to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Proceeds from the CD's sales go to two agencies in Uganda, Meeting Point and the Integrated Development and AIDS Concern (IDAAC).

"I am thrilled about this recognition for what was already one of the most meaningful projects of my career," says Barz. "Music is a key weapon in the fight against AIDS in Africa, and the music on *Singing for Life* is also just really great African music."

## Vanderbilt to Help Steer Dance Funding

**Great Performances at Vanderbilt** and its director will help the National Dance Project set the agenda for dance in America when it becomes one of 10 "hub sites" that guides the organization.

"I am pleased that we are now in the room as one of the top 10 curators," says **Bridgette Kohnhorst**, director of Great Performances at Vanderbilt. Kohnhorst will serve on the hub committee for two years beginning next January, meeting three times per year with other hub directors to review proposals, make funding recommendations and discuss program policy.

The National Dance Project is a grant program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, one of six regional arts agencies nationwide that funds and advocates creation and distribution of artistic expression.

## Art Majors Strut Their Stuff

The Frist Center for the Visual Arts exhibition *Future/Now: Mid-State Art Majors* featured the work of nine Vanderbilt students last winter among approximately 80 selected works by students in college or university art programs across Middle Tennessee. The exhibit included work by students Clay Carroll, Aimee Casey, Cassie Edwards, Deborah Figueroa-Cruz, John Hunter, Russell Lloyd, David McLeod, Amelia Spinney and Rachel Wang.

Participating schools in addition to Vanderbilt were the Appalachian Center for Craft/Tennessee Tech University, Austin Peay State University, Belmont University, Cumberland University, Lipscomb University, Fisk University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, and Watkins College of Art and Design. Faculty representing the art departments at each school selected the works on view.



**John Hunter, "Hear Me," linoleum block print**



KATE RUSSELL

Besser



# S.P.O.V.\*

\* Student Point of View

## Leveling the Playing Field

*An aspiring teacher sees a familiar playground through new eyes.*

By KELLY FINAN, CLASS OF 2009

FOR CHILDREN AGES 1 TO 4, the Susan Gray School provides intimate classes where typically developing children learn, play and grow alongside children with special needs. The education and environment at SGS are acceptance-based and allow children at all levels of physical and social development to thrive in a common setting.

For elementary education majors like me, the Susan Gray School (SGS) provides invaluable training. Originally named the Peabody Experimental School when it opened on the campus of Peabody College in 1968, SGS is devoted to educational research involving young children with developmental disabilities.

I did my first special education practicum at the Susan Gray School in the spring of 2003. Two years later, as part of the Peabody Academic Leaders (PALs) program, I had the opportunity to work and play with SGS kids for a second time.

My third experience at Susan Gray, however, in the summer of 2007, proved to be much different than the previous two. It began a new phase of my life in which the Susan Gray School family would play an important role.

It was last July, and I was glad to be back on the Peabody campus working with the children. We had been doing crafts inside, and after we finished painting, we headed outside for playtime. Play is an important part of the education at SGS, as it should be at any preschool. There is much research showing enormous positive benefits of play at an early age. That is why I was astonished when I went out onto the playground with the children that summer day.

As a college student walking across the 21st Avenue bridge, I had seen Susan Gray children playing outside many times before, but now I was viewing the playground through different eyes. While some children ran around freely, enjoying the playground equipment, the children with special needs and I sat at the top of a dirt-covered hill watching the others. These children were not able to experience the same quality of playtime as their peers. I

knew right then that something had to be done.

What had happened to allow me such a moment of clarity? Two years prior to that July morning in 2007, I had found myself unable to function normally. I couldn't stand without getting dizzy, couldn't walk without pain. The lower half of my body swelled constantly. It was especially frustrating because this was the summer I had planned to get a kidney trans-

plant in Maryland, where I reside when I'm not in Nashville. I had been diagnosed with kidney disease in high school, but had always managed to bounce back from any illnesses I'd faced. When my kidneys shut down following brain surgery I underwent in 2003, I went on dialysis. I had been on dialysis for a year and a half and had just gotten an MRI to clear me for transplant surgery.

The summer of 2005 was spent in confusion. No one could figure out just why my body was suddenly ailing. After a summer of dead-end doctor's appointments and tests, I decided to return to Vanderbilt to begin my junior year. Vanderbilt doctors were able to diagnose my disease, but at that time there was no known cause and no cure.

It wasn't until many months of subsequent hospitalization and a LifeFlight trip back to Maryland to receive a kidney transplant that researchers figured out what was causing my illness. Numerous studies at Vanderbilt and Johns Hopkins concluded that the initial MRI I had in early summer 2005, compounded with the many MRIs I had during my year-long hospital stay, had left me debilitated. The contrast dye Gadolinium, given to make the imaging clearer, had wreaked havoc on my system. Finally, I was allowed to return to my home to recuperate in August 2006.

At home I began to realize that I faced a major adjustment in living as a handicapped individual. Although I was getting healthier each day, it was becoming apparent that I would never get my old life back.



STEVIE GREEN

My family was a constant reminder of how lucky I was to be alive and how much I had to be thankful for. Slowly I faced the harsh reality that my life was forever changed. We decided that, despite the obstacles that surely lay ahead, I needed to return to Vanderbilt and finish what I had started.

Along with thoughts of Vanderbilt came a strong desire to go back to volunteering at Susan Gray. It was an ideal opportunity, not only because I had been there before and it was located right on Peabody's campus, but also because I thought it might be the perfect spot for me to start my transition back to college life as a handicapped individual.

Before long, I was taking summer-session classes and was assigned to volunteer in a community organization for a social justice class. I met with Ruth

Wolery, assistant professor of the practice of special education and director of the Susan Gray School, and thus became a part of the SGS family.

The children at Susan Gray didn't seem fazed by me, a volunteer teacher in a wheelchair, although they were fascinated with all its motorized bells and whistles. It looks like a mobile video game in the eyes of young children. At Susan Gray wheelchairs are, for some students, normal, and teachers impress upon the children the importance of acknowledging differences.

Even though the children certainly receive an excellent education, it was clear that something had to be done about what I witnessed that day on the dirt-covered hill. I felt that my life had been spared over the last few years and that I had been given a new purpose.

When I finished for the day, I met with Professor Wolery to find out how it might be possible to apply SGS's philosophy of acceptance and equality to the seemingly inequitable playground.

Since I first enrolled at Vanderbilt in the fall of 2002, there have always been construc-

tion projects. The Peabody College campus is undergoing a major expansion for The Commons. Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital are always expanding and adding facilities to help take care of the many lives Vanderbilt saves (including my own). Why was it that

larger goal. We knew if we wanted to raise large amounts of money, the right people would have to be involved.

My mentor, Ann Neely, a Peabody professor who is also director of undergraduate admissions and scholarships, came up with the idea that Vanderbilt's athletic fields are the univer-

sity's playgrounds, and that the athletes rely on these playgrounds. I loved this idea and immediately called upon my friend Shan Foster, a senior on the men's basketball team. Shan has an incredible track record of extending his talents well beyond his playground, the basketball court. I was not surprised when he immediately agreed to help raise money for this cause. Shan's coach, Kevin Stallings, wanted to help as well. I also met with David Williams, vice chancellor for univer-

sity affairs, who is in charge of athletics, and he pledged that the athletics program would match whatever was raised at the fundraiser.

I was ecstatic because we had come so far in such a short time. Donations were pouring in. My parents, who had been nothing but supportive and encouraging, decided they wanted to help out as well. They saw how enthralled I became with the children at SGS and the project itself. Their donation, along with countless others, brought us close to our goal by the night of the event in November. Vice Chancellor Williams announced that not only would he match whatever was raised, but that Athletics would fill the void of whatever was left.

With funding now in place, a playground for all children at the Susan Gray School will finally be built. I am overwhelmed by the generosity and kind spirit I have encountered everywhere I turn. The Vanderbilt community is incredible. The continuous support that SGS has received has caused me to realize that the physical situation I am in might not be "handicapped" after all. ▼



**Kelly Finan wouldn't take no for an answer, and as a result all Susan Gray School students will have a playground they can enjoy.**

JOHN RUSSELL

this playground seemed to be ignored?

Professor Wolery explained that SGS had been raising playground money for the past four years and had reached a total of \$60,000, but that they would need to raise at least an additional \$200,000 to start building a new playground. They had a detailed plan for the project and a great deal of motivation, but with all the new major projects that inevitably came up each year, the playground continually got pushed to the back burner.

My mind raced with possibilities. There are countless people out there, I thought, who would donate time and money to get this playground built if they knew what was happening. As many people had been an advocate for me through my various health complications, I needed to be an advocate for these children.

An annual SGS event called "Holidays Around the World," which celebrates diverse cultures, became a fundraiser for the playground in 2005 and 2006 at the suggestion of Ellen Brier, assistant dean for undergraduate student affairs at Peabody. Those of us planning the 2007 event began to meet weekly to determine how we could continue the tradition with a much



# A.P.O.V.\*

\*Alumni Point of View

## Lord of the Pointy Ears

*Mere mortals little suspect this fair maiden's imprisonment in a dark land of dragons and latex.* By CLAIRE SUDDATH, BA'04

**M**Y BOYFRIEND MAKES ELF ears. Long, pointy, flesh-colored things you can slide over the tips of your real ears when you pretend to be a goblin or fairy or your favorite *Lord of the Rings* character. His name is Paul Bielaczyc, BS'02, MS'04, and he makes these ears with his brother in an East Nashville studio, along with noses and foreheads, masks and scars — basically, any costume prosthetic you can imagine. And while I always have a good outfit on Halloween because of him, every time I tell people what he does, I am faced with blank stares and confused, sometimes horrified, expressions.

"Elf ears?" someone will say at a cocktail party. "What on earth are those?" I find myself at a lot of cocktail parties these days, talking to people I don't know because I'm supposed to learn how to network. I'm 25 now, four years out of college, and my social life is slowly migrating from two-for-one drink specials to wine-and-cheese night at someone's Pottery Barn-themed apartment.

The small talk at these soirees is always the same: big, friendly smiles, enthusiastic head nods, and superficial discussions about things I don't actually care about. If I mention my boyfriend in conversation, my new acquaintance will ask a few perfunctory questions about our relationship. How long have Paul and I been dating

(six years), how did we meet (as undergrads at Vanderbilt), and what does he do for a living? And that's when things get interesting.

No one responds to the mention of elf ears with a nod and a smile, the way they do when the answer is "lawyer" or "accountant" or any other one-word job description. Sometimes I wish I didn't have to explain Paul to everyone I meet. "He makes fake wounds and gashes?" I imagine someone saying at a party. "How interesting — so do I!" But this never happens. Paul has the prosthetic bullet-wound and exposed brain-bits market all



"Ominous Night," charcoal by Paul Bielaczyc

to himself.

Over the years I have perfected my description of Paul's job. He owns his own company, I tell people. It's called Aradani Studios. He started it with his brother. First it was ears, but then they moved on to other pros-

thetics, then costume jewelry and customized weapons like flails and maces. Last summer they hired a seamstress to sew made-to-order costumes. They don't have a storefront, but they do have employees who travel to conventions and festivals for them, and sometimes they travel themselves. Oh, they're also artists who illustrate fantasy books.

The conversation usually ends there, punctuated by an awkward silence that hangs in the air one second too long before someone decides to change the subject. But sometimes I'll see a spark of recognition in a person's face — usually a man's — and he will say, "What kind of fantasy books?" And that's when I throw out the terms Paul has taught me: *Dragonlance*. White Wolf Publishing. I don't know what these words mean, but I say them cheerfully and forcefully, the way my father taught me to recite "vice president of the financial division" when I was in first grade and had to do a report on what my parents did for a living.

"*Dragonlance*?" the closeted geek will ask. He will look at me with wide eyes, and suddenly I'll realize that I'm facing a man who wants nothing more than to drop out of business school and play *Dungeons and Dragons* all day. "I *love* *Dragonlance*! What did he do for them?"

"I dunno," I'll reply. "I think he drew a horsey?"

The truth is, I don't really know what Paul



Paul (right) with his brother and business partner, Michael Bielaczyc.

does. I see his drawings and look at his latest ear molds, but I don't know which piece of artwork is sold to which company. And because I'm not interested in sci-fi or fantasy—I'm more of the shoe-shopping, *America's Next Top Model*-watching type of girlfriend—I really have no idea why he's so upset when he comes home from work in a bad mood because 20-sided dice wouldn't glue onto a flail.

"What's a flail?" I will ask, or "Why are you gluing dice onto it?"

That's when Paul will turn to me with a look of mild pity, as if I'd just asked him to explain how to ride a bicycle. "A flail is a type of medieval weapon. I'm gluing dice onto it because then geeks will want to buy it."

"Oh, like a Bedazzler!" I'll reply. "For the type of people who cover their cell phones in pink rhinestones. I get it."

Sometimes when I explain Paul's profession, one of the closeted geeks will be so enthusiastic that he'll get other party guests interested, too. I'll find myself surrounded by people in khaki pants and Old Navy performance-fleece pullovers. They will stare at me like zoo visitors before a baboon exhibit, trying desperately to comprehend a job that allows employees to wear chain mail instead of blue jeans on Casual Friday. "Where does he make his prod-

ucts?" one of them will ask. "What's his job title?" "Who buys them?" "How did he get the idea?" "How many ears have they sold?"

The answer to that last question is 25,000 pairs. Thanks to Aradani Studios, 25,000 people now know the joy of latex prosthetic elf ears. And that's not even counting the customers who buy other products like noses and foreheads and vampire fangs. Paul and his brother even sell furry faun pants to people who want to dress like Mr. Tumnus from the *Chronicles of Narnia* movie. Of course, those who wish to look like a wardrobe closet are still better off going to Ikea.

When they've satisfactorily investigated the business side of the elf-ear endeavor, the next thing people want to know is how it affects me. I look so nice and normal, they think—am I really dating a man who owns his own set of leather armor?

"Well, he doesn't wear it," I tell them. "It's for decoration."

I do find Paul's profession strange, but it's a familiar kind of strangeness, something that makes sense to me but is hard to explain to others, sort of like telling a foreigner why our democratic political system keeps electing people named Clinton and Bush.

My boyfriend likes his job, so I like it, too.

I don't care that he sells costumes to sweaty-palmed World of Warcraft fanatics who smell faintly of microwavable

burritos, if he doesn't mind making small talk with someone in chinos who has a strong opinion on shiraz versus pino grigio.

In fact, I try to have as little contact with Paul's customers as possible. I used to attend the occasional convention with him—even I found the prospect of meeting the original Chewbacca interesting—but after a former *Star Trek* actor hit on me without wearing pants, I decided that the scene was not for me.

Most of my visits to Paul's conventions have gone

smoothly, but one particular trip stands out in my mind. My boyfriend is a friendly person, very animated and enthusiastic about his work, and his energy is infectious. One day he talked to another festival worker—a large woman who wore leather gauntlets as part of her everyday outfit—and she decided that she would try to steal him from me. Musketeer-like and clutching a sword, she challenged me to a duel. I'm a fairly wimpy person—I can't play poker because I'm too stingy to make a bet—and there was no way I'd be able to beat a woman who owned her own saber. So I ran away.

Other times, I'm the one who looks like an idiot at the conventions. Most attendees are there for one reason—because they are extreme fans. They spend hundreds of dollars on obscure memorabilia, dress up in costumes of their favorite characters, and fawn all over the celebrities who attend the conventions. The celebrity guests expect to be recognized and adored by these fans, but because they're usually B-grade actors from sci-fi or fantasy movies, I have no idea who they are. I once held an entire conversation with the man who voices Space Ghost on the

*Continued on page 85*



# A MILLION THANKS TO ALL THE REUNION 2007 VOLUNTEERS

Because of your hard work, Reunion 2007 giving surpassed its goals, providing new levels of support for Vanderbilt. In fact, the final tally was over \$46 million. The generosity of the undergraduate reunion classes and our distinguished Quinqs is already making an impact across campus. We also set a new attendance record—4,425 Vanderbilt alumni, spouses and friends attended the 2007 Reunion/Homecoming weekend.

So thank you all for a wonderful 2007!



## Reunion 2007 General Chair s

Keith Hoogland, BA'82  
Susan Moore Hoogland, BS'82

### Quinq Society

Bill Coble, BE'55

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Bill Cammack  
Eric Chazen  
Jim Johnson  
Anne Caldwell Parsons  
Anne Rich Pratt

### Class of 1957

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Jerry Caldwell\*  
Frank Cole  
Watt Crockett  
Nancy Skelton Fleming  
Bill Goodson  
Peggy Casparis Groos  
Rob Harwell  
Lee Ann Allen Hawkins\*  
C.W. Hayes  
Dick Johnston\*  
Bob Laws  
Alice Clark Merritt  
Robert Miller  
Susan Joy Moore  
Lucille Corkran Nabors  
Torrey Baxter Nance  
Suzanne Smith Reeves  
Riley Short  
Mary Eller Shreeve  
Mary Schlater Stumb  
Phillip Taylor  
Jane Houchens Tuten  
Amelia Spickard Watson  
Arville Wheeler  
Beth Henderson Wheeler  
Larry Wilson  
Larry Wolfe

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John Burch

Lee Churchill  
Jane Collins  
John Colton

Martha Prueher Conzelman

Ellen Watkins Cox  
George Crawford, Jr.\*  
David Evans

Carol Bruno Komara  
Barbara White Loda  
Art Malone  
Bruce Miller

Carole Ann Carrington Mooror

Betty West Pickell  
Barton Robison

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Ann Dobson Tidwell

James Veirs  
Bob Walker

Betty Thackston Westerman

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Stephen Block  
Don Bowles

Janie Ralston Bowles  
Norman Bradley  
Julia Davidson Brooks  
Judy Carmack Bross  
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Ann McCallister Coons  
Bart Cousins

Joan Triplett Easterly  
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Faye Allen Hale  
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Ed Kelly

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Ann Parrish McDonald

Anne Wall McLeod  
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Roger Moister  
Richard Pence

Rick Pennington  
Martha Smith Tate

Carol Kirk Teicher  
Bob White  
Ken Wolfe\*

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Terry Currie Banta

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Charles Cox

Kitty Bankston Cross  
William Diehl  
Stephen Estep

Dale Garth  
Geoff Gibson

Mae Go

Mary Beth O'Brien Grady  
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Clarke Heidrick

Barbara Benson Howell  
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Joan Michael King  
Mary Sturmon Lisher  
Raymond Martin

Hal May

John McClelland  
Anne Applegarth McGugin  
Karen Indorf Reid

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Gail Poust Slater  
Bob Stammer

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Stephen Sweet

Louise Lillard Sweet  
David Turner

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 David Blum  
 Libby Oldfield Broadhurst  
 Rick Burbank  
 Matt Callihan  
 Margaret Lynch Callihan  
 Missy Herrmann Eason  
 Rick Engle  
 Jeff Fisher\*  
 Jeff Gould\*  
 Beth Raebeck Hall  
 Andrea Lykins Lainhart  
 Laurie Lawrence  
 Donna Lilly  
 Bridgett Luther  
 Gaines Matthews  
 Chip Nichols  
 Douglas Quartner  
 Berney Ragan  
 Steve Schoettle  
 Tom Schoonover  
 David Sneed  
 Fred Stow  
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 Axson West

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 Elizabeth Schwartz Hale  
 Missie Wall Hall\*  
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 Emily Watson Hillsman  
 Orrin Ingram  
 Tori Thomas Mannes  
 Tim Marshall  
 Dibbie Smith Martin  
 Laura Hendrix McDaniel  
 Bill McGinnis  
 Russ Miron  
 Lisa Mumma Morgan  
 Lynn Stichter Pearce  
 Margot Bell Roberts\*  
 Marjorie Tillman Sennett  
 Janette Shelby Smith  
 Ann Potts Smith  
 David Smith  
 Julius Talton  
 Mary Christian Taylor  
 Kelly Butler Valentine  
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 Whitney Daane  
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 Dan Flagler  
 Melissa Hammel  
 Jamie Howe  
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 Jennifer Price Stark  
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 Stephanie Crews Sundock  
 Larry Taube  
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 Leah Krauth Bentley\*  
 Merrill Strobel Bohren  
 Beth Wooten Bonhaus  
 Loraine Gronberg Brown  
 Kelli Staples Burns  
 Tracey Kendall Coleman  
 David Elliott  
 Nicole Feliciano  
 Sarah Sinex Greene  
 Meredith Gast Hollomon  
 Betsy Bugg Holloway  
 Brigitte Borchardt Hubbard  
 Rich Hull  
 Janis Rose Hurter  
 Terrell Joseph  
 Sarah Morris Lawrence  
 Bonnie Terwilliger Leadbetter\*  
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 Katie Walsh Lloyd  
 Charlie Minter  
 Maria Norton  
 Meghan Montgomery Owen  
 Royce Risser  
 Shannon Chapman Rodriguez

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 John Adams  
 Phil Ayres  
 Emily Love Backstrom  
 Beverly Barrett  
 Marc Bousquet  
 John Browning  
 Lee Raines Buchmann  
 Myria Carpenter  
 Trey Clayton\*  
 Bill Collins  
 Liz Loftin Cotner  
 Matt Cotner  
 Carol Amelang Dawson  
 Scott Fisher  
 Jessica Stone Hartley  
 Tatum Hauck  
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 Charlie Kovas  
 Fontaine McDaniel Lee  
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 Erin Redig Leigh  
 Tiffany Mendez Levato  
 Brian Martin  
 Jason Mather  
 Katie McCall  
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 Rob Meserve  
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 Allison Graham Nolan  
 Kristen Grady Norton  
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 Lindsay Alexander Owen  
 Kari Morrison Payne  
 Amanda Dickinson Pommerenck  
 Derek Pommerenck  
 Britt Adams Redden  
 Mark Rothermel  
 Allison Valuch Sadler  
 Conner Searcy  
 Sarah Semple  
 Sarah Bockel Smith  
 Andrea Crump Streight  
 Jason Tomichek  
 Frank Trapp  
 Julie Wittman Trusock  
 Amelie Walker  
 Andy Wattula  
 Amy Coyle Wohlken  
 Harriet Goodrich Workman  
 Amy Young  
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 Jason Colgate  
 Ashley Comer  
 Anna Curry  
 Andrew Dunn  
 Kirk Reed Forrester  
 Tate Forrester  
 Nathan Hite  
 Sean Johnson  
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 Kat Stark  
 John Steele\*  
 Amanda Martin Vincent  
 Andrea Cox Yanicky  
 Rania Helou Zimmerman\*  
 Rob Zimmerman\*

*\* Indicates Class Weekend and Fundraising Chairs*





# The Classes

“Nial Raaen, BA’75, has been named chief of court management with the

*International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, Netherlands.* ”



DANIEL DUBOIS

## **Classy Chassis**

People who collect stamps or coins have it easy—they can add to their collections whenever their budget allows. But for car collectors like Marc Hamburger, space is always a consideration. Of the seven cars in his collection, those nearest and dearest to his heart are two Pierce-Arrows. One is a 1936 model, the other a rare 1931 that took seven years to restore.

“[The ’31] is a super luxury car—one of only 20 ever made. It would’ve sold for \$8,000 or \$9,000 then,” he says. “A Ford would’ve cost only \$500.” His Model 41 LeBaron Club Sedan garnered the Most Authentic Restoration trophy at the 2007 Pierce-Arrow Society Meet.

Pierce-Arrow automobiles debuted in 1903 and were immediately recognized as first-class cars. They won important races and were a favored conveyance of U.S. presidents.

“What made them so great was also their undoing,” says Hamburger. “They would not compromise on quality. In 1929 they made 10,000 cars, but then the Depression started. By 1938 they were bankrupt.”

His dream car is the Pierce Silver Arrow. Only five were made, and were showcased at the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago. Three are known to exist, and two are unaccounted for.

“It’s every car collector’s dream to walk into an old barn in the middle of nowhere and find some remarkable car that’s been sitting there for 40 years. That still happens.”

—Cindy Thomsen



“ Julia Robert Kaminski, BA'82, married Count Ulrik Christian Trampe on June 30, 2007, at



Ted Hildreth, BE'89 (standing, right), with Terry Moran, co-anchor of ABC News' *Nightline*

SGT. JACK W. CARLSON III

## Deadly Force

If North Korea or Iran shot an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) at the United States, most of us would be blissfully unaware. But for Lt. Col. Ted Hildreth, this “bolt out of the blue” would be just the scenario he’s been training for his whole career. Hildreth is commander of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greely, Alaska.

“My battalion is the only one of its kind in the military,” says Hildreth. “No other unit can shoot down an ICBM that would potentially touch our country.”

Thanks to satellites and sensors around the world, the ability to detect the time and general location of a missile launch occurs almost in real time. “All that information is correlated and fed to my fire direction crew so that they can do all they need to do to potentially launch and intercept an ICBM.” The final say-so to intercept lies with the country’s senior leadership, and they only have a few minutes to communicate with Hildreth and his crew, who are operational 24/7.

Hildreth’s two-year stint at Fort Greely will come to an end in May. He has been selected to attend the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., from July 2008 to June 2009. The course there is designed to train the future senior leaders of the Army and Army National Guard. But he will always be grateful for his time spent in command.

“A bad day in command beats a good day at the Pentagon any day,” says Hildreth. “There’s no greater privilege in life in the military.”

—Cindy Thomsen

*in Greenwich, Conn., and in Copenhagen, Denmark, on July 21, 2007.* ”



“Katie McCall, BA’97, has been named a reporter



**Billy O’Steen, BA’89 (left), Betsy Macdonald, BS’90, and Kirk Williams, BA’89**

## **It Pays to Advertise**

“Kids seem to be the admission ticket for making new friends in strange places,” says Kirk Williams, who figured he was the only Vanderbilt alumnus living in the small coastal village of Sumner, New Zealand, until one day his wife took their children, Ruby and Kirk, to the library.

“Little Kirk was wearing a Vandy sweatshirt when a woman came up to my wife, Breda, and asked if she had gone to Vanderbilt,” Kirk recalls.

“No,” Breda replied, “but my husband did.” Turns out the other woman’s husband was Billy O’Steen.

“I couldn’t place the name, but when Billy arrived at our house, the recognition was instant,” Kirk says. “We swapped many stories. He was a Sigma Chi and I was a Beta. It seems we even dated the same girl along the line.”

The Williams children became fast friends with the O’Steen girls, Lawson and Stewart, as did Breda and Billy’s wife, Susan. And then they found a third Vanderbilt graduate living in Sumner — Betsy Butera Macdonald, BS’90. “Betsy has a daughter, Virginia, and little boy, Gus,” Kirk explains. “She met a Kiwi, Andrew, while living out in Aspen. They married, and he wanted to move home to Christchurch.”

The three determined that their paths had crossed before, at fraternity houses and Nashville music venues. “We have since all become best of friends and even had Thanksgiving at Betsy’s house this year,” Kirk says. “I find it very bizarre that three people from a Southern school unwittingly followed such a similar pathway.”

Any untapped Vanderbilt Kiwis would be most welcome at small but lively gatherings of the Christchurch, New Zealand, Vanderbilt Alumni Chapter.

—Nelson Bryan

and fill-in anchor with CBS News in Chicago. ”

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“Kira Butler, BA'05, was a stilt walker in the 'Festival of the Lion King' segment

## Alumni Association News

### Alumni Association Honors Professor Tom Schwartz



Thomas Schwartz, professor of history, has received the Faculty Alumni Education Award, presented by the Alumni Association Board of Directors last November. First given in 1982, the award includes a prize of \$2,500 and an engraved julep cup.

Since 2003, Schwartz has lectured at nine alumni education events for Vanderbilt Chapters in New York; Boston; Los Angeles; Dallas; Washington, D.C.;

Richmond, Va.; and Austin, Texas, on subjects ranging from U.S.-European relations to foreign policy in presidential campaigns. He has made presentations at Reunion Weekend events, and in October will serve as faculty representative for the Vanderbilt Travel Program's trip to Vietnam and Cambodia.

Schwartz teaches courses in the history of American foreign relations, with an emphasis on the 20th century. He is the author of two books: one about alliance politics during the Vietnam War and one about U.S. policy toward Germany after World War II. He is currently writing a short history of the Cold War and a biography of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

### Mentoring and a Meal

"Should I take Italian or Spanish? And please pass the potatoes."

Vanderbilt students and alumni are networking with each other the old-fashioned way: over meals together. Through "Opening Does," a new initiative by the Office of Alumni Relations, 10 to 12 current students—all with the same interest or major—are brought together with five alumni who work in that field to share conversation and a family-style meal.

"We conducted focus groups with students and found they were interested in meeting alumni in informal, intimate settings where they could ask questions that perhaps they didn't want to ask in front of professors or parents," says Kate Stuart, program coordinator for alumni relations.

"Opening Does allows students to get real-world advice about what they can do with their Vanderbilt degree. And it's fun for the alumni, who chat about their old classes and professors, sports, and what it means to be a Vanderbilt alum."

So far six such events have taken place since last fall—for history majors, political science majors and engineering majors, and for students interested in media and marketing, nonclinical health care, and noninvestment banking finance. Students sign up on a first-come, first-served basis. Along with the various academic departments, the Vanderbilt Career Center is a partner in the project.

of last year's Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade. ”

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The advertisement features a central image of a man wearing a dark blue and gold striped scarf. To the left, several items are displayed: a pair of enamel cufflinks with the Vanderbilt lion logo, a chain with a similar logo, a T-bar with the logo, a pair of cotton socks with stripes, and a silk bow tie with stripes. The background is a light yellow color.





### Shiraz, Schumann and Space Cadets

Alumni who are part of the 37 Vanderbilt Chapters nationwide are staying connected by planning dozens of events each year, from simple get-togethers for ballgames and happy hours to elaborate wine tastings and educational lectures. Here's just a sampling:



The New York and Chicago chapters each hosted a "Chocolate and Cheese Tasting Soiree" in October, featuring Katrina Markoff, BA'95, from her Vosges Haut-Chocolat boutiques in those cities. In Denver, alumni enjoyed a wine tasting followed by a tour of the "Artisans and Kings: Selected Treasures from the Louvre" exhibit at the Denver Art Museum in November.

Exploration and the challenge of encouraging America's brightest students to enter careers in science and engineering was the subject of a Houston Chapter lunch and lecture in November by Rick Chappell, professor of physics and director of Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory. Vivien Fryd, professor of art history and American studies, engaged the Philadelphia Chapter the same month with a lecture and guided tour of an exhibit of Renoir's masterpieces at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Music enthusiasts in Atlanta gained insight into Beethoven and Schumann prior to a symphony performance, with the help of Michael Rose, associate professor of music, while in Nashville, Vice Chancellor for University Affairs David Williams chatted about Motown history.

To find out more about the Vanderbilt Chapter nearest you, visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/chapter\\_main.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/chapter_main.php).

### Words from the Wise

*Life After Vanderbilt* is a new guide written for new graduates by recent graduates—a collection of advice that the Alumni Association will present as a graduation gift to each member of the Class of 2008. With tips about moving, money, first jobs, networking and life changes, this manual has something for everyone, plus words of wisdom from Vanderbilt Chapter presidents and final thoughts from the Vanderbilt Career Center.

The advice ranges from the practical ("If you don't have the money, don't buy it. The \$150 purse really isn't worth the pain of being in debt.") to the playful ("Never believe the landlord when he says that living next to the 'el' train is an 'urban experience.'") to the comforting ("At my first job, I had no clue what I was doing for the first few months. This is normal! Everyone is clueless at first, but thankfully, it gets better with time.").

"Only young alumni from five years out were solicited for submissions, making it genuine, warm, real and recent," says Kate Stuart, program coordinator for alumni relations.



### Bling for the Vanderbilt Graduate

Give the gift of tradition with the official Vanderbilt class ring for alumni and students. For more information contact Balfour Rings at [www.balfour.com](http://www.balfour.com) or visit the Vanderbilt Bookstore.











**VJournal** continued from page 9

If plagiarized material is still discovered in this version, students are aware that they will be penalized. We also rely on a rigorous, open peer review of each other's work, which creates a sense that knowledge generation is a community affair. Students are critiqued on everything from grammar to argumentation skills. SafeAssign is simply one part of a community effort, which gives a very distinct form of feedback. Use of SafeAssign in this manner acts as both a deterrent and a teaching tool.

The students' initial reaction to the technology was mixed. They welcomed the leveling of the playing field but were wary of the professor's motives. To allay their fears that I was "out to get them," our class had a discussion about peer review, the generation of new knowledge, and the unique way in which we can combine and interpret information. Lastly, we discussed the originality report for a paper that I was writing. In the end, students were very comfortable with the new system.

As the semester progressed, the amount of plagiarized material in each rough draft dropped dramatically. Students were beginning to learn good note-taking practices, proper paraphrasing and, more important, they were learning how to express their voice.

Vanderbilt takes a two-pronged approach to academic integrity. At the institutional level, instruction in academic integrity begins during freshman orientation. The Honor Council speaks with students about plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty,

and students are required to demonstrate understanding in an online quiz. At the instructional level, the education continues with a first-year writing seminar where faculty teach research and writing strategies.

Another way to deter plagiarism is to understand why students plagiarize and

Nationwide, 40 percent of professors do not report known plagiarism for fear of poor student evaluations, lawsuits, administrative reprimands, or unhappiness with the outcome when the occurrence is reported.

then develop a prevention plan. The most common reasons given by students are that they are afraid to fail, have poor writing skills or poor time-management skills, may not understand the assignment, or may see the assignment as meaningless busywork. In addition to discussing plagiarism, we must provide clear guidelines for writing assignments and use transparent criteria for grading. It has been demonstrated time and time again that the single most important factor in preventing cheating in the classroom is the clearly stated views of the instructor.

Nationwide, 40 percent of professors do not report known plagiarism for fear of poor student evaluations, lawsuits, administrative reprimands, or unhappiness with the outcome when the occurrence is reported. For others who suspect plagiarism, the

time involved in tracking down references is prohibitive and the plagiarism is not pursued. At Vanderbilt if a case of plagiarism is detected, it is to be reported to the Honor Council for further action. The Honor Council comprises students whose charge is to uphold the Honor Code. If found guilty, the student could receive the minimum

penalty of an "F" in the course or the maximum penalty of expulsion. Some professors still choose to deal with plagiarism quietly and one-on-one with the student, often allowing for a rewrite, additional work, or perhaps a zero on the assignment.

Vanderbilt is struggling with the same issues that every other university wrestles with when it comes

to prevention, detection and action regarding plagiarism. Like many institutions, we are using the carrot-and-the-stick approach. The carrot is prevention in the form of intense education concerning the creation of meaningful academic work; the stick is the threat of SafeAssign and tough punitive repercussions.

What happened to the students in my non-majors chemistry course? As a class we had an hour-long, in-depth discussion about plagiarism. Students were given the opportunity to resubmit their work. I took a long, hard look at the types of assignments I was giving, paying close attention to making them more meaningful. Paper assignments now come with grading criteria upfront, and we use SafeAssign. I am happy to report that I still derive great pleasure from my

**A.P.O.V.** continued from page 69

cartoon television show, and when I finally found out who he was, I said, "Oh. That's nice," and wandered away. Only later did Paul tell me that the actor was the convention's guest of honor.

I have similarly embarrassed myself in front of *Star Trek* actors, *Battlestar Gallactica* characters, and the guy who played Hercules on that horrible USA Network television show by the same name. The only conven-

tion guest I've ever been excited to meet was LeVar Burton, the blind guy with the visor on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Burton came to the convention because of *Star Trek*, but I wanted to meet him because he hosted *Reading Rainbow*. I waited in line for an hour, behind hundreds of people clutching *Star Trek* DVDs, books and action figures they wanted autographed. When it was my turn to meet him, I shook the actor's hand and said, "Thank you, Mr. Burton. I really admire the way you read *Angelina*

*Ballerina*." These are the stories I tell at cocktail parties, and if I'm lucky, I inspire laughter instead of awkward silence.

When I moved to New York City last August to attend journalism school at Columbia University, I wasn't sure how to explain my boyfriend to my new acquaintances. On the one hand, New York is full of weirdos, and Paul's career is almost boring compared to the man in my building who makes his

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**A.P.O.V.** *continued from page 85*

living by dressing up like the Statue of Liberty and selling knickknacks to tourists. On the other hand, Columbia is a fancy institution, full of fancy people who wear fancy clothes and do fancy things like win Pulitzer Prizes. Would Pulitzer Prize winners care about the guy who hosted *Reading Rainbow*?

As it turns out, the answer is yes. Not only do Pulitzer Prize winners like *Reading Rainbow*, but they love elf ears. I've already hooked up one classmate with a pair of her own ears, and other people have asked to interview Paul and his brother for articles. Even if no one else takes advantage of my Halloween costume connections, at least I'll have something to talk about the next time I find myself at a cocktail party.

When people ask about Paul's educational background and how he developed the skills to follow such a bizarre, unraveled career path, I tell them he learned it at Vanderbilt. He learned about sculpture in his undergraduate studio art classes, and sometimes he crafts 3-D models of his drawings using the Maya animation software he learned in graduate school.

I keep telling Paul he should hang his Vanderbilt diplomas on the walls of his booth, right between the orc mask and the *Legend of Zelda* shield. When his elf-ear sales finally hit 30,000, he can look up at the diplomas and see how far he's come. At least his master's degree in computer science was good for something. ▼



CHIP TALBERT

**Southern Journal** *continued from page 88*

The letters I have come across bearing Bell's signature are clearly not written by him, but his correspondence suggests he had been mulling over the possibility of freeing his slaves for some time. Under Tennessee law he would have to send them out of the country. It seems likely that Bell grew increasingly anxious — a word that crops up in all of the letters — that his death would lead to an unseemly scramble. Friends spoke about signs of physical infirmity and mental feebleness. His confidante Thomas Cross said Bell anticipated trouble from what he described as his “collateral heirs” should he die before his slaves were free.

Those who knew Bell well described him as a man of peculiar temperament who wrote his will, it was said, and disposed of his servants — only to undo all that he had done. Bell evidently wrote wills frequently. One can envision him watching to see the reaction of his family, and then changing his will yet again. Perhaps at age 85 with no direct descendants to look after, it was one of life's joys.

In any case, Bell's decision came during a time when there was a spike of interest in colonization, with inquiries from Tennessee towns like McMinnville and Murfreesboro. The most significant of them came from William Kennedy, a slaveholder from Columbia, Tenn., who sent a first group of his slaves to Liberia in December 1852, sailing from New Orleans. A second group of Kennedy's slaves was to follow in the spring.

Bell initially planned to send 70 or 80 of his servants to Liberia in two separate groups. He proposed to cover half the cost to outfit them and get them to the ship if the American Colonization Society agreed to cover other expenses. Not uncharacteristically, Bell made a number of additional demands. He wanted to know if he could buy 2,000 acres of land rich in iron ore on which to settle the emigrants. When it appeared that was not possible, he insisted his company be settled with those of Kennedy's where there were known deposits of iron ore. The society replied

that only the government of Liberia could grant such a request but promised to approach the government.

Knowing that many of Kennedy's company had died on the last emigrant ship to leave the port the previous December, Bell insisted his company not ship out through New Orleans. His and Kennedy's groups would join the company in Savannah, Ga. The enterprise was to be headed by Thomas Scott, the patriarch of the family, who was rumored to have helped produce the cannonballs used by Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans.

These trips tried the souls of the emigrants. There was the cross-country trip to the ship from Middle Tennessee to Savannah in the period before rails. On this and other trips, the society hired an agent to assist and protect the former slaves, who usually took too much baggage with them. Along the way there were people willing to exploit the situation, and many of them had to be paid off. The voyage took an average of 40 days and, as one local person said, it was “hotter than hell.”

As is the case with most of the emigrants to Liberia, little is known about the first company of Bell's slaves who landed in 1854. Within six months they sent back to Bell a bar of iron, which suggested the land had rich deposits of iron ore. Within weeks of the departure of the first company of 38 emigrants, friends of Bell were reporting to the society that he was ready to send out a second company. The group that left in May 1854 comprised 49 emigrants.

Kennedy reported that Bell planned to offer an additional 200 “iron men,” as they were called, to the society if they could join early expeditions and if the Liberian government would grant additional land.

The prospects seemed good. One report declared that an analysis had found the land where Bell's former slaves settled boasted the best and richest iron ore in the world.

But among Bell's family there was widespread suspicion that he was not only losing his marbles but frittering away his assets in a misguided scheme. And family members were not the only persons who had other ideas.

Bell asked a trusted nephew, George Bain, to accompany the third group.

Bell sent a pair of trusted slaves, a man named Joe Hall and another called Jim Burrus, to give another nephew, James L. Bell, an envelope stuffed with \$3,500. The money evidently was to be sent to Thomas Scott, leader of the first expedition, to help pay for establishment of iron forges and to help see the emigrants who had already gone out through the hardships of their first settlement.

Joe Hall and Jim Burrus came up with an ingenious scheme. They sent half the money to Thomas Scott and used the other half to make their way to freedom in Ohio.

I found this advertisement for Burrus and Hall in the local newspaper:

Run away from the subscriber  
about 21st of August

T W O N E G R O E S

Joe is a black Negro, 24 years old, very stout but not fleshy. Weighs about 180 pounds. Has a scar on one of his cheekbones caused by a burn. Can read and write.

Jim is a copper-colored Negro with a peculiar yellowness about the eyes, about 60 years old. About 5 feet 9 and weighs about 175 pounds.

They have a large amount of money with them in notes on the Bank of Tennessee.

They are both keen, shrewd Negroes, possibly have forged free papers with them, and may have had assistance from a white man.

Always, there's a white man lurking in the background, as if, faced with \$3,500, these guys couldn't look out for themselves. The Bank of Tennessee offered an award of \$300, an amazing amount of money at the time.

Plans for a third company, at any rate, fell apart on April 1, 1855, when Bell died. In the end I am left unsure of Bell's motives. Bell's friend Kennedy may have reflected his views when he described colonization as "the grandest benevolent enterprise of its time that was good for the Negro and even better for the white man." Friends spoke of Bell's long desire to free a people to whom he was deeply attached. The cynic wonders why it took so long.

There's no evidence that Bell came to his decision because many of those he freed were his offspring. To put it indelicately, I get the impression that Bell wanted to give his family the old digit. He was clearly being difficult, and his "collateral heirs" were not treated kindly.

But his last will—*really* last will—insisted that the executors sell his slaves to "good masters" and that families not be separated.

Years later I came across the following notice in a Missouri newspaper:

The undersigned receivers of Montgomery Bell will offer in Valley Forge in Dickson County 140 Negroes consisting of men, women and children, many of them skilled in every department of the iron business, forge-ment keepers, and the majority of women and children excellent farm hands. Said slaves will be sold on 12 months' credit and as families as far as practical.

Montgomery Bell's heirs, in the end, got hold of some of his slaves, though the peri-

od of slavery by then was drawing to an end. Abraham Lincoln proposed sending free blacks elsewhere, though not necessarily to Liberia. Lincoln viewed colonization as a way of softening the conflict between Southerners and Northerners, and stayed with the idea through the middle of the Civil War.

Black Americans, however, were not partial to the idea of colonization. The United States was their country. They'd fought and died for it. Lincoln was stunned by how opposed black Americans were to colonization.

America's connection with Liberia remained strong, nonetheless. Iron ore would become Liberia's most important asset until the founding of the rubber industry in the 20th century.

In the end we are left with as many questions as answers regarding Montgomery Bell's decision to send his slaves to Liberia. Several years ago when a librarian at the Nashville Archives showed me a copy of Montgomery Bell's will, one phrase stood out. The will stipulated a bequest to open a school for "indigent boys."

Since then, every time I drive by Montgomery Bell Academy with its manicured lawns and imposing iron gates behind which generations of young gentlemen have prepared for academic careers at Vanderbilt and elsewhere, I have visions of poor indigent lads trying to cross Harding Road. Clearly something went awry with that part of Montgomery Bell's plan, too.

The lesson we are left with, perhaps, is that we should give away our riches before we grow old. ▼

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article has been adapted from a lecture given by Richard Blackett, the Andrew Jackson Professor of History, as part of the Thinking Out of the (Lunch) Box series last year. A bit of trivia for Vanderbilt history buffs: Montgomery Bell Academy originated in 1867 as part of the old University of Nashville, which became Peabody Normal College in 1888—later to become George Peabody College for Teachers and, in 1979, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.*



# Southern Journal

Reflections on the South

## Best Laid Plans

*A ruthless slave driver's decision to free the people he had exploited leaves questions 150 years later. By RICHARD BLACKETT*

I WAS BORN IN TRINIDAD, educated in England, and moved to Nashville in 2002 to teach history at Vanderbilt. My research focuses on African Americans in the Atlantic world of the 19th century. Wherever I live, I also try to do a bit of research into local history.

My daily drive to work takes me past Montgomery Bell Academy, which piqued my interest about the man for whom the school was named. My interest was aroused further when I ran across an old newspaper item about Montgomery Bell freeing his slaves and sending them to Liberia on the west coast of Africa. When I asked a local librarian why Bell had done such a thing, I was met with a knowing look, a twinkle in the eye, and the information that Bell was a bachelor. The inference was clear: Bachelors do things with women over whom they have command.

A historian of Dickson County, Tenn., where most of Bell's forges and furnaces were located, wrote of Bell: "He was a ruthless slave driver who made hard bargains ... who became wealthy exploiting Dickson County and who may even have had illegitimate white and black children, but who in later years became imbued with a philanthropic spirit and emancipated slaves and gave money for the establishment of a school for boys."

Much is implied here, but much is left unsaid. How does someone who has been eagerly going about exploiting his slaves decide to free them?

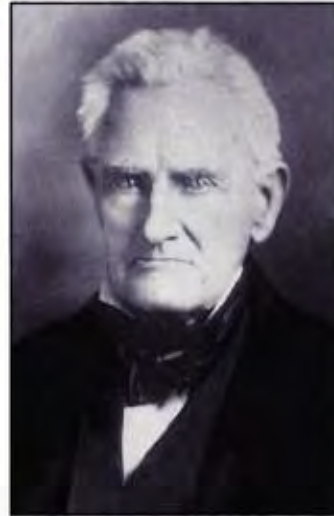
By the time Bell made the decision to

send his slaves to Liberia in the early 1850s, he had become Tennessee's most prominent ironmaster. Born in Chester County, Pa., in 1769, he moved first to Kentucky and then to Tennessee, where in 1804 he purchased a furnace from James Robertson, the founder of Nashville. The 1850 slave schedules record that Bell owned 310 slaves, making him possibly the largest slaveholder in the state.

In a society in which racism flourished, any slaveholder who was partial to freeing his slaves faced the problem of where to settle them once they were freed. Most Southern states made it impossible for freed slaves to remain in those states unless they got special dispensation from the legislature.

Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society in 1822 as a place to settle freed slaves and free blacks who no longer wished to live in the United States. The society had a schizophrenic history and character. On the one hand it saw itself as an anti-slavery organization; on the other it was an organization that got rid of free blacks, the most dangerous people within a slave society. Many state societies, including those of Pennsylvania and Maryland, created their own settlements of freed slaves along the coast of Liberia, with the idea of keeping people from a particular area together.

The American Colonization Society relied on support from local chapters. Funds to



cover the costs of passage and support were to be provided by the slaveholder. If no funds were available, the clerk of court had to hire out the slave until enough money was raised to send the slave to Liberia—an interesting emancipation concept.

By 1853 when Bell made the decision to send his slaves to Liberia, the Tennessee

Colonization Society, founded in 1829, was in desperate financial straits. As a result, Bell and others who wished to send their slaves to Liberia would have to foot much of the bill, and the bill was pretty steep. It was estimated it would cost \$60—in 1850 money—to outfit and support each emigrant for six months.

The society's Tennessee agent wrote to the national office in Washington, D.C., informing them that Montgomery Bell had 200 servants—documents of the era rarely use the term "slaves"—whom he wished to settle in Liberia. One hundred of them were direct descendants of James Worley, a slave for whom Bell had named one of his forges in Dickson County. Roughly 80 were mechanics who had built sawmills, gristmills and furnaces. Bell's slaves were skilled artisans, the cream of the crop. They blasted rock through tunnels, and he entrusted much of his business to them.

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The result? An unparalleled experience better than any internship imaginable. And, a trip to Dallas for Mallory and nine teammates to present their winning ideas to the American Airlines global marketing team—who were so impressed, they used those ideas to improve AA’s website and sales effort.

**Mallory Shafer**  
Vanderbilt Class of 2008  
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Mallory's Accelerator Teammates (not pictured):  
Emily Agostino (Vanderbilt, 2009), Cory Carpenter (Vanderbilt, 2009), Chapleigh Denman (Vanderbilt, 2007), Mike DiBenigno (Vanderbilt, 2009), Lauren Dornfeld (Vanderbilt, 2007), William Hennessy (Ole Miss, 2007), Rob Lindsay (Vanderbilt, 2009), Ray McGill (Cornell, 2007), Hawk Sindel (Vanderbilt, 2009)