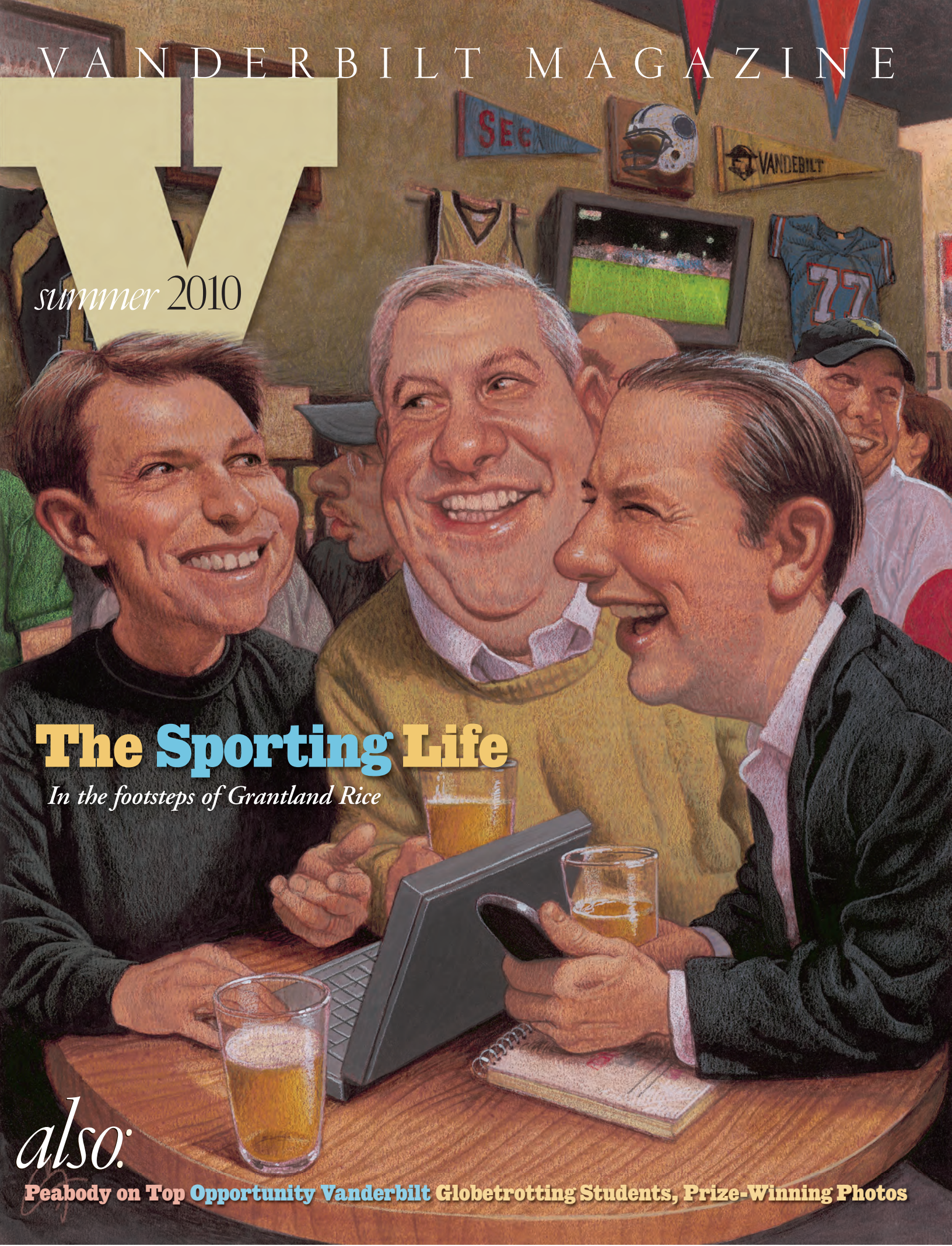


**V**  
summer 2010



# The Sporting Life

*In the footsteps of Grantland Rice*

*also:*

**Peabody on Top Opportunity Vanderbilt Globetrotting Students, Prize-Winning Photos**

# OpportunityVanderbilt



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Arts and Science, Class of 2012  
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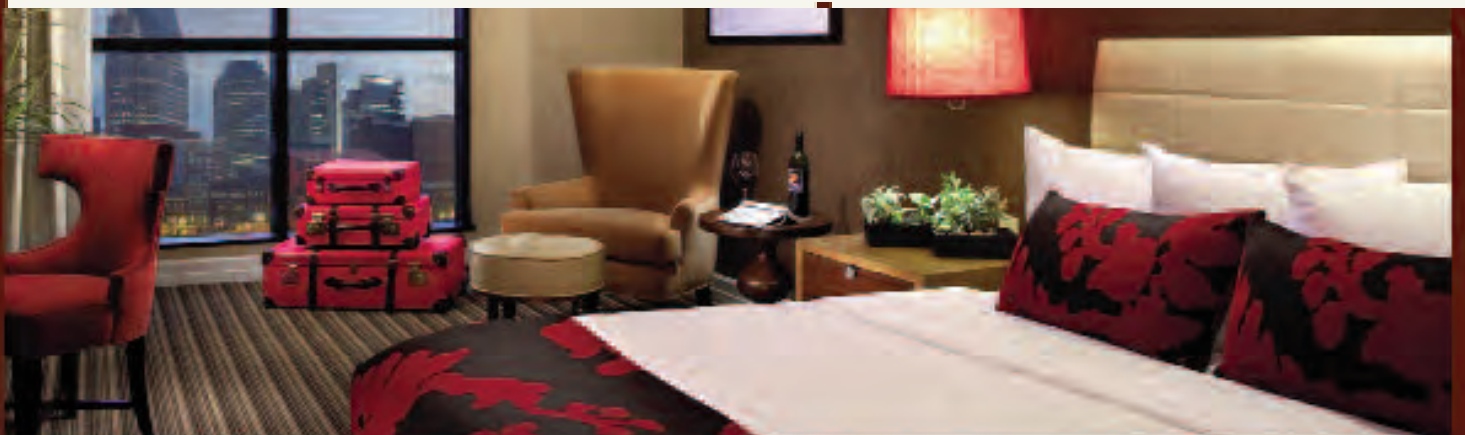
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*Alumni who cover the sports scene include (from left) Lee Jenkins, BA'99, senior writer for Sports Illustrated; Dave Sheinin, BS'91, national baseball writer for The Washington Post; and Tyler Kepner, BA'97, national baseball writer for The New York Times. Story on page 34. Illustration by C.F. Payne.*

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Just days before she was to begin studies at Vanderbilt, Michelle Eckland lost her mother to cancer. In her struggle to cope, she found a community of support in unexpected places—and organized a team to help cancer survivor Mo Mantus complete the Country Music Half Marathon. Read Eckland's story on page 68. Photo by Joe Howell.

Summer 2010, Volume 91, Number 2





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## C.F. Payne



C.F. PAYNE's artwork has graced the covers of *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *MAD Magazine*, *Der Spiegel*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Atlantic*, *Texas Monthly* and more. He has been commissioned to paint countless politicians, authors and entertainers and has illustrated 10 children's books, including *The Remarkable Farkle McBride* and *Micawber* by John Lithgow. Payne's artwork has been exhibited at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, Norman Rockwell Museum, the Society of Illustrators' Museum of American Illustration, and numerous college and university galleries.

## Chuck Offenburger

CHUCK OFFENBURGER, BA'69, got his start in print at age 13 in his hometown of Shenandoah, Iowa, writing sports news for the *Shenandoah Evening Sentinel*. After a long career as a *Des Moines Register* featured columnist, Offenburger now writes from his farm home in Greene County, Iowa. The author of four books, he serves as a visiting instructor at colleges and high schools, teaching journalism and courses about Iowa. For 16 years Offenburger was co-host of the internationally known RAGBRAI—the *Register's* Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa. His website is [www.offenburger.com](http://www.offenburger.com).



## Lisa A. DuBois



A freelance writer since 1985, LISA A. DUBOIS has penned stories for magazines, newspapers, podcast, radio and television, and is a frequent contributor to Vanderbilt publications. She is author of the nonfiction book *More Than a Place: The Origins of a Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt*, and is completing the manuscript for her second book, *Ambition and Energy: The Cockrell Family*, to be published later this year. DuBois resides with her husband in Houston.

## Frye Gaillard

FRYE GAILLARD, BA'68, grew up in Mobile, Ala. From 1972 until 1990 he lived in North Carolina and worked for *The Charlotte Observer*. His first book, *Watermelon Wine*, published in 1978, was a collection of essays about country music. Since then Gaillard has authored or co-authored more than 20 books, most concerning politics, race relations and contemporary Southern culture. In 2005, Gaillard returned to Alabama and became writer-in-residence in the history and English departments at the University of South Alabama. In the late 2000s he began working with singer-songwriter Kathryn Scheldt, whose album *Southern Girl* contains 10 songs co-written by him.



## Rob Simbeck



ROB SIMBECK's work has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Guideposts*, *Country Weekly*, *Field & Stream*, *Free Inquiry* and many other publications. He has won three national awards for his work in the *Nashville Scene* and two international awards for his outdoor writing. His website is [www.robsimbeck.com](http://www.robsimbeck.com).

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# DoreWays

A forum for exchanging ideas

## From the Editor

### Watershed Event

**T**HE RAIN BEGAN IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS of Saturday, May 1, cleansing a layer of spring pollen from car windshields as students slept or crammed for finals. By the time most Nashvillians stirred, the rain was falling in great unrelenting sheets.

I had planned to spend the weekend with friends at nearby Montgomery Bell State Park, but by 2 p.m. we opted to scotch the trip. Local weather alerts pre-empted the Kentucky Derby broadcast, businesses closed early and interstates clogged, and still the rain continued all night and Sunday morning and into the afternoon, when I opened my Vanderbilt email to read this stark phrase in a message from Provost Richard McCarty: “I have decided to cancel all exams scheduled for Monday, May 3.”

The flooding dumped more than 13 inches of rain in two days. On Saturday my colleague Nancy Wise, editor of *Vanderbilt Engineering and Arts and Science* magazines, was leaving Happy Tales, the Williamson County animal shelter where she volunteers. Her usual route was blocked by a police barricade. Nancy made a fateful decision to access an alternative route—and in an instant found her car nearly submerged in water. The car stalled. Nancy managed to push her car door open and waded through the water, purse on her shoulder. She walked into a drainage ditch and had to swim to safety.

Phillip Tucker, *Vanderbilt Magazine’s* associate editor, had a full house at his residence near Gaylord Opryland Hotel that weekend. Phillip’s sister, who has ALS, and brother-in-law are living with him while they renovate a condominium to accommodate Christy’s mobility needs. Their two dogs are also staying with Phillip, along with Phillip’s mother and her dachshund. On Sunday, May 2, Phillip got word that his house was in danger of flooding, and the whole household had to evacuate late that night. In the end Phillip’s house stayed dry, but many of his neighbors lost everything.

A few weeks before the flood, I had moved from my home in Bellevue to Hillsboro Village. My old neighborhood was hit hard, and for weeks as I drove out to check on my old house, I was stunned by the devastation. Volunteers helped haul the entire contents of flooded homes to the curb, creating mountains of sodden dry-wall and mildewing couches and waterlogged teddy bears.

Nashville received high marks from the national media for its “can-do” attitude after the flood, and Vanderbilt was a big part of the effort. Read a personal account of the flood on page 9.

—GayNelle Doll



Associate Editor Phillip Tucker snapped this photo of widespread flooding in his Pennington Bend neighborhood.

PHILLIP TUCKER

## From the Reader

### Food Equality and Obesity

I WAS DISAPPOINTED that “Flood Tide in Tennessee” [Spring 2010] didn’t discuss the causes of childhood obesity. One off-hand reference to “food inequality” does not do the issue justice. Fast food and other highly processed foods provide the greatest caloric density for families with limited financial resources and limited time for cooking. Until we address the lack of accessible, inexpensive, healthy options, all the resources of Vanderbilt and efforts of its outstanding staff are wasted.

SHAY ROALSON, BE’93  
Austin, Texas

I AM EXCITED TO SEE A FOCUS on diet and exercise for our children. My daughter (now 16) and I participated in a Vanderbilt program, “Shape Down,” about six years ago. Since then she has taken an active role with health-conscious diet choices and a fitness program. We as a family have made tremendous changes in meal choices and exercise. As a middle school teacher, I would like to hear more about the Eat Well, Play More Tennessee program, something I can incorporate into my curriculum.

DEBORAH JAMES  
Gallatin, Tenn.



[EDITOR’S NOTE: Nishan Akgulian created the original artwork we used to illustrate “Flood Tide in Tennessee.” We omitted the credit noting that Akgulian was the artist, and we apologize for the oversight.]

## Greeks Bearing Test Banks

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT GREEK life is primarily about getting wasted and having fun. There's nothing wrong with this. To argue that Greek life has evolved into something noble, however, is disingenuous. The necessity to make such an argument seriously undermines the position the author takes in this article ["Good to Be Greek," Spring 2010].

The Greek GPA is still inflated by the "test banks" made accessible to them. I consider this a serious problem at Vanderbilt. I also think that comparing the average Greek GPA to the overall average GPA is an overly simplistic analysis. Look at the top 25 percent of Vanderbilt students, and see what proportion is Greek: I suspect Greek students are disproportionately underrepresented in this subsection. My point is that getting involved in Greek life is probably not the best way to become an excellent student, despite this article's implications.

SAMUEL NACKMAN, BE'10  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

## The School of Country Life

THANK YOU for your article about Knapp Farm [Spring 2010, Collective Memory]. I admire Paul Conkin's work about the history of this area.

I am Bruce Payne's grandson and remember trips to the farm. There was an apartment in the clubhouse where my family spent several summers. The clubhouse at the farm had been the site of Buchanan's Station, one of the early settlements in the area and the site of a famous Indian battle. One tower was

still standing but was later torn down because of termites.

In addition to Holstein cows at Knapp Farm, there were Duroc hogs and South-down sheep. I remember watching men shear the sheep and going to sheep auctions at the fairgrounds. There were no row crops except for corn; the whole idea was to show the advantages of these breeds. Percheron horses were tried but were unsuccessful, as they could not take the heat.

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Ray Appleton ran the farm. His brother, Roy Appleton, was building and grounds superintendent for Peabody. Both Roy and Ray lived at the farm, and their father was night watchman at the college.

M. CARR PAYNE JR., BA'49  
Franklin, Tenn.

### Graphic Meltdown

ONCE AGAIN, an article about commercial nuclear reactors [Spring 2010, "Bright Ideas"] is illustrated with a picture of two BWR hyperbolic cooling towers—thus continuing the false impression with the public that they represent nuclear power reactors. I expect to continue to see this in daily newspapers, etc. (it probably started with media coverage of the Three Mile Island facility after the 1979 accident), but more is expected of Vanderbilt. Surely, a picture of a reactor containment building could have been found or drawn.

GEORGE R. JENKINS, BA'58  
Walnut Grove, Ga.

**The Yearling** <sup>"VIA THE OPRY"</sup> **Goes to the Opry** <sup>OD</sup>  
[Spring 2010] reminds me of a classmate at Vanderbilt my freshman year. He and I pledged Phi Delta Theta, and on initiation night we were sent out for various requirements. One was to get autographs at the *Grand Ole Opry*. My classmate was Claude Jarman Jr., BA'56—who had won an Acad-emy Award [in 1947, for Outstanding Child Actor] for his lead role in the movie *The Yearling*. This was our freshman year, 1952–53. Claude was a great guy and a great star.

DEAN GILLESPIE, BE'57  
McMinnville, Tenn.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Former child actor and Nashville native Claude Jarman lives in California and has a number of acting credits to his name, though he never again achieved the early success he found as Jody in *The Yearling*. The owner of a corporate travel planning business, Jarman last returned to Vanderbilt for his 50th Reunion in 2006.]

### Taking Matters into His Own Hands

THANKS FOR THE ARTICLE about Dr. O. Gordon Robinson, BA'53 [Fall 2009, "Humanity Ascending"]. Dr. Robinson has made a real and true difference in the lives of hundreds of people who mostly are living in countries that offer little or no hope or relief. His personal sacrifice of time and money has reached real people with real problems without dilution by theories, programs and bureaucrats. Score one for the individual who does the work. We need more of them.

DR. EVERETT C. MOSLEY, BA'53  
Huntsville, Ala.

### Letters are always welcome

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

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## The Weight of Water

*When your inventory starts at zero, each new discovery is one more thing than you thought you had.* By CYNTHIA J. CYRUS

**F**LOOD STORIES are community stories. They bring us connection with our neighbors (broadly speaking); we share those stories with one another in hallways, on sidewalks, in checkout lines, through Facebook and email, or over a nice dinner. They link us to the people around us through a sense of shared experience, through laughter and occasional tears, and through the ever-present reminder that people do extraordinarily generous things.

Though they are predicated on water and mud and loss, flood stories are affirming stories that tell us about the kind of people we can be—and about fears we didn't have to face.

My flood story starts at 2:32 p.m. on Saturday, May 1, when my husband, Tom, interrupted my work as associate dean at the Blair School of Music to tell me to come home—home being three and a half semi-rural acres west of Nashville where we lived with our children, Amelia, Nathaniel and Nissa; our four cats; four ducks; two budgies and 52 chickens.

The brief version of the story includes 11 hours of moving things upstairs and placing them on the floor, since none of us could anticipate just how severe the “moderate” flooding predicted on the early evening news was going to be. The story includes the part about carrying our chickens through the house to the back porch and throwing them on the roof of the kitchen as water poured through the doors of the first floor and came up to our ankles, and then up to our knees. There's the funny bit about our final exit from the



JOHN RUSSELL

**“There is a real sense of accomplishment as you finish scraping out one room and move on to the next,” says Cynthia Cyrus, shown with a salvaged photo of her mother.**

house when Tom paddled the canoe through the front door—the doorjamb helped provide stability—and Amelia and I climbed into the canoe from the inside stairway.

Then there's the re-evacuation as we realized that the parking lot where we'd moved our RV, chosen for being entirely outside the 500-year flood plain, didn't feel safe. We met our neighbor Charlie in the process and followed him up his driveway when he was finished hauling things across the road. He had a spot in his backyard that was nearly level, and we were able to ride out the rest of the flood in relative comfort. Others, too, were housed by uphill neighbors: The side yard of the farm down the road became a parking lot for more than a dozen cars and several

lawnmowers. The folks directly across the street from our house had one family living with them inside the house and another family living in their carport.

The flood waters continued to rise throughout the day Sunday as we napped, read books, and shared coffee, conversation and tools with our hosts. The orange barrels that had closed off the highway got wet, wetter, and then floated away altogether. Charlie's porch went under, then his mailbox.

On Monday, the misty morning revealed the giant lake our neighborhood had become. It wasn't until after breakfast that the water started receding, and not until noon that it was safe to get to the highway and bicycle the quarter mile to check on the status of our

house. (Bicycles can get through what cars cannot.)

Even with the water level down significantly, we found ourselves canoeing at gutter level on the kitchen roof. I peeked in upstairs and was greeted by a frenetically overjoyed cat. We could tell the water had topped the beds on the second story and that the 11 hours of moving things upstairs had been for naught, as anything not set on countertops was pretty much a total loss. We later learned that 25 feet

evacuating the three survivors in improvised pet carriers. That evening Tom and I shared a bottle of nice wine—the cats weren't the only thing we had rescued.

Monday we also began fielding the question that became a sort of Nashville mantra for the month: What can I do to help? By the close of the day, we had an offer of temporary housing in hand (with its associated pun, "safe harbor"), although the waters between our stretch of highway and the rest

what a community means. During the course of the various work days at the house, our "gratitude board" (a whiteboard to collect names of volunteers) grew to include well over 100 people. Two current Blair students coordinated a student team of volunteers at the end of finals week, and then stayed late a second day to help Amelia salvage photos. Vanderbilt faculty and staff came out in droves and lifted, sorted and moved the stuff of our lives. Alumni appeared, including a num-



**Scenes from a flood: Note the chickens huddled on the roof (above).**

of water had been in our home.

By dinnertime Monday evening I was able to enter the hip-deep water of the first floor. This first foray inside shocked me. It was almost impossible to walk. The mess was incredible, with caved-in ceiling Sheetrock mixed in with unidentifiable pieces of furniture (I'm still not sure how the coffee table wound up in the doorway of the playroom), craft materials, a jumble of toys, videotapes and books. With each step, something would shift like slick cobbles in a river crossing. It was eerily silent, with only the occasional rooster call to give normalcy to an apocalyptic interior landscape.

Amelia gathered up the bodies of the budgies and a duckling, and I collected the bodies of the 24 chickens that had been housed inside the downstairs craft room, wishing intensely all the while that we'd put the whole flock on the kitchen roof. We looked for the oldest cat, but didn't find her body until later. After a funeral up the hill for the pets that didn't survive, we again canoed through the front door and performed a kitty rescue,

of town were still too high to pass except by boat.

A colleague at Blair stepped in and covered a senior honors thesis defense for me. My fellow associate deans at Blair redistributed duties to cover senior exit interviews and deal with "whatever arises." Throughout Sunday and Monday my decanal colleagues across campus crafted and shared drafts of emails to faculty about the extraordinary situation, coordinating the varied responses to the cancellation of Monday's final exams, so that all I had to do was chime in and say, "Sounds good."

I'm not sure people elsewhere can appreciate how valuable Vanderbilt was in coordinating information for those of us cut off by water. Norma Gandy, Blair's executive secretary, provided us with news snippets (like the fact that Nashville had been declared a federal disaster area), helped to coordinate work crews and various volunteer efforts at our place, and provided thoughtful guidance and links to resources.

You learn through an experience like this

ber of representatives of the Class of 2006 (thanks, guys!) and several out-of-towners.

We had help from our church community (GNUUC, the Unitarian church in Bellevue) and from volunteers who just showed up with tools, generators, light sets and wheelbarrows—along with strength to haul a waterlogged piano, wet mattresses, and all the other furniture to the curb. People helped with laundry, took down bibliographic citations from the pages of waterlogged notes for my next book, and took the kids away to give them a dose of "normal time."

Food, shelter and clothing appeared as if by magic. The Red Cross delivered hot meals twice a day. You never think you're going to find yourself grateful for the free meal truck, but it saved us many trips to the grocery store, and every moment of salvage time was a chance to find something else that could be saved. We stayed with a friend for a few days, and then my cross-campus colleagues nominated me for a faculty-in-residence slot that has provided us with stable housing while the various agencies wend their way through the

decision flowchart.

Clothes arrived, left at the car, sent by mail, or brought in person. Betty Lee (Peabody College's registrar), for instance, left me a batch of professional clothes (no mud!) in my office, which I gratefully wore to our final faculty meeting and to Commencement.

Boxes at Blair held toiletries, pillows, bedding, a frying pan, a coffee pot. From across the country, small gifts—a comic book assortment, stuffed dragons, stationery, novels—

breadth of support and are humbled by the outpouring of goodwill.

People have asked how we have kept our spirits up throughout this ordeal. Answers vary depending on the moment, but a few things have been particularly important. We were never scared; our experience was basically yard-becomes-lake—no white water for us. No exciting, dramatic, scary moments; we evacuated to the RV, which had running water and a generator, so we didn't

lost so much more than we did. Our post-flood inventory started at zero; each thing we find is one more thing than we thought we had. We make discoveries, instead of counting loss by loss by loss.

A flood doesn't end when the water leaves; the two months since the high-water mark have been packed with work and with experiences. The physical work is grueling, and the navigation of bureaucracy requires a skill set all its own.



CENTER PHOTO BY JOHN RUSSELL; OTHER PHOTOS COURTESY CYNTHIA J. CYRUS

**We had matching shoes, unlike our next-door neighbor who had grabbed one brown shoe and one blue shoe. It is hard to be upset about the loss of things when cadaver dogs are searching your backyard. Other people lost so much more.**

came drifting in. Someone I had met once at a party gave us five boxes of home school materials. A stranger from Pegram, Tenn., came by with snacks, crocks and cleaning supplies.

This rich catalog of thoughtful gestures still awaits proper thanks and, some two months after the high-water mark, the listing of gifts both tangible and intangible continues to grow. We are keenly aware of the

even have to face hardship housing.

Then, too, we've always had those points of comparison. As we became fond of pointing out, it always could have been worse. We had matching shoes, unlike our next-door neighbor who had inadvertently grabbed one brown shoe and one blue shoe as he dumped clothes in a bag. Likewise, it is hard to be upset about the loss of things when cadaver dogs are searching your backyard. Other people

But my story is not an unhappy one. I got to say a fond farewell to many of the books downstairs as I did a quick-and-dirty inventory for insurance purposes. There is a real sense of accomplishment as you finish scraping out one room and move on to the next. And through it all, there has been laughter with the family ("this wasn't the RV trip we had listed on the calendar"), emailing with friends, and talking, talking, talking.

Our story isn't over—recovery will take a long time—but it has become a point of connection between us and the large and generous community that surrounds us. ▼

*Cynthia J. Cyrus has been named associate provost for undergraduate affairs, effective next January. Facebook members may view her flood photo album at <http://snipurl.com/vu-flood>.*





### Deconstruction 101 **Deconstruction 101**

Vanderbilt students pitch in to excavate a water-damaged home after floodwaters ravaged parts of Middle Tennessee May 1–2. The homes of about 70 Vanderbilt employees were completely destroyed, about 300 reported their homes were uninhabitable but salvageable, and more than 500 others reported damage exceeding \$5,000. Many employees and friends of Vanderbilt have contributed to a special fund for flood victims who are Vanderbilt employees. (Learn more at [www.vanderbilt.edu/flood](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/flood).) Read one flood victim's first-person account on page 9. Photo by John Russell.

*One image frozen in time*

# 1,000 Words

# The Campus

“Tommie Morton-Young used her education to strengthen

## Board of Trust Elects Mark Dalton as Chairman

THE VANDERBILT University Board of Trust has unanimously elected New York businessman Mark F. Dalton as its chairman-elect, to succeed Martha R. Ingram.

A 1975 graduate of Vanderbilt Law School, Dalton is co-chairman and CEO of Tudor Investment Corp. and its affiliates. Before joining Tudor in 1988, Dalton spent nine years with Kidder, Peabody & Co. as a senior executive and four years with the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell as an attorney in New York City.

“Vanderbilt is fortunate to have such an accomplished leader in Mark Dalton as chairman-elect,” says Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos. “Mark’s business and strategic expertise have served the university well.”

Dalton has been a member of Vanderbilt’s Board of Trust since 2002 and also has been a member of the board of trustees of Denison University since 1990. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Denison in 1972 and served as chairman of the Denison board from 2003 to 2009.

Ingram, who has partnered with three chancellors for more



Dalton



Ingram

than a decade to spearhead and support some of Vanderbilt’s most ambitious initiatives, will become an emerita member of the board beginning in the summer of 2011. She decided to give a year’s notice, Ingram says, in order to allow an orderly

transition to new leadership. “Mark and I will work together in the next year to ensure that Vanderbilt loses none of its momentum going forward.”

Elected board chairman in 1997 during the administration of Chan-

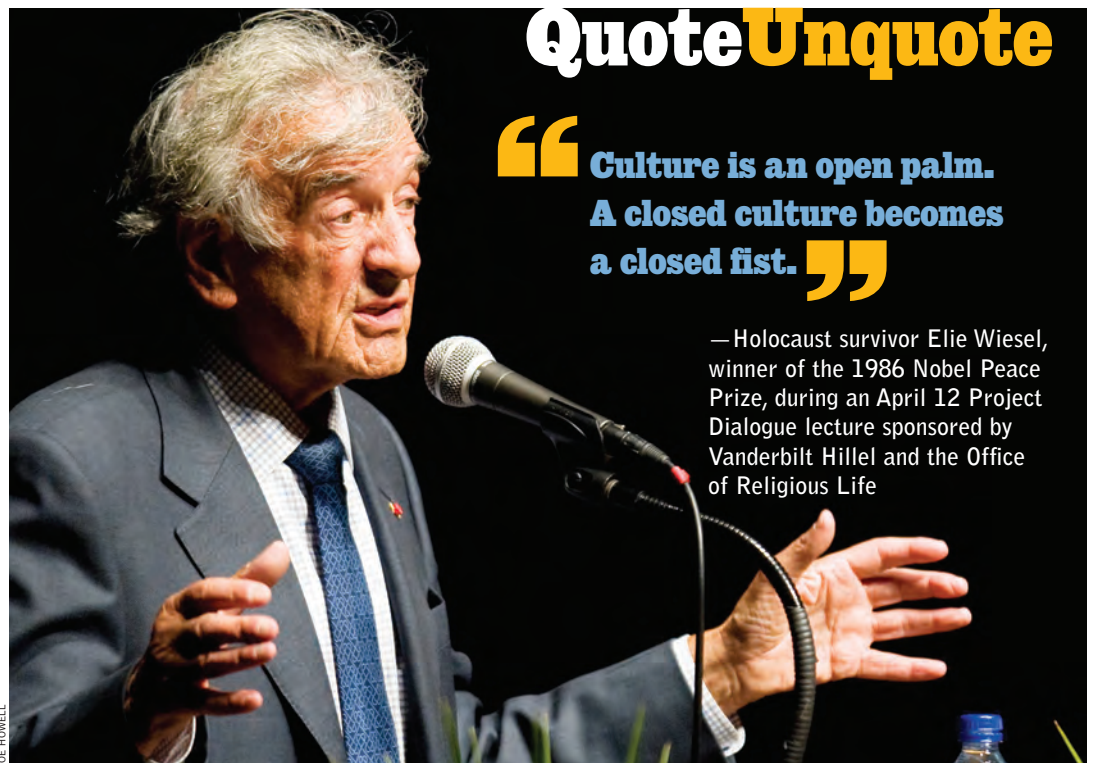
cancellor Joe B. Wyatt, Ingram was instrumental in the selection of former Chancellor Gordon Gee in 2000 and of Zeppos in 2008.

“Martha’s footprint on Vanderbilt is wide, deep and lasting,” says Zeppos. “During the next year we will celebrate appropri-

ately her leadership, but Martha, the board and I have much to accomplish with her at the helm until next summer.”

“Under Martha’s leadership as board chairman, Vanderbilt has made extraordinary strides in nearly every area,” says Dalton. “I will spend this next year working with and learning from her as we move toward this leadership transition.”

Also during its annual spring meeting, the Board of Trust elected Nancy P. Mulford (BA’82) of Dallas and Jackson W. Moore (JD’73) of Germantown, Tenn., as vice chairmen-elect and Joanne F. Hayes (BA’68) of Nashville as secretary-elect.



## Quote Unquote

“Culture is an open palm. A closed culture becomes a closed fist.”

—Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, winner of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, during an April 12 Project Dialogue lecture sponsored by Vanderbilt Hillel and the Office of Religious Life



# Summer 2010

*the lives of those who too often are marginalized.* ” — PEABODY COLLEGE DEAN CAMILLA P. BENBOW



## Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital Set for Growth

JUST SIX YEARS have passed since Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital opened its doors at Vanderbilt, but already the facility has outgrown its space. Hospital officials in June announced plans for a multi-phase, multiyear expansion project with an estimated total cost of \$250 million.

The Phase 1 expansion, with a price tag of \$25 million to \$30 million in construction costs, will consist of a 30,000-square-foot addition to the northwest corner of the hospital, across from the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. The expansion will be built atop the Children's Hospital's emergency department.

This first-phase expansion will add needed acute, neonatal intensive care and medical-surgical beds, and also will allow for increased space to house a growing number of physician scientists who care for Middle

Tennessee's youngest patients. Surrounding a patient-friendly atrium, the additional neonatal, acute care and medical-surgical beds will extend the existing patient care areas on the building's fourth through eighth floors.

"As a world-leading research university, Vanderbilt has a responsibility to discover new cures for children with life-threatening diseases while providing the finest possible child-centered care for children throughout the region," says Dr. Jonathan Gitlin, chair of pediatrics and assistant vice chancellor for child and maternal health. "Expanding our facilities will allow us to identify new and better ways to help children with cancer, heart disease, and many other serious conditions."

The expansion also will increase capacity to accommodate premature babies born at outlying hospitals who are then transferred to Children's Hospital. The new space will allow Children's Hospital to expand its Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplantation program, as well as its Cardiac Surgical Intensive Care and Congenital Heart Disease programs. Children's Hospital is the only hospital in Middle Tennessee to offer these services.

As part of the hospital's expansion, programmatic enhancements targeting three areas of childhood disease prevalent throughout Middle

Tennessee—prematurity, childhood cancer and childhood heart disease—will be incorporated into the new space.

Construction is planned for fall, pending approval from the Vanderbilt Board of Trust. In addition, \$20 million in programmatic investments are planned with the first-phase expansion.

Since its opening in February 2004, patient occupancy has remained consistently high at Children's Hospital. Within months of opening, the number of inpatient admissions and surgical procedures exceeded all projections. During fiscal year 2009 there were 235,849 pediatric visits at the hospital, and more than 171,000 children were seen in its clinics. Last year the hospital's emergency department cared for 48,626 children.

## Tommie Morton-Young Receives Peabody Award

NASHVILLE ACTIVIST, scholar and author Tommie Morton-Young received the Distinguished Alumna Award from Peabody College of education and human development during Commencement ceremonies May 14.

Morton-Young earned her master of arts degree in library science in 1955, becoming the first African American to graduate from George

Peabody College for Teachers, as it was then named. The Nashville native attended public schools and earned her undergraduate degree cum laude from Tennessee State University. After receiving her master's degree from Peabody, she went on to earn a Ph.D. from Duke University.



During her career she has held many positions in government and higher education. She served as a researcher for the U.S. Navy Library in Washington, D.C., and did transliteration in Russian for the Library of Congress. She taught at several universities, including Atlanta University, Tennessee State University, the University of Wisconsin, North Carolina State University, North Carolina Central University, and North Carolina A&T State University.

As a librarian and professor of education, Morton-Young pursued innovative concepts and passions. Her "toybrary" concept was hailed in the library and child development

## Inquiring Minds

### Vigilante Justice May Be a Matter of Trust

Vigilante justice is growing in many countries in Latin America, and a new study by Vanderbilt's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) helps explain why. As criminal violence has become all too common, ordinary citizens have increasingly taken matters into their own hands by attacking those they suspect of criminal behavior. Trust in others might seem an unlikely stimulus for such behavior, but that is precisely what the new study indicates. When high interpersonal trust is coupled with low confidence in law enforcement institutions, social capital can take on a dark side, as demonstrated by the kind of vigilante justice that has become common in Mexico.

In his report prepared for the Insights series produced by LAPOP, graduate student Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga used data from the AmericasBarometer 2004, 2006 and 2008 surveys. The surveys are conducted every two years by LAPOP.

### Device Serves as Baby's 'Bridge' to Transplant

Eleven-month-old Nathan Roberts was dying from heart failure. But now the infant has a second chance, thanks to the pediatric heart team at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt and a ventricular assist device used for the first time in Tennessee. On May 27 a surgical team with Vanderbilt's Pediatric Heart Institute placed the Berlin Heart device (with the commercial name EXCOR) in Nathan's tiny chest. The device is the first of its kind designed for use in small children or infants, buying them time until a donor heart can be found.

The Berlin Heart is similar to other left ventricular assist devices (LVADS) used in adults, but much smaller. Although some 200 young patients in the United States have used the device, it is still considered experimental and requires special FDA approval for "compassionate use."



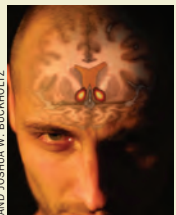
ANNE RAYNER

### Psychopaths' Brains Wired to Seek Rewards

The brains of psychopaths appear to be wired to keep seeking a reward at any cost. New research uncovers the role of the brain's reward system in psychopathy and opens a new area of study for understanding what drives these individuals. The results were published March 14 in *Nature Neuroscience*.

"We found that a hyper-reactive dopamine reward system may be the foundation for some of the most problematic behaviors associated with psychopathy, such as violent crime, recidivism and substance abuse," says Joshua Buckholtz, a graduate student in the Department of Psychology and lead author of the new study.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse funded the research.



GREGORY B. SAMANEZ-LARVIN AND JOSHUA W. BUCKHOLTZ

professions. At North Carolina Central University, she organized a learning laboratory that demonstrated her theories on using toys to teach.

While at North Carolina A&T, she received grants that allowed her to develop expertise in genealogy, which she has shared widely. She organized the North Carolina Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society as well as the Tennessee African American Genealogical and Historical Society.

As a community activist, Morton-Young has advocated for women, minorities and the disadvantaged. She is a former chairperson of the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The author of 10 books, Morton-Young currently writes, and operates Authentic Tours: Teaching through Tourism.

"Tommie Morton-Young made a signal contribution to the history of Peabody in 1955," says Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody. "But more important, she has used her education to strengthen the lives of children, families and communities, especially those who too often are marginalized."

Morton-Young delivered graduation remarks as part of Peabody's diploma awards ceremony for students receiving master's and doctoral degrees in education. "The college has a distinguished history and reputation, and as the first African American to graduate from the institution many years ago, I am pleased to name it among my alma maters," she said.

## Traumatic Injuries Bring Senior Boomers to the ER

"HOPE I DIE BEFORE I GET OLD," rocker Pete Townsend wrote in "My Generation," a song that became an anthem for baby boomers. Now that most boomers *are* getting old, emergency room staffers are faced with a new phenomenon: Senior citizens are the second fastest-growing segment of trauma patients.

Every day, adventure-loving seniors take to their bicycles, motorcycles or ATVs and end up in emergency rooms with traumatic injuries. Accidents such as these often lead to traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, or death.

Dr. John Morris, professor of surgery and biomedical informatics, doesn't even refer to traumatic injuries as accidents, but rather as diseases associated with high-risk behaviors.

"The rise in senior trauma really isn't all that surprising," says Morris, who is chief of the Division of Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at Vanderbilt University Hospital. "While falls are commonly the culprit, we're also seeing a rise in activity-based trauma among baby boomers. We're living longer and remaining active longer. But we're still aging, resulting in slower reflexes and less agility."

Cross-country biking enthusiast Bob Ostrowe, for example, was 64 when he crashed his bike on Memorial Day weekend in 2006. Once paramedics arrived he was already experiencing the signs of traumatic brain injury and, possibly, spinal cord injury. MRIs revealed severe frontal lobe injury.



COURTESY DENISE GARLAND

**Cross-country biker Bob Ostrowe has resumed cycling after a 2006 crash.**

After a long uphill climb, Ostrowe has recovered, and is cycling again, though at a slower pace. A significant part of his recovery included months of physical therapy, which is often neglected by patients and families who just want to get back to their lives.

“Once we’ve solved the immediate crisis, the key to a successful recovery is rehabili-

tation and a strong support network,” says Morris. “Without it we know the results will be dramatically different.”

Vanderbilt’s Division of Trauma partnered with the American Trauma Society in implementing the Trauma Survivors Network, which offers a variety of free services and resources.

**Find out more:** [www.vanderbilthealth.com/traumasurvivors](http://www.vanderbilthealth.com/traumasurvivors)

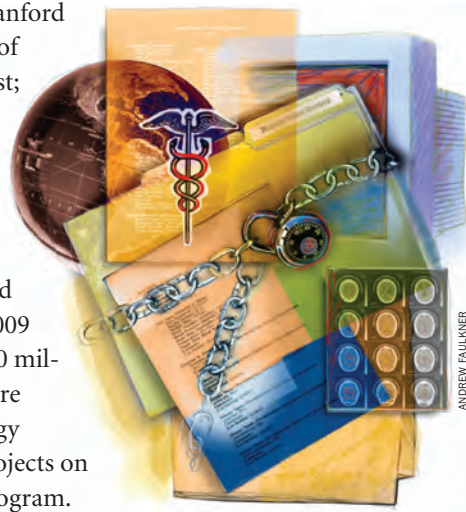
## Vanderbilt Plays Key Role in Health Privacy

THE U.S. HEALTH-CARE community is steadily moving into the digital age, shifting medical records from paper to electronic information systems. This movement raises serious concerns about security and privacy of patients’ medical information. In an attempt to put these concerns to rest, the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services has awarded \$15 million to create a new center for health information and privacy.

The center, which will be headquartered at the University of Illinois, will include researchers from Vanderbilt; University of California, Berkeley; Carnegie Mellon University; Dartmouth College; Harvard University Medical School; Johns Hopkins University; Northwestern University Memorial Hospital; Stanford University; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and the University of Washington. It is one of four health-care research centers funded for four years with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds as part of the \$60 million Strategic Healthcare Information Technology Advanced Research Projects on Security (SHARPS) program.

“Our participation in the new SHARPS center reflects the fact that Vanderbilt has become highly visible in the field of health-care security and privacy,” says Janos Sztipanovits, E. Bronson Ingram Professor of Engineering and director of the Institute for Software Integrated Systems (ISIS) at Vanderbilt School of Engineering. Sztipanovits—along with Mark Frisse, Accenture Professor of Biomedical Informatics at



ANDREW FALKNER

## Virtual Vanderbilt

### Oral History Preserves Wartime Memories <http://vandygoestowar.library.vanderbilt.edu>

Memories of historic battles, hide-outs from the Nazis, and campus war relief projects are preserved through the Vandy Goes to War oral history project, which can be heard on the Jean and Alexander Heard Library’s website. The length of interviews varies from about 15 minutes to an hour. Stories about soldiers who were captured and later escaped, as well as conversations with alumnae who remember campus life during the war, have been recorded.

Now that the World War II interviews have been posted, Special Collections and University Archives is putting out a call for Vanderbilt alumni who served in the Korean War or were on campus during the years 1950–53. Special Collections also encourages war veterans from the more recent conflicts in Vietnam, the first Gulf War, and Iraq and Afghanistan to record their memories. For information contact Molly Dohrmann, manuscripts assistant in Special Collections and University Archives, at [molly.h.dohrmann@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:molly.h.dohrmann@vanderbilt.edu) or (615) 322-2807.

Ask Us | Heard Library | Search ACDORN | Discover Library | OAK

Search This Site:

Browse the Collection:  
 • Korean War  
 • World War II  
 • All Wars  
 By Place  
 By Battle  
 By Subject

Images from Vandy Goes to War  
 Lyttleton Anderson, Army soldier

Ask Us | Heard Library | Search ACDORN | Discover Library | OAK

Interview with Lyttleton C. Anderson

Interviewed by: Molly Dohrmann  
 Recording Date: 2007-01-04  
 Interviewee(s): Lyttleton C. Anderson  
 Battle(s): Battle of the Bulge  
 Place(s): Awe, Germany; Bastogne, Belgium; Brest Peninsula, France; Camp Atterbury (Edinburgh), Indiana, United States; Elbe River, Europe; Fort Belvoir, Virginia, United States; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, United States; Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, United States; Koblenz, Germany; Lahn River, Germany; Le Havre, France; Liege, Belgium; Meuse River, Belgium; Meuse River, France; Meuse River, Netherlands; Mons, Belgium; Duren (near St. Vith), Belgium; Ponton Bridge, Mueden, Germany; Rieragen, Germany; Rhine River, Germany; Schnee Eifel, Germany; Schoenberg, Bavaria; Seine River, France; Siegfried Line, France, Germany, Switzerland; South Hampton, New Hampshire, United States; St. Vith, Belgium; Stavelot, Belgium; Vietnam, Belgium

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 (Stream Audio File)    (Download File)

(Note: RealPlayer is required to stream the .m4 audio files.  
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Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and Edward Schulz, director of information technology integration at VUMC—head up the joint Vanderbilt team. William Stead, the Medical Center's chief strategy and information officer, will serve as one of the center's two chief scientists.

One of Vanderbilt's contributions is the close partnership it has established between its engineers and clinical researchers. The Medical Center has a 15-year track record in the development of electronic health-care records, and ISIS contributes a structured approach to data security and extensive software tools that it has developed to protect sensitive data for the U.S. Department of Defense.

The SHARPS center will focus on three specific subjects: electronic health records, health information exchanges and telemedicine. Most U.S. hospitals have digitized their health records despite the fact that they are subject to new kinds of risks, such as the ease with which a thief could carry away thousands of patient records on a USB thumb drive or the possibility that records can be hacked when they are put online to increase accessibility.

## School of Nursing Pioneers Smart-Phone Use

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY School of Nursing is pioneering the use of smart phones as teaching tools. The school is one of the first in the nation to use a new application that transforms wireless devices, such as phones, iPod Touch and laptops, into classroom

response devices for enhanced learning.

"Students in our program have multiple exposures to computers and cell phones," says Susan Newbold, associate professor of nursing. "The time was right to take classroom response systems to the next level. We piloted the idea in January 2009, and by the time of the fall semester, it was being used by about 30 percent of our students."

Classroom response systems are a proven way to stimulate learning by engaging students in a nontraditional way, allowing them to provide instant feedback to faculty during class time. Systems that use "clickers"—dedicated devices that look like small remote controls—have been used successfully for several years throughout campus. In using them, students participate more fully during class time, improve performance, and help turn lectures into more intimate settings. Research has shown that these systems improve performance scores on exams.

"The School of Nursing is



**Nursing student Jordan Moore uses a smart phone in class to provide real-time feedback about her professor's lecture.**

the first on campus to use this new application, and was actually one of the first schools nationwide to use it," says Derek Bruff, senior lecturer in mathematics and assistant director of the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt.

VUSN faculty members have been using the new tool to help take attendance, administer tests and quizzes, ask opinion questions and encourage anonymous feedback. Many of the features can be integrated with the Blackboard Learning System that is used for various elements of course delivery.

The ResponseWare application can be used with Macintosh or Windows platforms, wireless smart phones or laptops. Students pay \$35 for the software version or \$40 to \$60 for a hand-held device.

"It allows instructors to focus on teaching rather than grading," says Newbold. "By using it for administrative tasks such as attendance, grading, and even in concert with our Blackboard system, it saves precious classroom time for more learning."



## Undergrads Present Work at National Political Science Conference

TWO VANDERBILT undergraduates had the rare opportunity in April to present their research findings about the influence of patronage on presidential appointments and government performance at the 2010 Midwest Political Science Association Conference.

Nick Gallo, a political science major who graduated in May, and Gabe Horton, a rising senior with a double major in political science and religious studies, were mentored by Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science David Lewis.

"This has been incredibly impressive for two undergraduate students to produce and then present research findings at a national political science conference," Lewis says. "About 99 percent of the other presenters there were either faculty or graduate students."

Horton's research was funded through the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Summer Research Program, while Gallo received support from the College of Arts and Science.

Horton and Lewis are the co-authors of "Turkey Farms and Dead Pools: Competence and Connections in Obama Administration Appointments." "Turkey farms" and "dead pools" are colloquial terms for government agencies

where presidents tend to make appointments based on political connection rather than job competence. Gallo wrote “Patronage and Appointee Management Performance,” which focuses on the impact of patronage appointments during the Bush administration on various agencies’ effectiveness.

Gallo and Horton will submit their research to peer-reviewed academic journals for possible publication at a later date.



## Academic Year Ends with Recycling Push

WHEN COLLEGE STUDENTS move out of their residence halls, they can generate a lot of waste. In addition to typical things like linens, futons, small chairs, bedding, small drawer sets, mini-fridges, microwaves, lamps, books and clothing, unusual items are sometimes discarded as well.

“Last year one suite donated an antique rocking horse,” says Amanda Dicks, BS’04, MEd’10, residential education area coordinator. “We also found a wooden scarecrow in one of the donation bins,” adds Leslie Newsome, BS’05, MA’07, also an area coordinator.

During Move Out at the close of the academic year, students had ample opportunity to donate and recycle items they didn’t want to keep. Decorations, clothing, small opera-

tional electronic appliances and other small items were collected in the lobbies of the residence halls by Move Out partners Dismas House, ARC of Nashville, ThriftSmart and Mending Hearts. The nonprofit organizations will sell the items to raise money.

In addition, Second Harvest Food Bank collected nonperishable food items. The Salvation Army collected furniture and other large items outside the residence halls. Other locations were set up to take non-working electronic appliances like dorm refrigerators, computers and TVs.

“Move Out is a great opportunity to keep items out of the waste stream,” says Jennifer Hackett, MDiv’00, Vanderbilt recycling coordinator. “Working together with our nonprofit partners ensures the items get recycled and reused.”

Recycling was also a focus at Commencement and related activities. Vanderbilt graduates and guests typically use about 20,000 plastic water bottles at Commencement activities.

“In 2008 we recycled 1.5 tons of plastic from Commencement activities,” says Hackett. “Our goal is to recycle as many bottles as possible and to look at reducing the use of bottles overall.”

The university offered glass recycling for the first time this year at The Party and at the traditional “Strawberries and Champagne” event after Commencement. Besides recycling plastic bottles, glass bottles and aluminum cans, The Party recycled the cardboard boxes in which food and beverages were transported. ▼

## Top Picks

### Coveted Fellowship Goes to Divinity Student



THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL

Rising second-year master of divinity candidate Anthony Sandusky will receive a \$10,000 stipend, half to be used for educational expenses, the other half to assist in a self-designed ministry project. Sandusky, 23, is one of 20 fellows recently selected by The Fund for Theological Education, a national, ecumenical nonprofit organization dedicated to finding and supporting Christian leaders. The fellowship is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and the Henry Luce Foundation. Fewer than 7 percent of clergy in most denominations today are under age 35, and interest in congregational ministry among seminary students has declined in recent years, underscoring the need for leadership development among students from diverse backgrounds.

### Alma Maters Honor Schaffner and Vermund

Two Vanderbilt physicians have received top alumni honors.

Dr. William Schaffner, chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, received the Weill Cornell Medical College Alumni Association Award of Distinction in June for his achievements as a physician, scientist and educator. Schaffner, who received the award at Cornell’s commencement, is the new president of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and a member of the Executive Committee of the Infectious Diseases Society of America. He is a 1962 graduate of Weill Cornell Medical College.



Dr. Sten Vermund, professor of pediatrics, medicine, preventive medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology and director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, received the Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Vermund accepted the award at the school’s commencement celebration in May. He is principal investigator responsible for scientific management of the HIV Prevention Trials Network, a worldwide collaborative.

### Samar Ali Appointed White House Fellow

Samar S. Ali, BS’03, JD’06, is one of 13 men and women appointed to the 2010–11 class of White House Fellows. Ali is an associate with the law firm Hogan Lovells US, where she was a founding member of its Abu Dhabi office.

During her freshman year at Vanderbilt, Ali co-founded the Middle Eastern Students Association. She was the university’s first Arab-Muslim student body president.



DANIEL DUBOIS

# Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

## Alpha Dog

*Fifth-year senior Andrew Giobbi taught young pups about baseball and perseverance. By RYAN SCHULZ*

**G**RAMPS, OLD MAN, super senior. Vanderbilt catcher Andrew Giobbi has heard it all before. As one of two fifth-year seniors on the roster for 2009–10 (shortstop Brian Harris was the other) in a sport that is short on four-year seniors, Giobbi—who graduated in May—was used to hearing the sarcastic remarks about his seniority in the locker room.

It doesn't mean he necessarily liked the constant ribbing he got from his teammates, but he understood it. After all, his Vanderbilt career began when this past year's college freshmen were just starting high school.

Giobbi's freshman class included Pedro Alvarez, who has just made his major league debut as third baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates, and high school teammate Ryan Flaherty, who is beginning his second season in the minor leagues. When Giobbi signed with Vanderbilt out of high school in Portland, Maine, he too thought he would be playing professionally by now.

"At that age I think a lot of kids are shortsighted and they want to have a three-year career, get paid, and get out of here," Giobbi says. "That's a decision you have to make.

If you don't get the money you want, do you take less or do you return to school?"

Watching as classmate after classmate goes on to play professionally can be difficult. Vanderbilt Head Coach Tim Corbin knows it takes certain traits to flourish in that role.

"It takes a very resilient person to do that," Corbin says. "Not a lot of people can. He and Brian Harris are two kids who could play professional baseball,

and I hope will."

Giobbi embraced his role on the team as an eldest statesman. It's the type of leadership role he thrives in. "Being a senior came with a lot of responsibility," he says. "It was more of an attitude change than an on-the-field change. For example, if you have a bad day at bat, you can't really show the kind of emotion you may



NEIL BRAVE

want to show because a younger player is going to see and repeat those actions."

As someone who is a natural leader, the catching position couldn't have been a better fit for Giobbi, who was in his second season as Vanderbilt's starting catcher for 2009–10. "You are the quarterback on the field, and

that is exactly how I look at being a catcher," he says. "I tried to align the defense, and I tried to handle the pitching staff as well as I could and call the pitches."

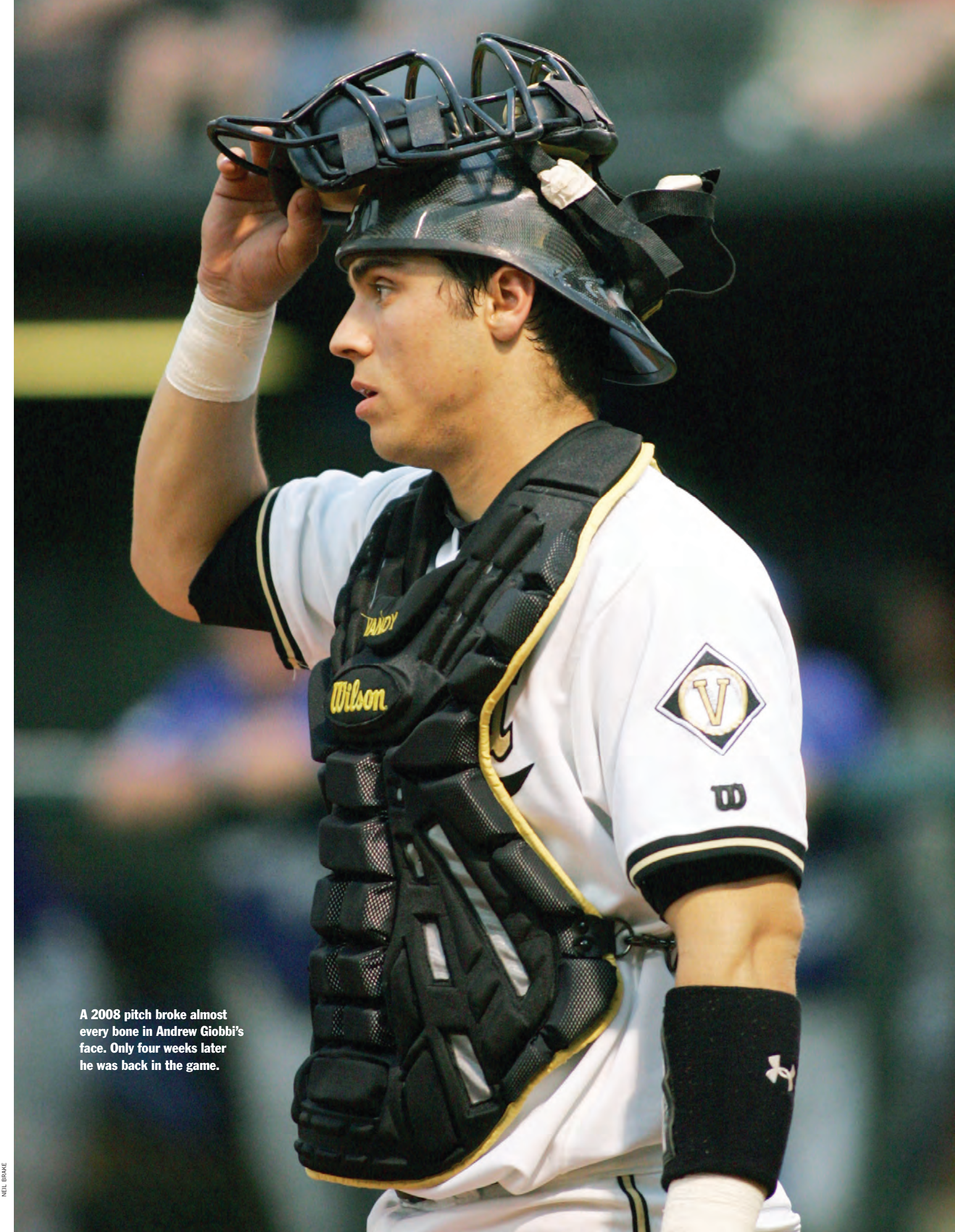
He saw his responsibilities increase toward the end of last season when he was granted the right to call pitches, a duty previously held by pitching coach Derek Johnson. Although it added to his tasks as a catcher, it's a role he enjoyed and knew would help him in the future.

"Seeing D.J. calling the pitches for so many years, I could pretty much tell him what he was going to call before he even called it," Giobbi says. "It was a little more pressure on me, but once the pitch was called and the guy executed the pitch, it was on me if it got hit."

Having a veteran behind the plate also assisted Vanderbilt's pitching staff last season. His experience and familiarity with the pitching staff helped the pitchers to be more comfortable on the mound.

"That's a position that requires leadership to run the show defensively, and he brought that leadership to the field," senior pitcher Drew Hayes says. "He brought a mentality of being around here and knowing the ins and outs of pitch calling. That understanding brought a comfort level to the pitchers."

Giobbi was born with baseball in his blood. His father, Mike, was drafted out of high school as a pitcher by the Chicago Cubs. His brother, Nick, pitched at the Division III level. Giobbi was put behind the plate at a young age. "I think they just stuck me



A 2008 pitch broke almost every bone in Andrew Giobbi's face. Only four weeks later he was back in the game.

behind the plate to catch my brother.”

Part of what made him such a valuable commodity to the Commodores was his versatility. Between summers in the Cape Cod League and his time at Vanderbilt, he played every position except shortstop and center field during his college career.

A series of baseball-inflicted injuries during the past two years forced the catcher to learn other positions. Last year he missed time during the regular season after fracturing his hand. In 2008 while in the Cape Cod League, he was hit in the face by a pitch.

No one would have questioned him had he shut it down for the rest of the summer to heal, but there is no quit in him. Just three and a half weeks after being hit, he returned to action wearing a mouth and face guard. His courageous comeback earned him the Cape Cod League’s Manny Robello 10th Player Award, which is presented to the player who performs above and beyond expectations.

“He’s the only kid I know who would get hit in the face with a baseball, break almost every bone in his face, and then only four weeks later return to a summer team to play,” Corbin says. “He is a hardcore player and a hardcore athlete.”

Giobbi returned to the game in short order, but the recovery time it took to get comfortable in the batter’s box again was much longer. “I don’t think people understand how tough it is to come back from something like that mentally,” he says. “You flinch a little bit, and it takes a while to get out of that.”

In the case of each injury, the time he spent away from the game made him realize how much he missed it. “You step away from the game, and you realize what it means to you to go out there.”

Giobbi graduated in May with a major in human and organizational development and a minor in managerial studies. He hopes he has many games ahead of him as a player, and if not on the field then maybe as a coach at the college level. ▼



**Head Football Coach Bobby Johnson announces his retirement in a July 14 press conference.**

STEVE GREEN

## Johnson Retires as Football Coach

Bobby Johnson retired as head coach of Vanderbilt football July 14, a decision that took the Vanderbilt community by surprise.

“This is Bobby’s decision,” said Vice Chancellor David Williams of the announcement. “When he informed me, I tried to talk him out of it. I was shocked. We love Bobby Johnson ... but we respect his decision.”

Johnson said his sudden retirement resulted from a variety of personal reasons and stressed that no health issues are involved. “After much thought and consideration from everyone involved, I’ve decided to retire, not resign, from college football coaching,” Johnson said at his press conference. “Obviously, this was a very tough decision with which my wife, Catherine, and I struggled. It has to do only with our lives and not with Vanderbilt football.”

Robbie Caldwell, assistant head coach and offensive line coach, has been named interim head coach. He has spent eight years with the Commodores and has more than 30 years of experience as a college coach.

## Alex Wins SEC Golf Championship

Sophomore Marina Alex won the SEC individual women’s golf championship and her first individual title as a collegian at the NorthRiver Yacht Club in Tuscaloosa, Ala, in April. She also was named a first-team selection to the National Golf Coaches Association’s All-American squad following her consistently high finishes throughout the 2009–2010 season.

Alex finished the SEC tournament with a 5-under-par 208 score, leading the Commodores to second place as a team. The second-place finish was the Commodores’ best since winning the championship in 2004. It also marked the Commodores’ first individual championship since the 2004 season, when May Wood took medalist honors. Alex set a new single-round SEC Championship record with a 6-under-par 65.

Alex, an economics major from Wayne, N.J., is only the third Vanderbilt women’s golfer to be named to the NGCA’s All-American team, joining Jacqui Concolino in 2007 and May Wood in 2004. Alex placed in the top 10 in all but one tournament.



JOHN RUSSELL

The Commodores finished the NCAA championship tournament in seventh place. Senior Brooke Goodwin led the team with the lowest scores.

## Solid Play Propels Commodore Hoops to Postseason

Vanderbilt’s men’s and women’s basketball teams advanced to postseason play in the NCAA Tournament.

The women finished the year with a 23–11 overall record, 9–7 in regular-season SEC play. They advanced to the semifinal round of the SEC Tournament in Duluth, Ga., and the second round of the NCAA Tournament in Cincinnati, losing to Xavier 63–62.

The men’s team finished with a 24–9 overall record, 12–4 in conference play. They advanced to the second round of the SEC Tournament and lost to Murray State University in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in San Jose, Calif., on a buzzer beater, 66–65. Head Coach Kevin Stallings was named SEC Coach of the Year and District 21 Coach of the Year by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. Center A.J. Ogilvy decided to forgo his senior season and enter the 2010 NBA draft.



# Sports Roundup

## Track and Field: Commodores Break School Records

Junior Katherine Hendricks set a new Vanderbilt record in the pole vault at 12-00.50 feet at the Sooner Invitational held in Norman, Okla., last April, and senior Buky Bamigboye set a school record in the heptathlon with 5,527 points en route to finishing fourth in the women's heptathlon at the SEC Outdoor Track and Field Championships in May.

## Men's Tennis: Lipman Named All-SEC

Vanderbilt tennis player Ryan Lipman became the first freshman player in school history to earn first-team All-SEC honors in April. He was named Co-SEC Freshman of the Year and was selected to the first-team All-SEC. Ranked 35th nationally, he was the only freshman in the SEC to play the season in the No. 1 singles position and compiled a 22-13 overall record. "It is a great achievement to be the first-ever Vanderbilt freshman to garner first-team All-SEC honors," says Head Coach Ian Duvenhage. "I am excited to see what additional firsts are in his future."

## Bowling: Commodores Finish Fifth in NCAA Finals

Vanderbilt earned a fifth-place finish in the NCAA Tournament in April for the second consecutive year, losing to defending national champion and top-ranked Nebraska in the third round. Vanderbilt won the first game of the best-of-seven Baker format, but dropped the next four. The tournament title went to Fairleigh Dickinson University.

## Women's Tennis: Newman, Preeg Named All-SEC

Catherine Newman was named a first-team All-SEC selection in April, becoming the third player in school history to earn All-SEC honors all four years. She also was named the SEC Women's Tennis Scholar-Athlete of the Year by the league coaches. She was on the dean's list every semester at Vanderbilt while majoring in civil engineering. She plans to earn her graduate degree in civil engineering at Stanford University. Sophomore Chelsea Preeg was named second-team All-SEC while playing mostly No. 2 and No. 3 singles.

## Lacrosse: Five Receive National Honors

Five Commodores were named to the All-American Lacrosse Conference team in May. Senior Sarah Downing, senior Alex Mundy and sophomore Ally Carey were named to the ALC first team, while senior Carter Foote and sophomore Natalie Wills received second-team honors. Vanderbilt finished the season with a 12-6 record.

Catherine Newman was named a third-team Academic All-American by *ESPN the Magazine* and CoSIDA in June.

# Collective Memory

Vanderbilt's roots revealed

## Dreams Deferred

*Vanderbilt weathered the Great Depression without running a deficit—but not without incurring painful losses.* By PAUL K. CONKIN

**F**EB. 19, 1932, WAS THE WORST day in Vanderbilt history. Wesley Hall, the largest and most versatile building on campus, burned. It had housed the divinity school, the divinity library, a cafeteria, and rooms and apartments for graduate students and faculty. The fire occurred just as the economy moved into the depths of the Great Depression. Insurance funds did not cover the cost of a replacement. For the next five years, the scorched walls remained as a visual reminder of hard times.

The Depression damaged Vanderbilt, but not to the extent that it devastated most public universities. The university did not face bankruptcy. It never ran a deficit, even in the awful years of 1932 and 1933. But the austerity that helped avoid deficits simply exacerbated already growing weaknesses that haunted all areas of the university except the medical school. It made an already provincial university virtually a Middle Tennessee institution, at least for undergraduates. Both its law and divinity schools were in deep trouble and would barely survive the Depression. The College of Arts and Science had only one department—English—with a nationally distinguished faculty, and it lost its most eminent professors during the 1930s. Vanderbilt as yet had no central library and no women's dorm except one for nursing students, and its one men's dorm—Kissam—was hated by students and was usually half empty.

In its early years Vanderbilt largely survived on income from its endowment. By 1930 this income was more than balanced by student tuition and by Northern philanthropy, partic-

ularly from the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board and the Carnegie Foundation. Of these three financial pillars, the endowment of approximately \$20 million suffered least from the depression.

But for years Vanderbilt Chancellor James H. Kirkland and his Board of Trust did not anticipate such good fortune. They spent sleepless nights worrying about the dire effects of New Deal policies on the corporations, largely utilities and railroads, whose top-rated bonds made up 90 percent of the Vanderbilt endowment. Ten percent of this was in the bonds of Wendell Willkie's Commonwealth and Southern holding company, the largest electrical utility in the South. It carried on what seemed a life-or-death battle with the Tennessee Valley Authority until a fair purchase of many C&S assets took place in 1939. The TVA, so popular among both students and faculty at Vanderbilt, became the devil incarnate in the eyes of Kirkland and most board members, who constantly lamented what they saw as President Roosevelt's encroachments on private business. Meanwhile on campus, several polls showed overwhelming student and faculty support for Roosevelt and his New Deal.

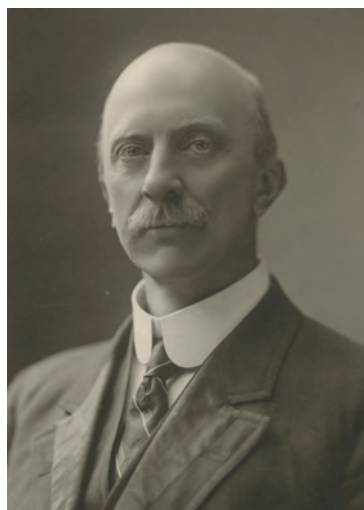
Before 1932 Vanderbilt had no treasurer or business manager. Kirkland, who presided as Vanderbilt's second chancellor from 1893

until 1937, made all the important investment decisions. He bought no common stock, although the university accepted a few gifts of such stock (less than 5 percent of the portfolio). Such a conservative strategy prevented Vanderbilt from profiting from the stock market boom of the mid-1920s. But after the stock market crash of October 1929, his conservatism paid off. His bonds, which yielded

from 5 to 5.5 percent interest, actually rose in market value as overall interest rates fell, particularly after 1932. Less than 5 percent of Vanderbilt's bond issuers defaulted on interest payments, and in most cases even those eventually paid in full.

But at Vanderbilt the critical issue was income from the endowment, not its face value, because Vanderbilt never dipped into the principal to meet operating costs. As soon as contractually possible, bond issuers retired older bonds and issued new ones with a yield as low as 3 percent. This decreased endowment income led a newly appointed university treasurer, Andrew Benedict, to shift more and more of the endowment into common stock, marking the beginning of a highly competent professional management of the endowment that continues today.

The greatest threat to Vanderbilt's finances came from the two other income sources: foundations and tuition. From 1929



to 1935 Vanderbilt did not receive a major gift from anyone. This was not a fatal blow, as many past gifts from foundations, particularly to the medical school, had gone into the endowment and thus continued to support programs.

Tuition income depended on the rate charged and the level of enrollment. Vanderbilt neither raised nor lowered undergraduate tuition during the early 1930s. It remained at \$4 for each quarter hour of credit, or \$192 for a full course load. Fees raised the total to around \$280. This seems modest today, but ranked among the highest in the South. Nursing and divinity students paid no tuition; law students paid \$200 a year, medical students \$300.

Beginning in the fall of 1931, enrollment began a gradual decline, but at a lower rate than for most colleges. Peabody lost nearly half its enrollment. Enrollment in Vanderbilt's College of Arts and Science dropped from 811 in 1930 to a low of 655 in the fall of 1933, and at a comparable rate in the School of Engineering.

Perhaps equally important, an increased share of students was from the greater Nashville area. Lowered admission standards (two language units rather than four, and less math) made it easier than ever before for students to gain admission, but Kirkland's Vanderbilt refused to change the quota of only 50 women admitted to the College of Arts and Science each year. In 1933 only 16 students in Arts and Science were from outside the South, and more than 62 percent of undergraduates were from Nashville. Most of these students either commuted or lived in scattered fraternity and sorority houses.

The lost tuition, joined with the fear of what would be the effect of New Deal busi-

ness policies, led Kirkland to cut spending as much as possible. For six years all construction ended. Buildings suffered from a lack of maintenance. Faculty replacements ended for all but the most essential positions. Yet, no professors lost their jobs because of financial stress.

Only in rare cases did any faculty receive raises from 1930 to 1936. In February 1933



**The 1932 Wesley Hall fire destroyed the personal belongings of 10 faculty members and 75 students—including poet Jesse Stuart, who lost 45 of his sonnets to fire. Facing page: James Kirkland became Vanderbilt's chancellor during a time of one national economic crisis, the Panic of 1893. By the time he retired in 1937, he and the university also had weathered the Great Depression.**

Kirkland asked the board, as a temporary measure, to cut all faculty and administrative salaries beginning in 1934–35 (these cuts ended in 1937), with the amount ranging from only 4 percent for the lowest-paid to 10 percent for professors or administrators making more than \$4,000. The average reduction was 8 percent and, as it turned out, was unnecessary because the budget each year had a surplus.

The faculty, with their jobs secure, had small reason to protest. Because of Depression deflation, the purchasing power of faculty salaries soared to the highest level in Vanderbilt history. And because of enrollment declines, they had to teach fewer students.

The Depression effectively ended for Vanderbilt by 1936. In the fall of 1935, enrollment rose by an unanticipated 100 students and continued to climb each year to a record Arts and Science enrollment of 1,046 in 1938–39. This increase reflected national trends, in part due to federal relief funds for work-study scholar-ships of \$15 a month for students from low-income families (up

to 215 a year at Vanderbilt). Such growth led to a series of faculty appointments and promotions under the new leadership that followed Chancellor Kirkland's retirement in 1937. After solid economic growth by 1935, foundations resumed their gifts for Southern higher education. In 1935 the General Education Board gave \$2.5 million for a large hospital addition, and in 1938 gave \$1 million to Vanderbilt, Peabody and Scarritt College for a new Central Library. Finally, in 1940 Vanderbilt built its first women's dorm—McTyeire.

Left over from the Depression were three critical goals for a post-World War II Van-

derbilt: to break out of its provincial box by building enough new dorms to make possible a truly residential university, to regain its educational leadership role in both undergraduate and graduate education for at least the South if not the nation, and to rebuild its two barely surviving professional schools—law and divinity. ▼

*Paul K. Conkin, Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, is the author of 20 books, including *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*.*

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# Bright Ideas

“Elements beyond 112 could have unexpected

## Nanosponge Drug Delivery Targets Cancerous Tumors

1 IMAGINE TREATING cancerous tumors by filling tiny sponges with drugs, attaching special chemical “linkers” that bond to the surface of tumor cells, and then injecting these sponges into the body.

That’s the idea behind a nanosponge delivery system developed by Eva Harth, assistant professor of chemistry at Vanderbilt. “Effective targeted drug-delivery systems have been a dream for a long time now, but it has been largely frustrated by the complex chemistry involved,” says Harth. “We have taken a significant step toward overcoming these obstacles.”

When loaded with an anticancer drug, the delivery system is three to five times more effective at reducing tumor growth than direct injection, reports a paper published in the June 1 issue of the journal *Cancer Research*.

The study was a collaboration between Harth’s laboratory and that of Dennis E.

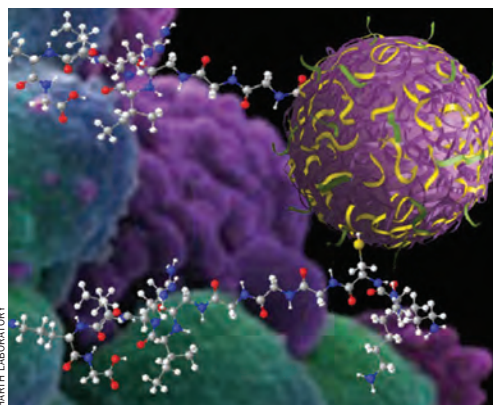
Hallahan, a former professor of radiation oncology at Vanderbilt who is now at the Washington University School of Medicine. Corresponding authors are Harth and Roberto Díaz at Emory University, who was working in the Hallahan laboratory when the studies were done.

The tiny sponges, about the size of a virus, circulate around the body until they encounter the surface of a tumor cell, where they stick to the surface (or are sucked into the cell) and begin releasing their potent cargo in a controllable and predictable fashion.



**Eva Harth’s method for targeted drug delivery relies on relatively simple chemistry, making commercial production more viable.**

Targeted delivery systems of this type have several basic advantages. Because the drug is released at the tumor instead of circulating widely through the body, it should be more effec-



**A nanosponge particle attaches to human breast-cancer cells in this illustration.**

are soluble in water. Encapsulating the anticancer drug in the nanosponge allows the use of hydrophobic

drugs that do not dissolve readily in water. Currently, these drugs must be mixed with another chemical, called an adjuvant reagent, which reduces the efficacy of the drug and can have adverse side effects.

It is also possible to control the size of nanosponge particles. This is important because research has shown that drug-delivery systems work best when they are smaller than 100 nanometers, about the depth of the pits on the surface of a compact disc.

The other major advantage of Harth’s system is the simple chemistry required. The researchers have developed simple, high-yield “click chemistry” methods for making the nanosponge particles and for attaching the linkers, which are made from peptides, relatively small biological molecules built by linking amino acids. “Many other drug-delivery systems require complicated chemistry that is difficult to

tive for a given dosage. It also should have fewer harmful side effects because smaller amounts of the drug come into contact with healthy tissue.

“We call the material nanosponge, but it is really more like a three-dimensional network or scaffold,” says Harth. The backbone is a long length of polyester. It is mixed in solution with small molecules called cross-linkers that act like tiny grappling hooks to fasten different parts of the polymer together. The net effect is to form spherically shaped particles filled with cavities where drug molecules can be stored. The polyester is biodegradable, so it breaks down gradually in the body. As it does, it releases the drug it is carrying in a predictable fashion.

Many other systems unload most of their drug cargo in a rapid and uncontrollable fashion, making it difficult to determine effective dosage levels.

Another major advantage is that the nanosponge particles

positions in the periodical table of elements.”

— PROFESSOR JOE HAMILTON



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scale up for commercial production,” Harth says.

The drug used for the animal studies was paclitaxel (the generic name of the drug Taxol). The researchers recorded the response of two different tumor types—slow-growing human breast cancer and fast-acting mouse glioma—to single injections. In both cases they found that it increased the death of cancer cells and delayed tumor growth “in a manner superior to known chemotherapy approaches.”

Additional Vanderbilt participants in the study were Ralph J. Passarella, Daniel E. Spratt, John G. Phillips, Hongmei Wu, Li Zhou, Alice E. van der Ende and Vasanth Sathiyakumar. The research was supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, and National Institutes of Health.

## Super-Heavy Element 117 Newest Addition to Periodic Chart

2. DISCOVERY OF A new super-heavy element sheds light on the basic organization of matter and strengthens the likelihood that still more massive elements may form an “island of stability”—a cluster of stable super-heavy

elements that could form novel materials with exotic and as-yet-unimagined scientific and practical applications.

Vanderbilt physicist Joe Hamilton played a key role in the discovery of element 117, which has been created and identified by an international team of scientists from Vanderbilt, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (Dubna, Russia), Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and the Research Institute for Advanced Reactors (Dimitrovgrad, Russia). Vanderbilt Professor of Physics A.V. Ramayya also was a member of the discovery team.

Atomic nuclei consist of protons and neutrons. Elements are determined by the number of positively charged protons in their nuclei. Atoms with the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons have the same chemical properties but weigh slightly differently and are called isotopes. The lightest natural element is hydrogen, with one proton. The heaviest natural element is uranium, with 92 protons.

Element 117 is the 26th new element that has been added to the periodic table since 1940. “These new elements provide important tests of nuclear theories,” says Hamilton. “The longer



Hamilton

KATE BARRY

lifetimes of the new isotopes observed in our discovery of element 117 make it possible to study the chemistry of these super-heavy elements. These studies will test theoretical predictions that elements beyond

112 could have unexpected positions in the periodical table of elements.”

As scientists created heavier and heavier artificial elements, those elements became increasingly unstable until reaching a limit at element 113. Then the Dubna scientists developed their calcium-bombardment technique, and lifetimes began to climb. In recent years physicists at Dubna, led by Yuri Oganessian, have developed a method of making super-heavy elements by smashing calcium ions, with 20 protons, into various targets. In this way they had discovered elements 114, 115, 116 and 118. They were unable to create element 117, however, because the target required was itself a very exotic and expensive element, berkelium, with 97 protons.

“When I talked to the people at Oak Ridge National Laboratory who have the ability to create berkelium, I was told it would cost \$3.5 million,” says

Hamilton, the Landon C. Garland Distinguished Professor of Physics at Vanderbilt. “That was too much, so I kept looking.”

After several years of checking regularly with his Oak Ridge contacts, Hamilton finally saw the opportunity he was looking for when he heard they had agreed to make the element californium for a commercial project. He realized berkelium could be extracted at the same time, so he worked out a deal that would produce the target material.

The two-year experimental campaign began at the High Flux Isotope Reactor in Oak Ridge with a 250-day irradiation in the world’s most intense neutron flux that produced 22 milligrams of berkelium. This was followed by 90 days of processing at Oak Ridge to separate and purify the berkelium. The material was sent to Dimitrovgrad for target preparation and then transferred to Dubna, where it was placed in one of the world’s most powerful heavy ion accelerators. Six atoms of element 117 were produced after 150 days of bombardment. The data from these six events were analyzed at Dubna and Livermore, and the results were double-checked by the entire team.

A report of the discovery has been accepted for publication in the *Physical Review Letters*.

## More Writing Can Boost Reading Skills

3. READING AND writing have become essential skills for almost every job, yet the majority of students do not read or write well enough to meet grade-level demands. A report co-authored by Vanderbilt researchers Steve Graham and Michael Hebert finds that while the two skills are closely connected, writing is an often-overlooked tool for improving reading skills and content learning.

“While writing is important in its own right, the evidence clearly shows that writing supports reading and reading development. Increasing how often students write has positive benefits on their development as readers,” says Graham, professor and Currey Ingram Chair in Special Education and Literacy at Peabody College.

“Previous research demonstrates that writing about information presented in science, math, English and social studies also supports students’ learning in those subjects. If we want to maximize students’ accomplishments in these criti-

cal areas, writing needs to become part of the solution.”

The report, *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*, was commissioned by the Carnegie Corp. of New York and published by the Alliance for Excellent Education. It was released April 14 and is available at [www.all4ed.org/files/WritingToRead.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/WritingToRead.pdf) and [www.carnegie.org/literacy](http://www.carnegie.org/literacy).

*Writing to Read* is part of a series of Carnegie-funded reports intended to re-engineer literacy instruction across the curriculum to drive student achievement.

The three closely related instructional practices that *Writing to Read* identifies as being effective in improving students’ reading are: Have students write about the texts they read; teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text; and increase how much students write.

The report carefully notes that writing practices cannot take the place of effective reading practices and calls for writing to complement reading instruction, stating that each type of practice supports and strengthens the other.

*Writing to Read* builds on the ideas presented in a 2006

Alliance report also co-authored by Graham, *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School Literacy*.

Hebert is a pre-doctoral fellow at Peabody College.

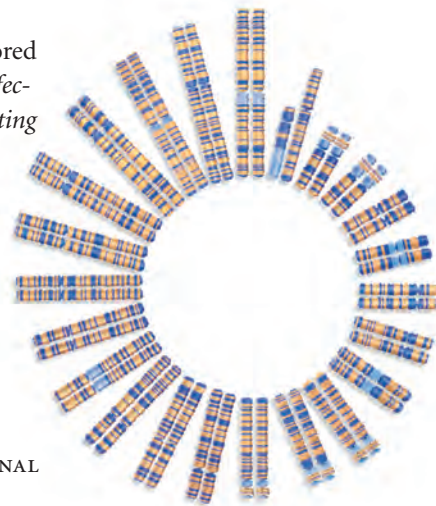
## Researchers Report Significant Advance in Autism Genetics

4. AN INTERNATIONAL consortium of autism researchers, including two from Vanderbilt, has reported a significant advance in unraveling the genetics of autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Reporting in the June 9 issue of the journal *Nature*, the researchers compared the DNA obtained from nearly 1,000 people with ASD to nearly 1,300 matched controls (people without ASD). They found that people with ASD tended to have more rare copy number variations (CNVs), deletions or duplications of specific sections of DNA that may affect gene expression.

“Our work has identified numerous genes with variants that cause or contribute substantial risk to carriers, but the CNVs identified were very rare,” says James Sutcliffe, associate professor of molecular physiology, biophysics and psychiatry at Vanderbilt. “The number of different genes affected is large, and this further underscores the genetic complexity of ASD.”

“The genetics of autism has been very difficult to understand. It is heartening that we



are now beginning to make progress and that this will open the door to further research in understanding the genetic underpinnings of autism,” adds Jonathan Haines, the T.H. Morgan Professor of Human Genetics,

professor of molecular physiology and biophysics, and director of the Vanderbilt Center for Human Genetics Research, who also participated in the research. Both

are Vanderbilt Kennedy Center investigators.

Autism is a spectrum of developmental disorders characterized by impairments in communication and social interaction, and patterns of repetitive, restricted and stereotyped behaviors. It occurs in up to one in every 150 children in the United States, and is more common in males.

Most studies to date have focused on common genetic variation, which causes only slight increases in risk. The findings reported in this study add to a growing body of evidence that suggests ASD is caused in part by many rare variants impacting numerous biological pathways. Some of these variants may affect genes



JOHN RUSSELL



involved in transmitting signals between nerve cells in the brain, while others previously have been implicated in intellectual disabilities.

Identification of these rare variants and the biological pathways they may affect was made possible by the international Autism Genome Project ([www.autismgenome.org](http://www.autismgenome.org)), which recruited a large number of research participants throughout the world.

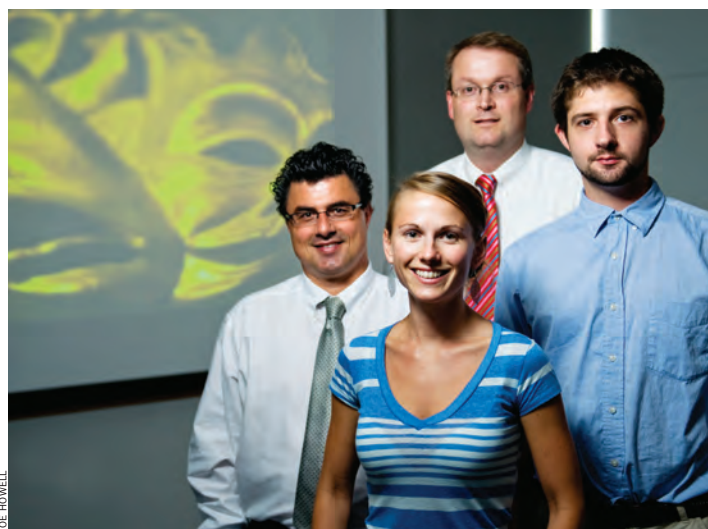
The project is opening up new areas of research and new targets for genetic testing, the researchers concluded. Potentially, these studies could lead to the development of new treatments for ASD.

## Insulin-Signaling Disruption May Trigger Psychiatric Disorders

**5** DEFECTS IN INSULIN action that occur in diabetes and obesity could directly contribute to psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia. Vanderbilt researchers have discovered a molecular link between impaired insulin signaling in the brain and schizophrenia-like behaviors in mice.

Their findings, reported June 8 in *PLoS Biology*, offer a new perspective on the psychiatric and cognitive disorders that affect patients with diabetes and suggest new strategies for treating these conditions.

“We know that people with diabetes have an increased incidence of mood and other psychiatric disorders,” says endocrinologist Dr. Kevin Niswender, assistant professor of medicine, molecular physiology and biophysics. “And we



**Researching the link between diabetes and schizophrenia are (from left) Aurelio Galli, Sabrina Robertson, Kevin Niswender and Michael Siuta.**

think those co-morbidities might explain why some patients have trouble taking care of their diabetes.”

“Something goes wrong in the brain because insulin isn’t signaling the way it normally does,” says neurobiologist Aurelio Galli, associate professor of molecular physiology and biophysics. Galli’s group was among the first to show that insulin—the hormone that governs glucose metabolism in the body—also regulates the brain’s supply of dopamine, a neurotransmitter with roles in motor activity, attention and reward.

Disrupted dopamine signaling has been implicated in brain disorders including depression, Parkinson’s disease, schizophrenia, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Now, Galli, Niswender and colleagues have pieced together the molecular pathway between perturbed insulin signaling in the brain and dopamine dysfunction leading to schizophrenia-like behaviors.

The researchers developed mice with an insulin-signaling defect only in neurons by

impairing the function of the protein Akt, which transmits insulin’s signal inside cells. They found that the mice have behavioral abnormalities similar to those frequently seen in patients with schizophrenia.

They also showed how defects in insulin signaling disrupt neurotransmitter levels in the brain: The mice have reduced dopamine and elevated norepinephrine in the prefrontal cortex, an important area for cognitive processes. These changes resulted from elevated levels of the transporter protein (NET) that removes norepinephrine and dopamine from the synaptic space between neurons.

“We believe the excess NET is sucking away all the dopamine and converting it to norepinephrine, creating this situation of [low levels of dopamine] in the cortex,” Galli explains.

Low dopamine function in the cortex is thought to contribute to the cognitive deficits and negative symptoms—depression, social withdrawal—associated with schizophrenia. By treating the mice with drugs

that block NET activity, investigators were able to restore normal cortical dopamine levels and behaviors. Clinical trials of NET inhibitors in patients with schizophrenia are already under way, Galli says, and these new data provide mechanistic support for this approach.

The findings also provide a molecular basis for interpreting previous reports of Akt deficiencies in patients with schizophrenia, as revealed by postmortem, imaging and genetic association studies.

Galli and Niswender suggest that the insulin to Akt signaling pathway is critical for “fine tuning” the function of monoamine neurotransmitters—dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin—and that it can be impaired in many different ways.

“Dysregulation of this pathway—because of type 1 diabetes, because of a high-fat diet, because of drugs of abuse, because of genetic variations—may put a person on the road to neuropsychiatric disorders,” Galli says.

Understanding the molecular link between insulin action and dopamine balance—the connection between food and mood—offers the potential for novel therapeutic approaches, the researchers said. The mouse model described in the current studies may be useful for testing schizophrenia and cognition-enhancing treatments.

Michael Siuta and Sabrina Robertson are the lead authors of the study. The National Institutes of Health and the Vanderbilt University Silvio O. Conte Center for Neuroscience Research supported the research. ▽

# InClass

A spotlight on faculty and their work

## Second Nature

*From exciting students about science to wrestling crocodiles, Ken Catania brings a childlike curiosity to everything he does.* By ROB SIMBECK

**A**FTER A YEAR OF HARD work on a doctoral thesis suggested by his adviser, Ken Catania made a fateful decision.

"It was clear that his first love was the star-nosed mole," remembers Glenn Northcutt, his adviser at the University of California-San Diego, "and he came to me and told me that's what he wanted to work on instead. I was reluctant to let him. The moles lived clear across the country, they were hard to keep and even harder to catch. I knew it was a long shot. Then one day Ken came and said, 'Glenn, I really like working in your lab, but if you don't let me work on star-nosed moles, I'm going to leave and find another one.'

"I thought, 'I really don't want to lose this kid,'" Northcutt says. "He's a really bright young graduate student, and one way or the other he's got a thesis wrapped up, whether he knows it or not. I said, 'Go for it.'"

Catania did the collecting himself in Pennsylvania. Because the California lab did not have everything he needed for the project, he traveled back and forth between San Diego and Nashville, where he worked with Vanderbilt's Jon Kaas, Distinguished Centennial Professor of Psychology and associate professor of cell and developmental biology. The research helped prove that the mole's 22-lobed nose does not, as many suspected, serve as an extra "hand" or detect electrical fields, but rather serves as an extraordinarily sensitive organ of touch. Catania would eventually come to Vanderbilt

for postdoctoral work—he is now associate professor of biological sciences—and go on to a great deal more research on the mole.

"That work," says Kaas, "made his career."

Catania's work with the star-nosed mole would indeed lay the groundwork for a career in neurobiology that is highly individualistic and highly successful.

The individualism is both stylistic and sub-

solved—is one he still embraces.

His success can be seen both in the strength of his output—a steady stream of technical papers as well as articles in general-interest magazines like *Scientific American* and *Natural History*—and in the grants and awards that have made him one of the university's brightest lights. They include the John F. Kennedy Center Young Scientist Award, the Searle Scholars Award, the National Science Foundation CAREER Award, and the MacArthur Fellowship—nicknamed the "genius grant"—bestowed for "creativity, originality, and potential to make important contributions in the future."

Few would argue whether those attributes apply to Catania, whose work cuts a broad swath through biology.

"Ken's work bridges several areas, even though what he's doing is quite unique," says Charles Singleton, professor of biological sciences and chair of the department at Vanderbilt. "His work helps our understanding of how the brain is structured and how that structure is involved in its function, and within that he overlaps with people looking at the cellular aspects of neuroscience and the molecules involved in building synapses and sending signals. At the other end, his comparative studies relate brain structure and organization to behavioral differences among species."

Catania is enthusiastic about operating without borders.


"I don't see boundaries between different fields," he says. "I'm mainly in neuro-ethol-



**Ken Catania examines a naked mole rat, a species that maintains a social structure similar to that of ants and termites.**

stantive. Catania's very choice of creatures like the star-nosed mole, the naked mole rat and, most recently, the crocodile, earn him major style points. The approach he exhibited 15 years ago in pursuing his doctoral thesis—single-minded, hands-on, with a willingness to follow his gut and the ability to define a problem precisely to get it



A man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark grey button-down shirt and blue jeans, is sitting and holding a small Nile crocodile. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Behind him is a large, brightly lit aquarium tank with a rocky bottom and some green plants. The lighting is soft, highlighting his face and the texture of the crocodile's scales.

**"I used to be a little defensive about studying such weird-looking animals," says Ken Catania, pictured holding a juvenile Nile crocodile. "But then I realized that what makes these animals so strange is their extreme specialization and, for that very reason, there is a great deal we can learn from studying them."**

ogy, an integration of animal behavior and the neurosciences, so already the goal of the field is to be very broad. Even beyond that, you want to go to the natural environment of the animals you're studying, since the behavior only makes sense if you look at where it evolved and what challenges these animals actually have. I think you can go from ecological studies to behavior studies to nervous-system studies and all the way down to molecules. To fully understand how these things work, you need to take a very interdisciplinary approach."

Catania's starting point is often simply detailed observation of behavior, sometimes drawn from high-speed filming he does himself. Such observation was key to his initial insights into the nerve structure of the nose of the star-nosed mole, of the ability of the mole and the water shrew to use "underwater sniffing" to follow scent trails underwater, and of the tentacled snake's ability to use movement to direct prey toward its mouth.

His childhood helped lay the groundwork for the way in which curiosity and technique

intersect in his work. His father was a psychologist who studied under B.F. Skinner, "so I had a strong link to scientific and logical ways of thinking about animal behavior," he says. "My mother would take me out for long walks to look at nature, trees, and wildlife and birds, and I was one of those kids who was just obsessed with butterflies and other insects. That eventually led to snakes and turtles and whatever I could find."

While he was an undergraduate at the University of Maryland, his passion turned into a career choice.

"I started doing research while simultaneously working at the National Zoo, and what was completely obvious then crystallized," he says. "I worked there for a wonderful man who was the head curator of animals—Ed Gould. He was interested in the sensory system of star-nosed moles and introduced me to the system."

Catania is known for bringing his work into the classroom, where his is an extremely popular presence.

"One course in particular, The Neuro-

biology of Behavior, is always oversubscribed," says Singleton, "because it's an interesting topic and because of Ken's excellent skill as a teacher. Students really seem to take to his style and appreciate his care and his concern in helping them learn."

"I love teaching that class," says Catania. "I feel very fortunate that I'm actually teaching about the subject that I study. It's a natural thing for me to translate what I think of as the excitement of all these interesting animals and what they can do into the classroom."

The accompanying lab work gives him the chance to introduce students to the rigors of designing studies, collecting data and presenting reports.

"Students in the lab joke about figures being 'Catania standard,'" he says with a laugh, "meaning that I want them to be very well done and precise, whether it's a technical figure or a photograph—because you can do it well if you put the effort in."

"Science has a huge artistic side to it," he adds. "That's why I incorporate photography

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and illustrations in articles, to try to capture what these animals do so that people can see it.”

He is adamant, in fact, about exciting the public about the methods and importance of science, and he cites Carl Sagan as an early leader in the effort to do just that.

“Getting people excited about science is really important,” he says. “I think back to the things in my childhood that had a big impact on me, including a children’s book my parents gave me that had a star-nosed mole in it. When I found one dead near a stream in the woods behind our house, I knew what it was and had read about it. It was a little nudge in a direction that kept me thinking about where things lived and the ecology of different animals, and that kind of experience helped me have a sense of animal behavior and habitats that definitely carries through my career.”

His attraction to the lyrical side of the scientific world extends into his own life. He has jousting at Renaissance fairs and, as part of an intensive weeklong session dealing with croc-

odiles, learned the fine art of wrestling them.

“He never ceased to surprise me,” says Northcutt. “One day he said to me, ‘I want to go to the Philippines for a week. Do you have any objections?’ I said no and asked why he wanted to go. He blushed and said, ‘I’m going to enter a kickboxing tournament.’ I’m not sure what qualifications he has in martial arts, but I wouldn’t want to find out the hard way.”

His proposal to his wife, Elizabeth Cata-

“I don’t see boundaries between different fields.”

—Ken Catania

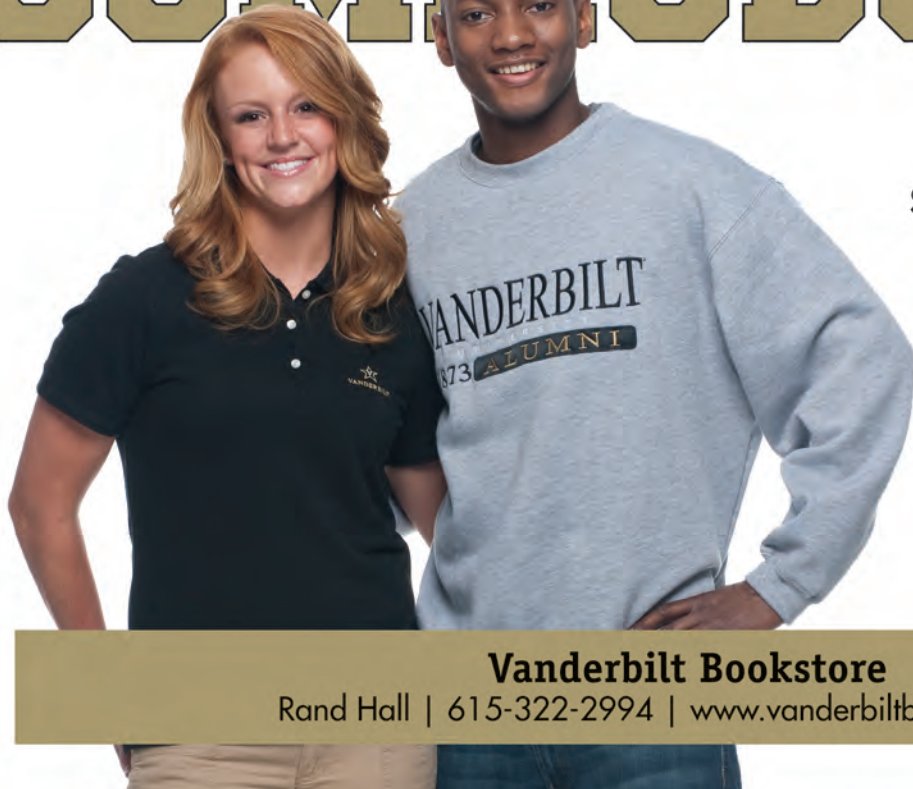
nia, PhD’08, a research fellow at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, made no less an impression. Both are rock climbers, and he popped the question on a tiny grass-covered ledge on a cliff face “while we were attached to the wall,” she says. He had climbed onto the ledge just before her and strewn rose petals in the grass.

He continues to impress those around him. “Ken keeps coming up with new and wonderful approaches,” says Kaas. “He has that kind of curiosity. He sees something that puzzles him, then seeks to find answers. It’s the kind of curiosity people have as children that then gets suppressed as impractical. But Ken says, ‘I can find the answer.’”

His highly individualized approach, like his choice of projects, serves him well even as it sets him apart.

“Most people specialize—that’s the way you make it in science nowadays,” says Kaas. “More and more, it’s about knowing more about some little thing than anyone else. Ken just sees things in a much bigger context and has found a way to bring that into his work. That’s his career. That’s his unique contribution.” ▼

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*Today's alumni continue a storied Vanderbilt tradition in sports journalism.*



Sheinin

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Kepner

LUKE SHARRETT



Olney

JOHN ATASHIAN/ESPN



Jenkins

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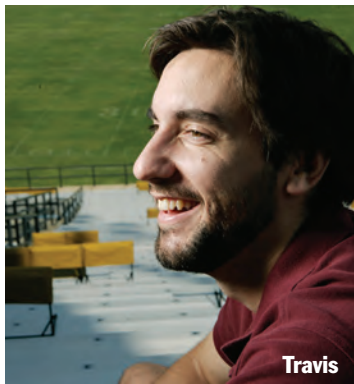


# Shooting from the Lip

By CINDY THOMSEN



MAUREEN CAVANAGH



MARK DELONG PHOTOGRAPHY

For a university that claims just one national championship to its name, Vanderbilt certainly has a national stage when it comes to alumni sports writers. ESPN, *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Washington Post*, and the sports website FanHouse all feature writers who honed their craft at Vanderbilt.

Buster Olney, BA'88, is a senior writer and baseball analyst at ESPN. Tyler Kepner, BA'97, is a national baseball writer at *The New York Times*. *Sports Illustrated* is home to two Vanderbilt alumni—Mark Bechtel, BA'93, who is a senior editor, and Lee Jenkins, BA'99, a senior writer. Dave Sheinin, BS'91, is a national baseball writer at *The Washington Post*. And Clay Travis, JD'04, MFA'08, is a columnist for FanHouse and also hosts a daily radio show on the highest-rated sports talk station in the country, Nashville's 104.5 The Zone.

Their opinions vary, but not their passion for the games they cover.

*What is it about sports writing that makes it different from other types of journalism?*

**Jenkins:** There's always been a real freedom to sports writing. I don't know if that's because sports hasn't been taken as seriously, but it has always felt to me like you can take more chances with your writing. It always felt more literary and less journalistic.

**Kepner:** Sports is just fun, and it's full of human interest stories. It's something I was drawn to because I love baseball. It's a natural way to combine two passions of mine.

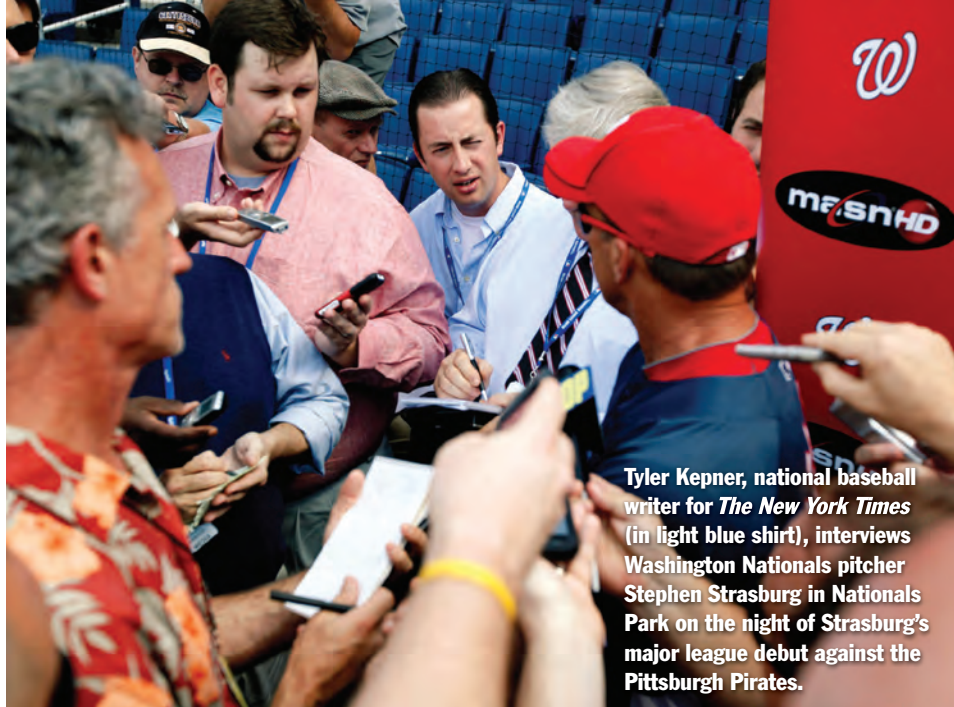
**Bechtel:** It's funny to me that people who don't like sports always look down on those of us who do. Basketball and football are simple games, but the people who play them are, by and large, interesting characters to dig into and profile and deconstruct. It's always interesting to me that some of the best writing out there is about something that many people consider to be a hobby.

**Sheinin:** It's the inherent drama—winners and losers, the “can't beat 'ems” and the vanquished. It lends itself to dramatic writing. Sports is full of characters who are amusing and entertaining and compelling.

**Travis:** I started writing when I was practicing law full time, and my goal was to offer just 15 to 20 minutes of entertainment for overeducated lawyers who were sitting in front of their computer screens all day like me. These people are intelligent, but just not into reading newspapers. I think the Internet gives me the freedom to be more creative.

“Vanderbilt students know how to put words together about big-time sports, even if the team isn’t winning.”

—Tyler Kepner, BA’97



Tyler Kepner, national baseball writer for *The New York Times* (in light blue shirt), interviews Washington Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg in Nationals Park on the night of Strasburg’s major league debut against the Pittsburgh Pirates.

LUME SHARRETT

*Why do you think Vanderbilt—a school without a journalism department—turns out so many talented sports writers?*

**Kepner:** Vanderbilt may not be known for sports championships, but they have some great programs and compete in the SEC, and that’s a draw for someone who wants to write about sports. It’s a good academic school, and you’re going to get good students who know how to put words together about big-time sports, even if the team isn’t winning. It’s a good combination for sports writing.

**Jenkins:** Vanderbilt’s being in the SEC is a big draw because you know you’re going to be covering a lot of sports powers if you’re writing for the *Hustler*. Most of the games didn’t go our way [when I was a student], but they were still entertaining and dramatic and lots of fun to write about. There was an excruciating loss to LSU: We decided to go for two in the last minute of the game, and we got two delay-of-game penalties and ended up having to kick from the 13-yard line. The kick was blocked. I went right to my dorm room and crushed [Coach Woody Widenhofer] for the next six hours. That memory sums up Vanderbilt to me because it was a terrible day, but I got a good column out of it.

**Travis:** It’s having professors like Tony Earley, who is one of the best living writers in America, and Lorraine López and Nancy Reisman. All those people who teach in the Eng-

lish department have incredibly deep knowledge to impart. Ultimately, if you are trying to be a good sports writer, you have to focus on the writing more than the sports. You have to tell good stories.

*If your fairy godmother walked into your office right now and offered you four tickets to any sporting event in the world, what would you choose?*

**Bechtel:** I would go to Spain to see the two best soccer teams in the world, which are in Barcelona and Madrid. They play each other twice a year, so I’d get two tickets for Barcelona and two for Madrid. They call the game “El Clásico.” I’ve seen it on TV, and the atmosphere is incredible.

**Travis:** I would go to the World Cup. What an amazing opportunity to watch a World Cup soccer match taking place in South Africa and embracing and embedding yourself in the culture of the place. It would be incredibly unique and intense. If I had to choose something in the States, the Masters is hard to beat, especially if you can take three buddies with you.

**Kepner:** One thing I’d like to see is a perfect game or a no-hitter. I’ve never seen one.

**Jenkins:** I would go see the Vanderbilt baseball team in Omaha [Neb.]. I’ve never done the College World Series, and it’s something I’ve always wanted to go to. When

you put baseball in sort of a pastoral setting like that and play in the daytime, I feel like it can’t be beat. But it’s not seen as a big-ticket event, and most of the publications I’ve worked for haven’t covered it.

**Sheinin:** I would want tickets to see Vanderbilt playing in the Final Four. If that ever happened, I’d have to go.

*What is it about baseball that makes people so passionate about the sport? Why is it romanticized so?*

**Olney:** I grew up in central Vermont, and my entire family hated sports—baseball in particular. I love the inherent chess match. In every pitch, the circumstances and the chessboard change. It’s a little bit like watching a suspense movie. There is a buildup. The more you know about how the circumstances change from pitch to pitch and the more you know about the personalities, the more you like it.

**Sheinin:** I think a lot of it has to do with the history and its connections to past generations. The pace of the game just suits some people. It’s a slower-moving game. There’s no clock, and it moves at its own pace. I think it takes a certain type of person to be a fan.



*Who's the most interesting personality in sports right now?*

**Travis:** Charles Barkley. I have always been drawn to people who speak without a filter. It's interesting to see guys who can transcend sports and cross over lines. Sports is great, but it is the toy department of life.

**Olney:** The biggest story in baseball this summer is going to be Stephen Strasburg, the greatest pitching prospect anybody has ever seen. I'm fascinated by the idea that this 21-year-old kid is probably going to face more scrutiny and more pressure than any player coming out of the minor leagues in the history of baseball. When you meet him, he is a quiet kid, and most people probably would say that he's not interesting in the way most people would define it—but I can't imagine a more unique set of circumstances than what he's walking into.

**Jenkins:** Kobe Bryant. He may be the best basketball player I've ever seen—he is starting to enter that conversation with Michael Jordan. He is very insulated like a lot of sports stars. But you get the sense in the brief moments you have with him that he is highly intelligent. He is one of those athletes, like Tiger Woods, where there is a lot going on and you don't know what it is. His performances are so intriguing that you really become interested in what's deeper, even though it's very hard to get at.

“I love the inherent chess match in baseball. In every pitch, the circumstances and the chess board change. It's a little bit like watching a suspense movie.”

—Buster Olney, BA'88



**Sheinin:** It's hard to pick against Tiger Woods because he is clearly the best at his sport in history and he is such a train wreck of a person right now. When you combine those two things together—his ability and dominance in his sport, along with his personal life—I don't know how it could get much more compelling than that.

**Bechtel:** Tiger Woods was interesting before this scandal, always so inscrutable. It's going to be incredibly interesting to see what he does from here—how he tries to recover and how people react. It's all about entitlement and the people you surround yourself with, and power and how it corrupts.

*What sporting event is the most overly hyped?*

**Olney:** I think it's the Super Bowl. The run-up to it is just mind numbing. Some people don't get baseball; I'm like that with the Super Bowl. I don't want to hear anything about it

for two weeks beforehand. When the game comes, I'm excited, but the two weeks leading up to it drive me nuts.

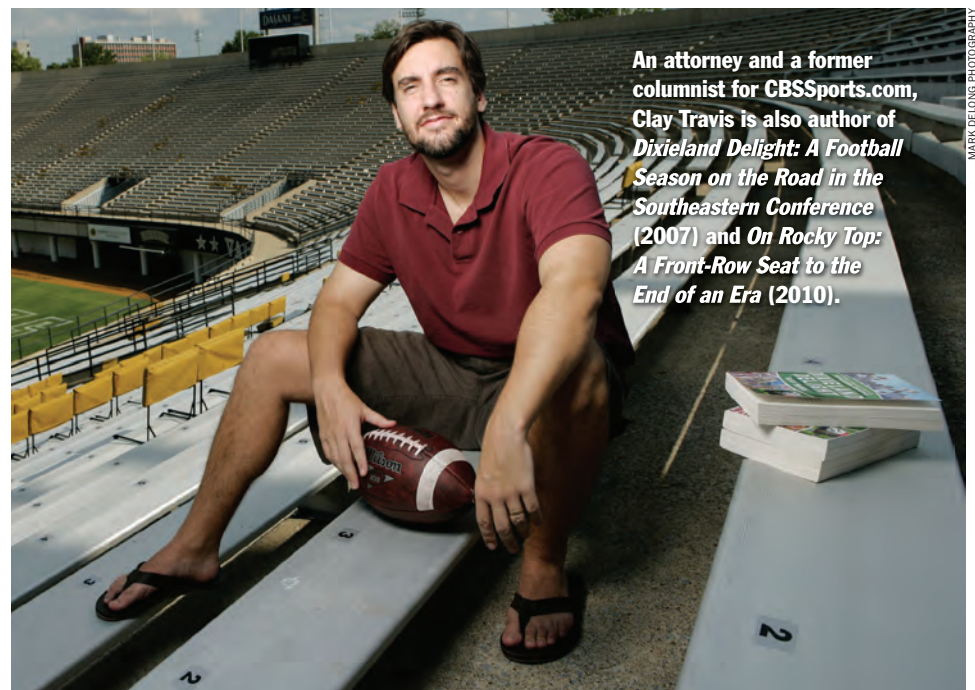
**Travis:** Tons of people watch the Super Bowl who have no idea what's going on. Millions of people are watching who didn't care about any of the four teams that were playing two weeks earlier.

**Sheinin:** I have to go with the Super Bowl. There are two weeks of gloating, plus the silly media day thing, and then the game is never as compelling as the hype.

**Bechtel:** Media day at the Super Bowl is a zoo. You get these people who've never covered football players asking gimmicky questions like, “What kind of underwear do you wear?” At some point people are going to start writing stories about the people who write the stories. It's a bizarre zoo that serves no purpose whatsoever but ends up being the lead story on *SportsCenter* and is on the front of every website.

“If you are trying to be a good sports writer, you have to focus on the writing more than the sports. You have to tell good stories.”

—Clay Travis, JD'04, MFA'08



An attorney and a former columnist for CBSsports.com, Clay Travis is also author of *Dixieland Delight: A Football Season on the Road in the Southeastern Conference* (2007) and *On Rocky Top: A Front-Row Seat to the End of an Era* (2010).

MARY DELONG PHOTOGRAPHY



**Lee Jenkins does a phone interview from the Florida Marlins dugout in Miami's Sun Life Stadium.**

AL TELEMAN/SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

“My favorite events are the tiny ones. My favorite thing to do is find some college baseball player or some minor leaguer who is on the verge.”

—Lee Jenkins, BA'99

**Jenkins:** I've done Super Bowl media day several times now. There are people from around the world—you have people from Al Jazeera Sports there. You have people dressed up in costumes. It's out of control. I usually don't like Super Bowls, but this year was a kick because the Saints won and it was so unique—it felt like the epitome of what you want the job to be. It was such a great story because of everything New Orleans had been through and the fan base was so excited. I know that's been played out, but it came across in pure form in the locker room. Getting to do that story is probably one of the most exciting things in my career.

*The thought of covering what sport or event makes you cringe?*

**Jenkins:** Anything having to do with the New England Patriots. The last time I had to cover them, I went to Foxborough [Mass.] with a blank notebook, and when I got in my car and went back to the airport after reporting for the day, I still had a blank notebook. The Patriots are one of those teams—and they're mostly in the NFL—that have come to the conclusion that they don't need the media at all. I'm not saying that's wrong, but they just don't want to disseminate their message in any way. Any story involving the New England Patriots is my nightmare, and I think most sports writers feel the same way.

**Sheinin:** Actually, it's the NFL. I never watch it, and I'm not a fan. Access is much more

limited than in baseball, and they keep you at arm's length. It is much harder to write compellingly about people you're not with. I just think the NFL is way too testosterone laden. The pace and rhythm of baseball are much more appealing to me.

**Olney:** After my first child was born, I knew I couldn't be a baseball beat writer anymore. It's 150 nights a year on the road, and it's just grueling.

**Travis:** I wouldn't be very good at covering the WNBA or hockey. I'm interested in the



**Dave Sheinin, national baseball writer for *The Washington Post*, dreams of seeing Vanderbilt play in the Final Four one day.**

JOHN MCDONNELL/THE WASHINGTON POST

“Sports lends itself to dramatic writing. It's full of characters who are amusing and entertaining and compelling.”

—Dave Sheinin, BS'91





## Freedom to Write and Keep Writing

**America's love affair with its sports heroes** began in the first half of the last century—an era often referred to as the “golden age of sports.” Athletes with names like Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Seabiscuit captured the country’s imagination. In the days before 24-hour sports channels, fans turned to newspapers for their information. No one at that time wielded greater influence than Grantland Rice.

Rice, BA 1901, wasn’t content to write of box scores and statistics. He was a storyteller, a maker of legends. Much of the mystique Notre Dame football still enjoys today can be traced to this passage published by the *New York Herald Tribune* on Oct. 18, 1924:

“Outlined against a blue-gray October sky, the Four Horsemen rode again. In dramatic lore they are known as famine, pestilence, destruction and death. These are only aliases. Their real names are Stuhldreher, Miller, Crowley and Layden. They formed the crest of the South Bend cyclone before which another fighting Army team was swept over the precipice at the Polo Grounds this afternoon ... .”

Rice studied Greek and Latin at Vanderbilt, where he was captain of the baseball team. He loved football, but at 135 pounds he was mostly used as a substitute in the game. During his college career he sustained a broken arm, torn ribs, a broken collarbone, and a broken shoulder blade.

In 1956, two years after Rice’s death, the Thoroughbred Racing Association established the TRA–Grantland Rice Memorial Scholarship in Sports Journalism at Vanderbilt to honor Rice’s legacy. In 1986 the name of the scholarship was changed to include Fred Russell, ’27, a protégé of Rice’s who crafted his own legendary career writing for the *Nashville Banner* for a remarkable 69 years.

The author of several books, Russell wrote with flair and humor—as in this description of Buster Brown, a Nashville first baseman and pitcher of the 1920s:

“He was from East St. Louis, and his nose and tell-tale thickened scar-tissue beneath the skin around his eyes showed he had been a prizefighter. He carried a spring-lock knife with a blade about five inches long—actually kept it in his uniform, a fact well known to visiting players. Regularly before a game Buster would stroll over to the visiting bench, stick his head in



**Grantland Rice loved football but, at 135 pounds, was better suited for baseball. In July of this year, Rice was named to the Vanderbilt Athletics Hall of Fame.**

and ask, belligerently: ‘Any you guys want to fight?’ There would ensue a silence. Then Buster would say: ‘If you doesn’t then keep your lip buttoned.’”

Vanderbilt alumni Tyler Kepner, BA’97; Lee Jenkins, BA’99; and Dave Sheinin, BS’91, have all followed in Rice’s and Russell’s footsteps and were recipients of the scholarship named in their honor. Other notable winners include Skip Bayless, BA’74, and Roy Blount Jr., BA’63.

Today these accomplished professionals are connected to one another by the scholarship and by their time at Vanderbilt.

“There is kind of a bond with us, and it goes back to the scholarship and then *The Vanderbilt Hustler* where we sort of felt the freedom to write and keep writing,” Lee Jenkins says. “We just wrote. I think that goes for Dave, and I know it goes for Tyler and a lot of other people. We were just kids running this little newspaper. We wanted to make a good paper, but we also wanted to learn and write good stories and find our voices.”



**Fred Russell, shown here with Muhammad Ali, covered sports for the *Nashville Banner* from 1929 until it ceased publication in 1998.**

sports I grew up being a fan of. Those are the sports I have a good working knowledge of, and those are the sports where I can offer something unique and entertaining.

*Do you have a favorite event you've written about or would love to see again?*

**Jenkins:** My favorite events are the tiny ones. My favorite thing to do is find some college baseball player or some minor leaguer who is on the verge.

**Bechtel:** When *Sports Illustrated* was putting together its 50th anniversary issue back in 2004, we did stories that typified sports in each state. We tried to do a different sport for each state, so we got into some pretty random ones. I wrote about the state curling championship in North Dakota. Normally, when you call and say you're from *SI*, it carries a lot of weight. But when I called the head of the curling club, he was kind of a jerk and was like "yeah, whatever" because he thought a friend was playing a trick on him. But he turned out to be the nicest guy, and the whole story just turned into this four-day bender in North Dakota where all we did was sit there and take drinks from people and interact with the locals. And there was a little curling here and there.

**Olney:** Easily the coolest thing I ever covered was a basketball game at Vanderbilt between Belmont and Lipscomb in 1990. Another one, in a way you'd never want to repeat, was the 2001 World Series. I was at *The New York Times* then, and it was an incredible event to cover because it was only a few weeks after 9/11. The emotional backdrop for that was unbelievable.

*Do you still follow Vanderbilt sports?*

**Bechtel:** I do—very closely. They're on TV a lot more now, and the website is great; you can listen to a lot of games there. I get down to Nashville occasionally to see games. Vanderbilt has changed. There's tailgating and a whole pregame village area by the stadium.



As a senior editor of *Sports Illustrated*, Mark Bechtel puts another issue of the magazine to bed. Bechtel recently returned from South Africa, where he covered this year's FIFA World Cup.

"Basketball and football are simple games, but the people who play them are interesting characters to dig into and profile and deconstruct."

—Mark Bechtel, BA'93

**Olney:** I do a daily column on the ESPN website, and most days I link to something going on with Vanderbilt. I very much follow it.

**Jenkins:** I'm constantly texting with Dave Sheinin and Tyler Kepner during games. I actually bought a phone that makes it eas-

ier to text for this purpose. I've even taken flak for this phone in NFL locker rooms.

**Sheinin:** Jenkins and I live and die with Commodore basketball. We text each other like 14-year-old girls. ▼

# Remarkable students



**Kyle McCollom Jr., Class of 2011**  
 He is helping former inmates transition into the working world through Triple Thread, his custom apparel social enterprise opening this fall.



**Alice Bator, Class of 2011**  
 As co-founder of the Kasiisi Project Vanderbilt, she spent two summers in Uganda working with UNICEF and other organizations to better the lives of schoolgirls.



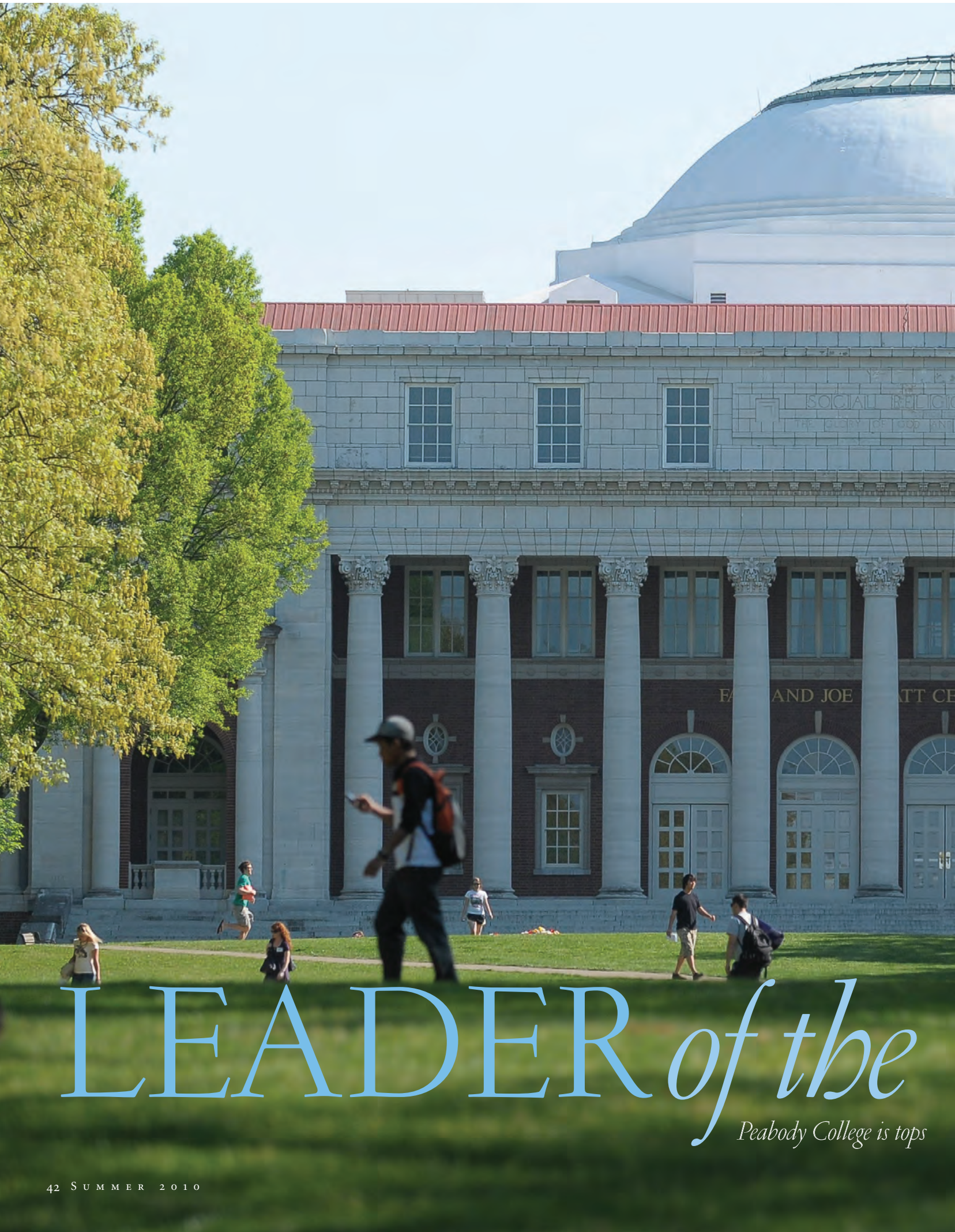
**Wyatt Smith, BS'10**  
 After a year leading Vanderbilt Student Government, this new Board of Trust member is exploring democracies around the world as the Michael B. Keegan Traveling Fellow.



**Dallas Jessup, Class of 2013**  
 Her Just Yell Fire nonprofit works to stop sexual assault and abduction of teenage girls. She has reached more than one million girls in 44 countries.



Every gift to Vanderbilt helps shape the future for remarkable students like these. Make your gift today at [www.vanderbilt.edu/givenow](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/givenow) or contact Laurie McPeak at (615) 322-7252 or [laurie.mcpeak@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:laurie.mcpeak@vanderbilt.edu).



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# LEADER *of the*

*Peabody College is tops*

By LISA A. DUBOIS



Out of the shadows of the Vanderbilt constellation has emerged a glittering star. During the past decade Peabody College of education and human development has been quietly elevating its national reputation as one of the most—if not *the* most—respected schools of education in the country.

For the past two years, *U.S. News & World Report* has named Peabody's graduate education program as the very best in the nation. As if those accolades weren't enough, the subspecialties of administration/supervision and special education also have been ranked No. 1. Other Peabody subspecialties ranked near the top of the academic food chain include education policy (fifth), elementary education (fifth), educational psychology (seventh), and higher education administration (eighth).

# PACK

*in education innovation, research and reform.*

MARY DONALDSON

Only 30 years ago it seemed like the school was chasing a mirage. In 1979, when Chancellor Alexander Heard signed the historic merger agreement that enfolded the financially struggling George Peabody College for Teachers into Vanderbilt University, many felt as if the university was unwisely making room for an awkward second cousin. Despite great angst, anger and argument among faculty and students on both sides, Peabody became the ninth school within the university. Defending his decision to the Peabody Board of Trustees in 1979, Heard predicted, “[This] will not be easy by any means, and it involves a lot of risks for the present Peabody College and the present Vanderbilt University, but it seems to be a risk worth taking [because of] the educational significance of the missions we think we can achieve together.”

Turns out the chancellor’s instincts were right. “Peabody has earned its reputation as the best graduate school of education for a good reason,” says Grover “Russ” Whitehurst, director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. “It’s good to see that an institution committed to high-quality research can provide a recipe for gaining recognition among its peers on a national level. Peabody’s success story should be a model for schools of education around the country.”

A major factor in recruiting and retaining the nation’s top educational scholars is the fact that Peabody now has 11 endowed faculty chair holders, who help set the bar even higher for faculty performance and bring in additional financial resources. Peabody and Vanderbilt have forged a powerful synergy, based largely on quality research being generated by the faculty. “We’ve become kind of a Mecca of research methodology in educational research,” says Craig Kennedy, associate dean for research, professor of special education and chair of the department, and associate professor of pediatrics. “We have a lot of col-laborations going on between research methodologists and content experts, so we can do research that a lot of other universities can’t because they don’t have that assemblage of people.”



**“It’s not just weak teachers who leave the profession. It’s often some of the best who get frustrated and leave.”**  
—Craig Kennedy

Most school districts spend about 80 percent of operating monies on teacher salaries. Policymakers began asking if this was the best use of resources. Nobody knew the answer.

With 125 faculty members garnering \$54 million in research funding last year, Peabody scholars brought home the largest share of the available pie, in part because they were investigating issues related to wide-sweeping education reform. When education reform became a priority for both the George W. Bush

and Barack Obama administrations, policymakers went scrambling for expert voices to help them shape one of the most important debates of the 21st century. Because Peabody scholars were already applying rigorous scientific methods to the topics they were exploring and had hard data to back up their claims, legislators and think tanks across the country naturally began to seek out their opinions.

“It’s very important that Peabody remain part of the reform movement,” says Jim Cooper, Democratic U.S. congressman representing Tennessee’s Fifth District. “A lot of policymakers are being whipsawed right now. We need guidance. We have the education of children before us, and we need to know what path to go down.” He adds that academic environments like Peabody’s have the potential to merge the theoretical with the practical—to do first-rate research, but also to produce first-rate teachers who can put innovation into action.

In April 2010, representing the interests of schools of education, Dean Benbow testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, chaired by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). HELP is charged with reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was converted into No Child Left Behind (NCLB) by President Bush and recently overhauled by the Obama administration.

Sen. Harkin says he is optimistic that he can lead a bipartisan process to implement changes that will ultimately lead toward achieving equity and excellence in American education. As part of that plan, he says, “We want to give teachers credit for student growth and reward schools for significantly improving student achievement. We must ensure that our students have great teachers and leaders, and that educators have the support they need to do their jobs well.”

From his vantage point of formulating a national agenda, Harkin sees a cultural shift happening in education as more people use data to drive both policy and practice, as well as a growing appreciation among policymakers for the importance of research. “Many of the most successful reforms are built on a foundation of data, and it allows us to approach teaching in more scientific ways,” he comments. “While we have more to learn in this area, I think we have made strides.”

### A Dearth of Hard Data

Unfortunately, for nearly 100 years, hard data relating to education research in the United States was nowhere to be found. In the early 1960s, says Whitehurst, the RAND—a large international research organization—was commissioned by the federal government to review all research that had been done on American education and, based on their findings, to propose how to improve the nation’s schools. The RAND concluded that so little research had been done that essentially nothing was known.

In 1999 the National Academy of Sciences was given a similar task



**A leading advocate for more education research, Peabody Dean Camilla Benbow testifies in Washington on April 15.**

and surmised that, 40 years down the road, still almost nothing was known. They also concluded that in no other field but education was the research base as weak. By and large, educators were operating on professional opinion and best guesses to determine how to teach our children.

“Now that’s changed,” Whitehurst says. “Much more good research is going on than even a decade ago. Nearly all the conversations now are within the ballpark. A decade ago the ballpark wasn’t even visible.”

Part of the lag can be blamed on the dearth of financial investment in empirical education research, says Benbow. During the past 100 years, the United States has steadily invested in medical, agricultural and technological research. As a result, those fields have made colossal advancements. Not counting recent federal stimulus money, the United States spends about \$36 billion a year, for example, on medical research. By comparison, it annually devotes about \$750 million to all education research.

Historically in education, rather than continually and deliberately building upon a knowledge base, the major focus instead has been on access. The government made it mandatory that all children from all racial and socioeconomic groups attend school, and it funded programs to make that possible.

What the mandate did *not* do was broaden the understanding of what differentiates a high-performing school from a low-performing one; or identify the characteristics that make one person a great teacher and another person a mediocre one; or reveal the best way to teach language arts to an impoverished fifth grader in an inner-city neighborhood; and so on. American education became a state, district and neighborhood crapshoot. Schools were built, teachers were hired, and the luckiest kids finished high school prepared to tackle the rigors of college while the unluckiest kids finished high school—maybe—lacking the skill sets necessary to make a decent living or advance in life.

In 2001, No Child Left Behind became the law of the land. Despite its inherent flaws, NCLB revealed alarming cracks in the veneer of American school systems. Upon further inspection, the disparities

were appalling. Whitehurst says, “If you’re in the fourth grade in elementary school, the difference between having a really good teacher and having a really bad teacher is almost a third of a year of growth during the course of a year. Few other service industries would ever allow that type of variation.”

Yet the question remains, What should we do about these problems? Peabody researchers have been uniquely positioned to figure that out by conducting scientifically based, randomized clinical trials. The focus of ongoing studies at Peabody ranges, says Kennedy, “from the question of how to teach children with autism who are nonverbal, to the question of whether or not you actually get child-performance changes in public schools by paying teachers based upon their students’ performance. That’s a huge continuum of research—from looking at the individual child to working with multiple states’ school districts. It’s really unique for a school of education.”

In fact, Peabody faculty members have been so aggressive in their study that they have organized 17 research and outreach centers within the college—more than at any other school of education in the country. These garrisons of investigation include the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, the National Center on Performance Incentives, the National Center on School Choice, and the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities. A primary mission for these centers is to “create knowledge for policymakers so they can make decisions about policy based on evidence rather than belief,” Benbow says.

### **Performance Incentives and Student Achievement**

One of the hottest topics in education today is the idea of paying teachers an incentive bonus if their students excel on standardized measurements of learning and progress. Matthew Springer, assistant professor of public policy and education, serves as director of the National Center on Performance Incentives, based at Peabody. Beginning in the 1950s, virtually all schools established teacher pay scales according to two criteria: years of experience and degree held. The longer teachers worked in the system and the higher their post-baccalaureate degree, the more they were paid. When NCLB

came into practice, it revealed that students of more seasoned and better-paid teachers were not necessarily the highest achievers. A hue and cry arose from the public demanding that teachers' compensation should be based instead on the test scores of their pupils.

Until now, Springer says, "we'd never tried to study systematically whether pay-for-performance is a good policy or not. We know from a growing body of research that the relationship between a teacher's years of experience and the degrees they hold are not necessarily correlated, if correlated at all, with student outcomes. So there must be a better way. We just don't know what a better way may be."

Most school districts spend about 80 percent of their operating monies on teacher salaries. However, as certain students fell behind the curve, policymakers began asking if this was the best use of their resources. Unfortunately, nobody knew the answer to the question. The National Center on Performance Incentives is now conducting a wide-ranging empirical study in schools in Nashville and Round Rock, Texas, to determine if, over a three-year period, middle-school math students are more successful at reaching academic benchmarks if their teachers receive a performance bonus. Using previously established district benchmarks, the study is paying individual teachers a \$5,000 bonus if their students reach the 80th percentile; a \$10,000 bonus at the 85th percentile; and \$15,000 for achieving the 95th percentile.

Beyond performance incentives and student-achievement data, the study is also looking into teacher attitudes, teacher perceptions, instructional practices, teacher attendance and professional development to determine if any of these factors shed light on the issue. The idea is to discover a formula of elements that makes someone a "great" teacher, and then develop strategies to transfer that formula to current and future educators. "Compensation may be only one part of the puzzle," says Springer. "It's not going to be a silver bullet, even if it is proven to be effective. We really must look at reform of the entire system itself."

Whitehurst of the Brookings Institution agrees. "Research needs to tell us what works and how we can get teachers to engage in the classroom," he says. "A lot of that will involve classroom skills, but a lot will also depend on support in the classroom, the curriculum set up by the school, an accountability system that makes sense, and peers who teachers can relate to. It's not simple, and it's not one thing."

In addition to collecting data, Peabody is also addressing education reform at the grassroots level. Beginning in the fall of 2010, it will begin offering a master's degree in teaching and learning in urban schools. The idea is that teachers who work in the poorest school systems with the most disadvantaged students are more likely to be suc-

cessful if they receive specific training for that job.

Dean Benbow compares the concept to that of the 1970s when teachers began training to work with children with special needs. At the time, special education was quite controversial, dismissed by skeptics as another education fad. Today, however, those same skeptics admit that special education is an undeniable success story.

"We've made huge progress because we've done a vast amount of research in special education," Benbow says. "We have seen that if investments are made in research and development of leaders and teachers, the trajectories of kids can be changed." She argues that with the same investment, urban education can become equally successful, turning around students who come to school under the most challenging of circumstances.

The urban schools master's program is free to the 24 graduate students enrolled in it, and comes with a five-year teaching commitment. Starting off, the program contains three strands: middle-school math instruction, science instruction and literacy, which are the most critical areas for students living in urban poverty. The Peabody graduate students are placed into schools in cohorts of seven or eight so they will not feel like they've been airdropped alone into a hard-to-staff school. The beauty of this initiative, says Jesse Register, superintendent of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, is that "teachers get a free master's degree and we get top-quality teachers." If the program works, he hopes to expand it to other grades and institutionalize it as an ongoing collaboration between Metro Schools and Peabody.

### High-Ranking College, Low-Ranking District

During the 2009–2010 school year, Nashville public schools had 76,000 students enrolled—60,000 of whom were considered disadvantaged. They came from 80 different countries and spoke 120 different languages in the home, so many of these children were learning English for the first time in the classroom.

"The demographics have changed so fast that the district has not been able to keep up," says Register. "We can't make incremental changes and become successful. We must transform the school district. We must learn how to do things that we've never been successful with before. And Peabody and Vanderbilt have a role to play in that."

One way in which Peabody and Vanderbilt contribute is by deploying its graduates into the teaching workforce. However, a problem for Peabody—and for nearly all schools of education—is that many students train for four years to become teachers only to drop out of the profession in less time than it took for them to earn a degree.

"Somehow, we have to match education with tenure," states Rep. Cooper. He also worries that while Nashville boasts the top school of education in the country, the same cannot be said for the schools in the district where it resides. In fact, some Metro Nashville schools are deemed among the worst in terms of student performance.

"It's gratifying that Peabody is so successful and doing so well. They're doing a better job than anybody else in America. But it's disheartening that the American school system isn't doing better," Cooper laments. "In Tennessee we rank among the top three states



TINGLI WANG  
**"Compensation is not a silver bullet. We must look at reform of the entire system."**  
—Matthew Springer



for the quality of our roads. Why aren't our schools in the top three? Because we're willing to pay more for our roads than for our schools."

Peabody College at Vanderbilt—and, before that, George Peabody College for Teachers—has always ranked among the most prominent training grounds for America's educators, respected for its innovative and forward-thinking pedagogy.

"To maximize education today and tomorrow, students need a broad educational experience to cope with the fast pace of change and expansion of knowledge," says longtime Peabody supporter H. Rodes Hart, BA'54, who chairs Vanderbilt's Shape the Future Campaign. "Exploiting evolving technical knowledge and rapid change in learning techniques is essential for maximum preparation to compete in the future, and Peabody will lead the way."

Peabody has produced generations of teachers, principals, superintendents, university presidents and other leaders who have had a major impact on children's education. Still, Craig Kennedy concedes that despite what he calls "beacons of excellence," the college cannot be expected to overcome the avalanche of educational woes experienced by the nation's schools even as it turns out determined, qualified graduates.

"Unfortunately, it's not just weak teachers who leave the profession," he says. "It's often some of the best teachers who get frustrated and leave."

On the other hand, despite the bleak backdrop facing many who enter the education job market, this is probably one of the most exciting times to become a teacher. The nation has reached a turning point and is on the cusp of revolutionary change, starting with the Obama administration's lure of Race to the Top education funds. In the first round of funding, only two states, Tennessee and Delaware, had applications deemed strong enough to warrant Race to the Top awards. With the help of numerous educators around the state, Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen landed \$500 million in bonus money

to improve the quality of education statewide.

As part of the process, Bredesen's office asked Professor Springer to lead research studies to track outcomes of some of the innovative practices being put into place. The research component is still being designed and will inform the process as it moves forward.

Springer says, "When the state reached out to me, I saw Race to the Top as an opportunity to ensure that the work we were doing had a meaningful impact and potentially would help improve educational opportunities for all children. The heart of the effort is not to conduct the next great innovative study, but to answer questions that can help inform practice and policy."

Although he's proud of the effort made to get these new federal funds and excited about how they will be spent, Rep. Cooper sees another side to it. "Great education is not built on one-time windfalls," he insists. "Isn't it interesting that it took almost a lottery-size winning to help us do things we probably should have done anyway? This one-time gift can boost us, but what happens when the gift runs out?"

The answer may depend in part on the agility of Peabody scholars as they quickly implement studies, evaluate outcomes and make recommendations. It also may depend on Peabody graduates who are working in the trenches, trying out innovative teaching practices. Momentum is certainly on the side of both the researchers and the educators out in the field. As education reform continues to rumble fast and furious across America, Peabody faculty and students are in a prime position to help lead the charge. ▽



STEVE GREEN

### Leadership in the Trenches: Nashville Educators of the Year

"Having students from varied backgrounds ought to be an opportunity," says Bill Moody, BS'77, right, with John Shuler, MEd'94, at Nashville's Two Rivers Middle School, where Moody is principal. "Unfortunately, many teachers do not know how to reach students from different cultures, nor are they provided training. They tend to see it as taking instructional time away from their other students." Moody was named Metro Nashville Public Schools' 2010 Middle School Principal of the Year, while Shuler was named Elementary School Teacher of the Year. "Public schools demand teachers who engage in data-driven instruction, research-based practices, and higher-level thinking among students," says Shuler. "Peabody emphasizes academic rigor, a research base, creative practice and critical reflection. What better match could there be?"

# Chance of a **L**



When you're 18 and contemplating your future,  
the right opportunity can make all the difference.

# LIFETIME



## One hundred million dollars in gifts for scholarships.

That's the ambitious goal of Opportunity Vanderbilt, the university's commitment to replace need-based undergraduate student loans with grants and scholarships.

The good news: To date, Vanderbilt has raised \$81 million in gifts for scholarship endowment. The not-so-good news: Vanderbilt's scholarship endowment remains below the level of many of its peer institutions.

When a copy of a heartfelt letter of thanks sent to a university administrator by student Arian Danian reached the *Vanderbilt Magazine* office recently, it inspired us to turn the spotlight on Opportunity Vanderbilt by asking other scholarship recipients to share their stories, too.



### Arian Danian

*Class of 2013*

#### DOUBLE MAJOR:

human and organizational development, history

HOMETOWN: Plano, Texas

*Shorenstein Family  
Scholarship recipient*

“Every day as I walk across the Peabody campus, I am overwhelmed with gratitude that Vanderbilt would invest so much in me, and am inspired to do my best in hopes that one day I can do for someone else what Vanderbilt has done for me.”

It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I finally realized how important education is to me. During my high school years, I had a lot of problems at home and I was very lost. My parents, both Iranian immigrants, had divorced, and after a family bankruptcy I was living with my mother in a cramped apartment and sleeping on the couch.

School was always my outlet. When I was overwhelmed or didn't feel like going home, I got involved with programs at school or spent more time studying, and it was very rewarding. My teachers were always mentors for me, and I appreciated their role in helping me reach higher levels of academic success and personal fulfillment.

I saw a lot of kids in my neighborhood

with similar problems at home, and it really hurt me to see many of them get involved with drugs or crime as their outlet. I like to think that if they'd had good teachers and mentors that they would have been more likely to immerse themselves in learning and other good habits. These experiences became the foundation of my desire to pursue a career in education. However, there were a lot of times when I felt there was a ceiling on what I could accomplish because of my family's financial circumstances.

I remember spending a lot of time during my senior year researching universities I would like to attend and feeling I would never have the opportunity to do so. When I came across Vanderbilt, I felt it was the best fit for me, and when I found out about the expanded aid program, I knew this could work.

Initially, what attracted me to Vanderbilt were the sterling reputation of Peabody College as one of the premier schools of education in the country, the small class sizes, and the opportunities that come with such a prestigious institution. When I finally got to Vanderbilt, it had everything I expected, but it had so much more. The informational brochures and pamphlets promoting the university just couldn't quantify the kindness, care and genuine concern of the administration and faculty or the atmosphere of scholarship and learning that permeated every room on campus.

Every day as I walk across the Peabody campus to get to my classes, I am overwhelmed with gratitude by the opportunity that has been afforded me. Living and learning on the same campus that has educated so many of the world's greatest thinkers and innovators inspires me to do my best each day, in hopes that I can one day give somebody the same opportunity this institution has given me. Whether it's forming personal relationships with my professors, participating in the Speakers' Committee, tutoring young Nashvillians, or spending time with friends, I've already learned so much about myself during just one year at Vanderbilt.

Right now I'm double majoring in human and organizational development and history. I'm hoping to get teacher certification through Vanderbilt after I graduate in order to teach for a couple of years, and then to pursue a

career in educational administration. I know my experiences at Vanderbilt will be a valuable asset in pursuing my dreams, and it wouldn't have been possible without the care and generosity of this prestigious institution. ▼

“I gained appreciation for people of all shapes, colors, sizes and ethnicities while discovering how to step outside my comfort zone.”

As an African American woman, I have an abiding interest in diversity. I enjoy learning about other ethnic groups, religions and ideas. During high school in Memphis, in order to diversify my cultural awareness and build on my understanding of diversity, I immersed myself in many extracurricular activities, including the Memphis Youth Symphony, Medical Explorers, and the Technology Student Association. However, I wanted more.

Being from a predominately African American high school, I wanted to enroll at a more diverse university. Even before applying to Vanderbilt, I knew this university was for me. When I toured the campus in the fall before graduating from high school, the welcoming environment of the students and staff made an indelible impression. With its mix of students and its state-of-the-art laboratories and research facilities, Vanderbilt became my dream school. The College of Arts and Science, I felt, would offer the foundation I needed to prepare for medical school.

Freshman year, my transition to Vanderbilt was challenging to say the least. I was overly ambitious and loaded myself with 18 hours' worth of demanding courses. Trying to balance school work, social life and leisure time was problematic. All-nighters seemed to be my best friend. Although the transition from high school to college was a formidable one, it rewarded me with valuable knowledge that developed my critical-thinking and studying skills while highlighting

## Kembral Nelson

*Class of 2011*

**MAJOR:** medicine, health and society, with minors in biology, sociology and Spanish

**HOMETOWN:** Memphis, Tenn.

*Parents Scholarship recipient*

LINSEY LISBAU



the importance of time management. I was able to interact with different people within the Vanderbilt community and excel in accomplishing my goals—developing academically, intellectually and socially.

The main thing that draws me to Vanderbilt is still its diversity. Freshman year I lived in Kissam Hall, where the housing demographic was mainly African American. As a result, I tended to socialize only within my race, which inhibited my knowledge of all the other races and cultures at Vanderbilt. It wasn't until the beginning of sophomore year that I made the choice to throw myself into the enriching cultures this school offers.

I moved to McTyeire Hall, an international dorm on campus. There I learned about various cultures and traditions of people from the U.S. and students from other countries such as Germany and Korea. In McTyeire, I gained appreciation for people of all shapes, colors, sizes and ethnicities while discovering how to step outside my comfort zone.

I joined a Latina-based multicultural sorority, Sigma Lambda Gamma, which embraces women of all races. Within this sorority I've been able to promote the beautiful concept of diversity and the empowerment of cultural awareness in the Vanderbilt community. The chapter is represented by various ethnicities from African and Indian to Latina and Caucasian. As a member of the Multicultural Leadership Council, this sorority actively participates in events such as Diwali and Café con Leche [an annual celebration of Hispanic

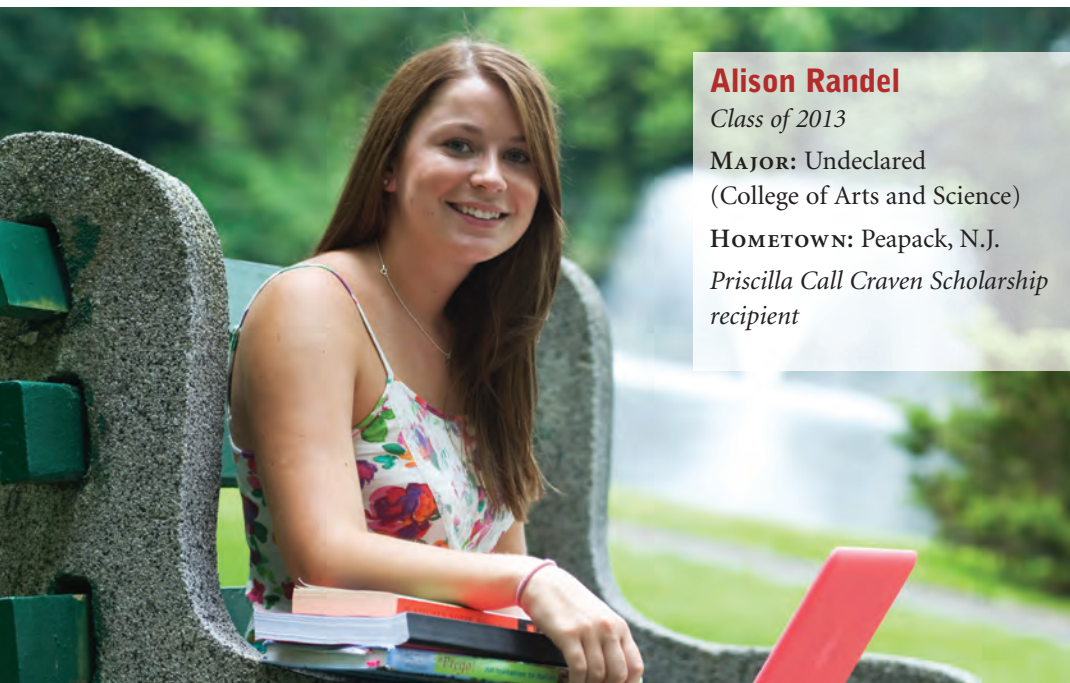
dance and culture produced by the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic Students]. With every event I've had the opportunity to embrace different cultures.

Vanderbilt offers many extracurricular opportunities, and I've taken part in many of them, including Alternative Spring Break in the Everglades and Alternative Winter Break in New Orleans.

Within my sorority I've implemented "Education Matters," which is a program at the Tennessee Prison for Women. There a group of volunteers and I tutor incarcerated women for their GED examination. With every experience Vanderbilt has enhanced my leadership skills and enabled me to participate in enriching activities and organizations.

I'm majoring in medicine, health and society and doing a triple minor in biology, sociology and Spanish. My desire is to become a pediatric cardiologist. Upon completion of medical school, I will blend my career and community service by working with youth who aspire to achieve. I hope to nurture their full potential in the medical field.

Vanderbilt has proven to be my extended family and a caring community. I thank the Vanderbilt family for ensuring that college so far has been the best three years of my life. At this university I have developed a compassion for others and an understanding of different cultures that I never knew was possible. ▼



## Alison Randel

Class of 2013

**MAJOR:** Undeclared  
(College of Arts and Science)

**HOMETOWN:** Peapack, N.J.

*Priscilla Call Craven Scholarship  
recipient*

ELENA OLIVO

“Being a part of this school has confirmed my belief that a good work ethic is the key to a successful future and has inspired me to work harder than ever.”

My whole life I have been blessed with amazing opportunities. The first came in the form of a scholarship at Showcase Studios, the Far Hills, N.J., school at which I took dance classes. The owner, Miss Eileen, saw my potential and took a liking to me. She offered me a chance to take a few extra classes. In return, I only had to help clean the studio or assist teachers with classes of younger students. When Miss Eileen saw my eagerness and initiative to help around the studio, she rewarded me with more classes and even a chance to go to dance conventions in New York City.

Miss Eileen did not realize it, but her generosity was a building block to the work ethic I now have. She taught me that one could create her own opportunities through hard work. I did not always like it, but I applied this work ethic to my schoolwork. Although in middle school I did not completely understand why good grades were important, I knew they could only help me in the future. Sure enough,

they did.

This good work ethic proved to be my springboard to the Pingry School, a private high school in my area. Despite financial hardship—my mom is a single parent with three kids—I was able to attend this great school because I had been committed to always doing my best. The next four years were full of new friendships, new experiences and new opportunities. Everyone I met at Pingry helped me to become the person I am today. Teachers taught me to challenge myself, and friends helped me to appreciate the fun memories we were creating together. While my four years at Pingry were some of the most enjoyable of my life, they gave me hope for a future even better and more exciting.

At the beginning of my senior year in high school, I was searching to find the college that would be my perfect match. Sifting through the numerous pamphlets that had been mailed to me, I was thoroughly confused. However, after much research, Vanderbilt University rose to the top of my college list. The diverse and competitive academic programs offered, the beautiful campus, and its location in Nashville won me over. In fact, I became so sure that Vanderbilt was the place for me, I took a leap of faith and applied Early Decision without ever having visited the campus. I will never forget the day I received my acceptance letter. I tore open the manila envelope

and jumped with excitement when I read, “Congratulations.”

As my senior year continued, I was relieved I did not have to go through the same uncertainty most of my classmates were experiencing. However, after the school year ended and the days before moving into the Vanderbilt Commons became fewer and fewer, I began to feel anxious. I had never even been to a sleep-away camp. What if I had made the wrong decision? What if Vanderbilt University was not the place for me?

Thankfully, all my fears dissipated as soon as I set foot on campus. To my surprise the transition to living in Tennessee, 15 hours away from my family, was not a difficult one. Although slightly intimidating at first, meeting new people was one of the most exciting aspects of being a newcomer on campus. Through orientation groups, classes and Greek life, I already feel as though I have made what will become lifelong friendships. Some of my closest friends are now from Georgia, Texas, California and New York.

Taking college-level courses has been an intimidating yet exciting experience. In some of my classes, I’ve been more engaged and more challenged than ever before. Balancing my social life, academic obligations, intramural soccer, volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity, and work at the Television News Archive during my first year was a true growing experience. From my first day to my last day of freshman year, I never stopped thinking about how lucky I am to be able to call Vanderbilt my home.

I am confident the next three years I spend at Vanderbilt will be better than the first. I plan to continue making new friendships, excel in my academics, and become much more involved in campus life. I have grown to love Vanderbilt during this past year and want to make as many precious memories as possible. Being a part of this school has confirmed my belief that a good work ethic is the key to a successful future and has inspired me to work harder than ever before. ▼

Long before coming to Vanderbilt, I started first grade at St. Edward School in South Nashville. Afternoons were spent in piano lessons and soccer practices. Dinners were homemade and eaten at a busy

“I have learned well that sacrifice, although not always enjoyable, is imperative.”

but full table. Summer and winter vacations were spent with extended family in Pennsylvania and Vermont. Life was like a storybook.

Gradually, things got a little more complicated. I developed a strong interest in music after learning to play the trombone in the fourth grade. I was involved in the school's band program and began taking private lessons in the sixth grade. Soccer practice was always part of my after-school schedule. I transferred to St. Bernard School for the seventh and eighth grades and soon had to think about high school.

My parents insisted that I stay at a private school because they deemed it the best learning and maturing environment possible. I took tours of area private high schools and, after completing a sort of standardized test and an interview, I was accepted to Montgomery Bell Academy (MBA). I eagerly decided to attend MBA in hopes of somehow being transformed into one of the giant seniors we met at the open house.

Before the first day of school at MBA, I was asked to attend a rehearsal for the small pep band that plays at home football games. Having enjoyed success in junior high playing trombone at several regional band festivals, I was relieved to find a way to get musically involved in high school so early. I soon made good friends in the band program, participating in the school's jazz band from my first day there until my last. As a freshman during the fall semester, however, I had to choose a sport to play in either fall or winter, as all MBA students are required to participate in an athletics program for two of the three seasons. Not able to simply wait for soccer tryouts in the spring, I went out on a limb and attended a training session for the school's rifle shooting program. As it turned out, I never played soccer again and went on to be a member of the varsity rifle team for two years, culminating in a second-place finish at the National Junior Olympic Air Rifle Championships during the summer after my sophomore year. I then decided to leave the rifle team to focus more on my trombone studies, which gave

me time to participate in the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts and numerous All-State Music Festivals.

I decided to come to Vanderbilt University mainly because it offered an active on-campus student life, a strong engineering program, and an excellent professor of trombone at the Blair School of Music. I have enjoyed being a member of the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity in addition to performing with the Spirit of Gold and the Blair Big Band, Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. I also have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of Vanderbilt's chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers and participating in the Concrete Canoe and other fun com-

well that sacrifice, although not always enjoyable, is imperative.

From squeezing into the middle of the front seat on road trips to watching romantic comedy movies with unfortunate frequency, I sacrificed early and often thanks to my older siblings. But my parents taught me the more important lesson of sacrificing in order to maintain priorities. Although my sisters and I always begged without end (I still do!) for a certain gadget or sugary candy from the checkout aisle of the grocery store, both my mother and father displayed monk-like patience.

We still have a TV from the 1980s, but we all attended private, academically well-known



### John C. Fontaine

*Class of 2011*

**MAJOR:** civil engineering, with a minor in trombone

**HOMETOWN:** Nashville

*Hardaway Family Scholarship and Duncan School Memorial Scholarship recipient*

petitions. Having completed several summer internships with civil engineering firms around Nashville, I look forward to pursuing a career in the field after graduation in the spring of 2011. I plan to remain an active trombone player and hope someday to have a family.

Looking back, the financial sacrifice of my parents to make possible the educations of their four children is deeply humbling. Without generous financial aid from the fine institutions I attended for both high school and college, I never could have had such wonderful memories or aspirations. I have learned

institutions from first grade onward. I can only hope to pass along this value of sacrifice and a good education to my children. ▼



# WIDE EXPOSURE

*Studying on the other side of the world brings risk and reward.*

Last year more than 700 Vanderbilt students received part of their education outside the United States, choosing from more than 100 Vanderbilt study abroad programs. During the past decade Vanderbilt has significantly increased resources to make international study accessible to more students. From nearly 300 entries submitted to the Global Education Office's photo contest this year, these 12 were selected for the GEO's annual calendar.

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





## **Umbria, Italy**

Study abroad meant a great chance to break out of the normal engineering cycle and see the world for a semester. It made me a better-rounded person [and] a more attractive job candidate.

*Aaron Thompson, BS'10*

*Study abroad: Vienna, Austria*



## **Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft National Park, Namibia** **Grand Prize Winner**

I took the photo of Deadvlei because it captured the desolate nature of the Namibian desert and also because the contrasts among the black tree, white sand and orange dunes created a nice composition. This photo reminds me of how varied my experience in Africa was. While I spent most of my time with CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) Cape Town in an urban setting, I also had plenty of opportunities to travel to other parts of the African continent.

*Ben Woods, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Cape Town, South Africa*

RE



### **Orbit Restaurant, Sky Tower Auckland, New Zealand**

Sharing a meal has always been something that brings people together, whether in celebration, mourning or just catching up. I love that the experience is not confined by cultural barriers, but brings out fellowship and community.

*Vanessa Yu, BS'10*

*Study abroad: Auckland, New Zealand*

### **Amsterdam, Netherlands**

While it was hard to leave Vanderbilt, I would never take back the four months spent in Italy. I had the chance to explore many cultures outside my own, to speak different languages, and to learn to live in an environment totally foreign to much of what I have known.

*Catherine Spaulding, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Florence, Italy*





**Mount Roy  
Wanaka, New Zealand**

I met incredible people and gained insight about things I never would have known otherwise. Making the decision to spend a semester on the other side of the world was risky, liberating and unpredictably rewarding.

*Shane Stever, BS'10*

*Study abroad: Wellington, New Zealand*

**Tanzhesi Temple  
Beijing, China**

Studying abroad in China was one of my most humbling experiences thus far.

Every day I was learning something fascinating and new while coming closer to the realization that I know so very little.

*Amanda Heinbockel, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Beijing, China*





### **Atacama Desert, Chile**

My semester in Chile gave me the opportunity to see beautiful things, meet wonderful people, and prove to myself that I could launch headlong into a completely foreign setting, survive, and come out of it a stronger, more confident person.

*Kathleen Flanigan, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Valparaiso, Chile*

### **Ancient Corinth (Archaea Kórinthos), Greece**

Studying in Greece for the summer ignited a desire to delve into Greek history because I witnessed firsthand how Greek historical facts are real and tangible, not just [something found] in a textbook.

*Elena Benitez, Class of 2011*

*Study abroad: Kenchreai, Greece*





### **New Brighton Beach Christchurch, New Zealand**

Although I found much in common with New Zealanders, I celebrated our differences just as much, if not more so. I grew personally by gaining a broader yet more acute perspective on America, New Zealand, and the world between the two.

*Sarah McKibben, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Christchurch, New Zealand*



### **San Telmo Fair Buenos Aires, Argentina**

I was at a huge fair in an old part of the city where people were selling art, crafts, knick-knacks, antiques, food, jewelry and more. This bottle vendor stood in a little square; I was drawn to the colors as the light glinted through the glass.

*Rachel Shelton, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Buenos Aires, Argentina*

### **Great Wall of China Miyun County, Beijing, China**

We had spent the day hiking this more remote section of the Great Wall and had spent a very cold night sleeping on top of the wall. We awoke just before sunrise and went for a morning stroll on the wall to catch a glimpse of the first rays of sun; the orange rays started at the tops of the peaks and slowly worked their way down. The beauty was spectacular, and just knowing a little of the very long history of the wall made me respect it even more.

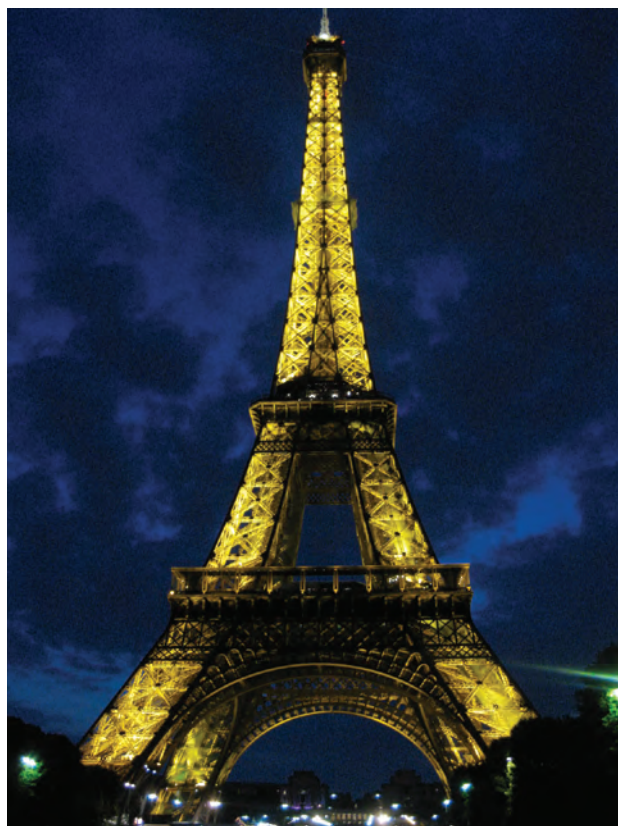
*Reid Bartlett, BA'10*

*Study abroad: Beijing, China*

## Paris, France

Study abroad was really a learning experience that could never take place within a classroom. It was a chance to integrate into a totally different culture and learn a new appreciation for foreign traditions.

*Sarah Williams, Class of 2011  
Study abroad: Dresden, Germany*





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# The Minds

“By listening deeply to other people’s stories, I realized the

## Books and Writers:

### Truth Teller

BARE-LEGGED IN A HOUSEDRESS covered with red and orange flowers, spoken-word artist Minton Sparks walks to the microphone in bone-colored loafers, a purse of the same color hanging from her arm. As a guitar strums in the background, she begins to dramatize her poetry in a soft, Southern accent for a rapt audience.

Poet, storyteller and performance artist rolled into one, Sparks, aka Jill Webb-Hill, MEd’91, draws from her family history to tell spellbinding stories, alternately funny and sad, serious and whimsical.

“I started writing these stories,” she says, “so my children would know our family history.” Her stage name, Minton Sparks, combines her maternal grandparents’ last names.

Her creative process always starts with a poem, which Sparks then takes to her accompanist, usually guitarist John Jackson or keyboardist Steve Conn.

“We discuss the mood of the piece,” she says, “and it becomes a conversation between the music and the poetry. It turns out to be something way better than what I originally wrote.”

Sparks then takes it on the road, fine-tuning her performance. Her 70-minute act consists of poems or short stories that last around three to four minutes—“about the length of a song,” she notes.

Sparks has won several awards, including Spoken Word Record of the Year in 1994 (Just Plain Folk Music Awards) and a Leonard Bernstein Fellowship in 1998. She has recorded three CDs, written two books, and created a line of greeting cards. A new CD, *Minton*



Minton Sparks (aka Jill Webb-Hill)

*Sparks, Live at Station Inn*, is scheduled for release this fall. She recently branched out into co-writing songs with rocker Marshall Chapman, BA’71, and songwriter Gretchen Peters. She also has partnered with Waylon Jennings, Keb’ Mo’ and Maura O’Connell, and opened for artists like Nancy Griffith and John Prine.

Born in Murfreesboro, Tenn., Sparks received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., before earning a master’s degree in counseling from Peabody College. She also attended Vanderbilt Divinity School in 1992 and spent several years as a therapist in private practice, an experience that strongly influences her poetry.

“By listening deeply to other people’s stories,” she says, “I realized the healing power in telling stories.”

**Find out more:** [www.mintonsparks.com](http://www.mintonsparks.com)

— Joanne Lamphere Beckham

### Students Launch Literary Journal

A NATIONAL LITERARY JOURNAL, *Nashville Review*, was launched by graduate creative writing students at Vanderbilt in April.

*Nashville Review* will be issued three times a year, in the spring, fall and summer. It will operate under a broad definition of literature, including fiction, poetry, comics, songs and films. Interviews with distinguished artists also will be featured.

“Anyone can submit,” says editor Matthew Baker, a 2011 M.F.A. candidate. “We’ve had hundreds of submissions and interest from 45 countries on our website.”

The first issue featured poetry by Rickey Laurentiis and Heather Derr-Smith, fiction by Pamela Main and others, and music by Sufjan Stevens and Tyler James, as well as interviews with poet Beth Bachmann and novelist Salvador Plascencia. For a full listing of the contents, please see the website.

Submissions were screened by Vanderbilt M.F.A. creative writing students, and no current Vanderbilt students were permitted to submit.

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

### Visual Art: Drawing the Line

DRAWING EMPLOYS THE MOST INTIMATE of media: a pencil, a pen, a piece of chalk, a sheet of paper. These materials, so easily accessible and normally used for writing, become in the hands of a visual artist a different means of communication. With none of the preparation needed for painting or sculpture, an artist can express the idea of the moment.

# Eye

beating power in telling stories.



—MINTON SPARKS,  
aka JILL WEBB-HILL, MEd'91



Transposing the intangible onto ephemera itself, it almost seems as if the viewer watches the proverbial light bulb going on above the artist's head.

This kind of expressive line could be found in abundance in the summer show at the Fine Arts Gallery's new location in Cohen Memorial Hall on the Peabody campus. *Five Centuries of Drawing: A Selection from the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery Collection* consisted of more than 50 drawings by a wide

range of European and North American artists. Many of the works had more than a passing connection to Vanderbilt. Some of the drawings represented relatively recent gifts by Thomas Brumbaugh, professor of fine arts, emeritus; a number of works were by Eugene Biel-Bienne, an Austrian artist who fled the Nazis and later taught at Vanderbilt from 1959 to 1963; two medical illustrations were by Susan Wilkes, who worked in the medical illustration department of Vanderbilt Hospital in the 1930s and '40s; and a triptych in graphite and shellac on paper was by alumnus and contemporary artist Creighton Michael, MA'76.

"Some of these had been exhibited before," says Joseph Mella, director of the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery, "and some I had wanted to do something with, but they had not fit in thematically [with prior exhibits]. We had several hundred drawings. I thought it would be interesting for a summer exhibit to take a more historical approach."

While it is true that drawing often serves to help the artist gather ideas in service to what may ultimately become a painting or three-dimensional work, it is also true that many are meant to stand alone as finished pieces. The exhibit featured both kinds of work—from sketches by 18th- and 19th-century artists such as George Romney and Benjamin Haydon to finished pastels by little-known late 19th-century French artist Cécile Chennevière-Gaudez and American Gloria

DeArcangelis, whose 1984 work "Masculine" measures 65 by 50 inches.

The back wall of the gallery showcased six works by Biel-Bienne, whose painting "The Mockery of Christ" hangs in a rear stairwell at Vanderbilt Divinity School. The influence of German Expressionism was evident in these big, bold drawings, thus providing a jolt before entering the back gallery, which housed an exhibit of American art also from the Fine Arts Gallery's collection.

*American Art at Vanderbilt* highlighted painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography drawn from the gallery's collection of nearly 1,500 works by American artists. Most of the names were well known: Mary Cassatt, William Merritt Chase, Stuart Davis, Childe Hassam, Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, among others. One rarely exhibited piece by composer John Cage was a plexigram, a silkscreen on multiple pieces of Plexiglas, titled "(Not wanting to say anything about Marcel)."

"After Marcel Duchamp died, reporters were calling important artists for comments," Mella explains. "[American artist] Jasper Johns said, 'I have nothing to say about Marcel,' so Cage took that quote and created a piece that says a lot about Marcel. Like many of Cage's visual pieces, his methodology involved flipping coins and the Chinese *Book of Changes*, so [the imagery] is dictated by that."

*Five Centuries of Drawing* and *American Art at Vanderbilt* were on view at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery through July.

#### Find out more:

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

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

#### Film and Media:

#### News Acquisitions

THE PAPERS OF JULIAN GOODMAN, AN



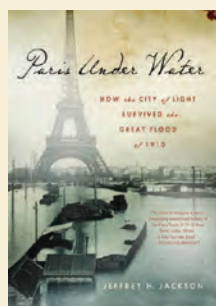
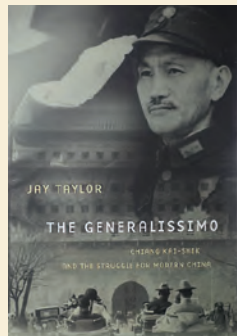
Kenneth Hayes Miller's etching "Leaving the Shop" (top, right) and Feliks Topolski's gestural drawing "Neville Chamberlain" (bottom, left) were featured in two summer exhibits at the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery.

## Recent Books

### *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*

(2009, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press)  
by Jay Taylor, BA'52

Chiang Kai-shek set the stage for Taiwan's evolution of a Chinese model of democratic modernization. Drawing on Chinese sources including Chiang's diaries, Taylor provides penetrating insight into the dynamics of the past that lie behind the struggle for modernity of mainland China and its relationship with Taiwan. The book won the 2010 Lionel Gelber Prize.



### *Paris Under Water: How the City of Light Survived the Great Flood of 1910*

(2010, Palgrave Macmillan)  
by Jeffrey H. Jackson, BS'93

Jackson's book tells the story of the great Paris flood of January 1910. Following this disaster, the worst in the city's modern history, Parisians rallied together to save their city despite decades of political, cultural, economic and religious division that could have torn the city apart.

### *Sleepwalking in Daylight*

(2009, Mira)  
by Elizabeth Brack Flock, BA'87

In Flock's latest novel, Samantha Friedman finds that she and her adopted daughter, Cammy, are on parallel paths, each indulging in desperate, furtive escapism—for Sam, a heady affair with her supposed soul mate, fueled by clandestine coffee dates and the desire to feel something; for Cammy, a secretive search for her birth mother punctuated by pills, pot, and the need to feel absolutely nothing.



### *Nancy Batson Crews: Alabama's First Lady of Flight*

(2009, University of Alabama Press)  
and

### *Nancy Love and the WASP Ferry Pilots of World War II*

(2008, University of North Texas Press)

by Sarah Byrn Rickman, BA'58

Rickman won the Combs Gates

Award given by the National Aviation Hall of Fame for these two biographies of women who played significant roles in the history of aviation: Nancy Batson Crews, one of the original members of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) during World War II, and her mentor, Nancy Love, who founded the WAFS and served as commander of the ferrying division of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).

NBC broadcast pioneer who helped bring to life the network news programs we watch today, have been placed in Special Collections at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library.

Goodman began at NBC as a correspondent in 1945 during the formative years of television news. His experiences provided a solid understanding of the business as he worked his way up to president, chief executive officer and chairman until his retirement in 1979.

Goodman oversaw the rise of one of America's best-known anchor teams, David Brinkley and Chet Huntley. Other highlights of Goodman's career include producing the second of the televised "Great Debates" between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon and overseeing NBC News' coverage of several presidential conventions. He pioneered the television newsmagazine format with *David Brinkley's Journal* during the early '60s. At age 44 he became the youngest president in NBC's history.

"The Goodman papers are one of the anchors of our growing holdings of news leaders and political figures who shaped the news and lived at the center of so many important events of our time," says Connie Vinita Dowell, dean of libraries. "Goodman's archives are especially significant for us because the papers relate to and support the content of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. All together, these print and media collections are a mark of distinction for Vanderbilt University."

John Seigenthaler, founder of the First Amendment Center, former publisher of *The Tennessean* newspaper, and founding editorial director of *USA Today*, calls the Goodman papers an archival treasure. "For more than three decades, Julian Goodman's work and leadership at NBC were a vital force in shaping, enlivening and enhancing the culture of our nation's communications media," Seigenthaler says. "The documents will enrich the work of researchers seeking to understand the unique impact television had on our society, our government and our politics in the second half of the 20th century."

Goodman received numerous awards and honors through the years, including a George Foster Peabody Award in 1974 for his "out-

standing work in the area of First Amendment rights and privileges for broadcasting.” The International Radio and Television Society awarded Goodman the Gold Medal, its highest honor, for his achievements in and contributions to broadcasting. He also received the prestigious National Association of Broadcasters Distinguished Service Award. In addition, Goodman was the second recipient, following President Lyndon Johnson, of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ Distinguished Alumni Award.

During an April 1989 *NBC Nightly News* story about the 50th anniversary of television, Goodman said, “We were inventing the rules as we played the game.” In 2010 the media world is much different than the one he helped mold during his years at NBC. But Goodman, 88, is philosophical about the technological revolution of better communication, faster reporting and fierce competition. “There are more opportunities to be inaccurate now,” he said. “But there are plenty of people to correct you. Your competition will correct you.”

—Ann Marie Deer Owens

## Music:

### Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid

EARLY PRESS MATERIALS for the Oct. 31 concert by the Blair Percussion VORTEX are issued with a tongue-in-cheek warning: “Don’t ENTER THE VORTEX if you’re afraid of the dark.”

While the rest of us may be afraid, it’s clear that Blair’s student percussion ensemble and its artistic director, Michael Holland, certainly appear to be fearless. After previous collaborations with artists like Mary Ellen Childs of CRASH; Daniel Bernard Roumain, BMus’93; and DJ and remix artist Brad ‘Kali’ Bowden, the fall concert, which takes place on Halloween this year, looks to collaborations with artists closer to home—Assistant Professor of Musicology Jim Lovensheimer and composer and Associate Professor of Music Composition and Theory Michael Slayton—for a chilling theatrical adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s classic short story “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

“Jim did a post-concert discussion when we had Mary Ellen Childs here, who is the composer for CRASH,” Holland explains. “He was fascinated from the beginning,



JOHN RUSSELL

**Members of Blair Percussion VORTEX, shown during their spring concert, must think like actors and move like dancers while playing various percussion instruments.**



wanting to know how we put [a percussion concert] together, and what the rehearsal process is like because it really is different from a chamber music concert. So, over a lot of conversation, and because of the fact that the next concert happened to fall on Halloween, we started knocking around ideas. Jim had wanted to do this adaptation of “The Tell-Tale Heart” for a long time.

“It’s scary because it’s all internal,” Holland says. “It gets at that dark side that is in all of us. Someone who has done something that is against every law of God and man is trying to keep a secret and can’t. The intensity of the score that Michael Slayton is creating will match the intensity of the story that Poe has written.”

Lovensheimer is approaching “The Tell-Tale Heart” from the vantage point of an interrogation.

“Jim will do all the speaking, but the perception from the audience will be that of an interrogation, of someone slowly giving up what he knows he has to give up, but that he doesn’t want to give up, because it will expose him as the criminal he is.”

Also on the bill is Edgard Varèse’s *Ionisation*, credited as being among the first West-

ern pieces composed for percussion alone, and the 1913 one-reel film *Suspense*, co-directed by Lois Weber and Phillips Smalley—an early thriller that will keep the audience on the edge of their seats. VORTEX will provide live accompaniment for the film.

“I was born in the wrong era,” Holland says. “For all the work I do that is on the cutting edge, I love that period of film starting from 1895 going into the ’40s for the creative output it generated. As a percussionist, it’s a natural. Most of the sound effects in this era are percussion-based.”

The Blair Percussion VORTEX Halloween concert will take place in Turner Hall at the Blair School of Music at 7 p.m. Admission is free, but tickets are required. Tickets will be available for pickup at the Blair main desk beginning Oct. 1.

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

—Bonnie Arant Ertelt

# S.P.O.V.\*

\* Student Point of View

## Peaks and Valleys

*“Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind—or forgotten.”*

*(From the animated film Lilo & Stitch)*

By MICHELLE ECKLAND, CLASS OF 2011

A FEW YEARS AGO, *ohana*—for me—basically meant my mom, my dad and my brother. Since losing my mother to a rare form of cancer, *ohana* has come to mean much more.

As a child I was constantly afraid that one day I would wake up and my mom would be dead. I remember in seventh grade waking up to my brother telling me that my mom was in the hospital yet again. She had multiple diseases that led to hospital visits, surgeries, and numerous visits to doctors.

During my junior year of high school, my fear of losing my mom was intensified. In April 2006, Mom was diagnosed with stage 4 cholangiocarcinoma—a rare cancer of the bile ducts. The doctors told her that her cancer had a very poor prognosis and that she would probably live for about a year. They told her she could try chemotherapy, but that it probably wouldn't shrink the size of her tumors. My mom started chemotherapy on Sept. 11, 2006—just two weeks into my senior year of high school.

Throughout the next six months, as my

mom received chemotherapy, I watched her independence slowly diminish. First she could no longer drive. After that the cancer took away her balance, her memory, and everything that made my mom who she was. With each new development, my fear would increase.

Every morning I would wake up and make sure that she was still here in my life, alive. Before school I would go into her bedroom and give her a kiss on the cheek. She would wake up for a second, smile, say “I love you,”

and then fall right back to sleep. I wanted to make sure that if my mom died while I was gone that she would know I loved her—and that I would know I had kissed her before I left.

Throughout all of this, I was trying to live my life as a high school senior. I applied to colleges, held numerous leadership positions at my high school, and worked part time. Looking back I now recognize how

alone I felt. I didn't have any friends who had a parent with cancer; I felt like no one understood what I was going through.

In March 2007 the doctors stopped my mom's chemotherapy as it was no longer proving beneficial. But she held on long enough to see me graduate from high school,

hear my graduation speech, and celebrate my 18th birthday.

My mom's health really began to decline that summer. She slowly became more swollen and forgot how to perform daily functions. Worst of all, she had trouble remembering who I was.

On Aug. 2, 2007—the day after her 50th birthday—I rode in the ambulance as we moved her to a nursing home. As tears streamed down her face, it suddenly hit me: My mom was never going to see our house again. She was going to die in this nursing home where all the patients appeared twice her age.

At 6:48 a.m. on Aug. 8, I awoke to my father shaking me. He had just returned from my mom's nursing home—and told me that Mom had passed away 10 minutes before he'd arrived there.

At first I did not believe him. I was hurt and angry. The hospice nurses were supposed to let us know when she was supposed to pass. They'd said she had at least a few more weeks to live. I did not understand. I could not believe that I would never be able to hug my mom again or kiss her and tell her that I love her.

My mom's funeral was my first funeral. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know that the family went to the funeral home in the morning before the funeral Mass. After we said our goodbyes at the funeral home, we sat in the limo and waited for them to roll



SUSAN URMAY

my mom's casket to where it would be placed in the hearse. I watched as these men slowly transported the casket from the church to the hearse, and I thought, *My mom can't possibly be in there.*

As we walked down the church aisle with my dad in the middle—one arm around me, the other around my brother—I remember realizing, *This is it. This is my family now.* My mom was in the casket that was slowly moving in front of me. She really was never coming back.

After my mom's death, I did not know what to do with myself. I did not want to sit around and cry all day—Mom would not want me to do that. Everything I saw reminded me of her and how she was no longer here. I wanted just to curl up in a ball and hope that if I prayed hard enough that maybe she could come back.

I was told that I was supposed to grieve. I was leaving for college at Vanderbilt University in less than two weeks. I had not started my dorm shopping, and I wasn't sure I wanted to go to school for the fall semester. But one conversation kept playing back in my head.

Earlier that summer my mom had sat me down on the couch next to her. She told me that regardless of how she was doing, she wanted me to go to school on time, and that knowing I was at school getting closer to my dream would put a smile on her face. My dad always tells me that my mom passed when she did because she wanted me to go to college more than anything.

I knew what I had to do, but I did not know how I would be able to survive.

Move-in day at college amplified my loneliness and pain. While I was unpacking my things and trying to organize my room, some of the other girls in the dorm were complaining about how annoying their moms were and how they couldn't wait for their moms to leave so they could decorate their rooms the way they wanted to.

I felt so alone and had absolutely no idea how I was going to survive in this new envi-

ronment 1,100 miles away from my family back home in Massachusetts.

A few days into the semester, I became an emotional wreck, right around the one-year anniversary of when my mom started chemo. I visited the counseling center at Vanderbilt



**Michelle Eckland and her mother each had a stuffed heffalump—a character from *Winnie the Pooh*. “She used to bring hers to the hospital,” says Michelle. “She’s buried with that, and I still have mine and sleep with it every night.”**

COURTESY OF MICHELLE ECKLAND

and met with a therapist, who gave me a pamphlet about this place called Gilda's Club—a support community for people with cancer and their families and friends.

I had never heard of the organization. Honestly, I thought my therapist was a little crazy and was trying to pawn me off on someone else. If this was such a great organization, why had I never heard of it? Why was there not one in Massachusetts where there are some of the best hospitals in the country?

I followed my therapist's advice and went to a new-member meeting at Gilda's Club. At the time, Gilda's Club Nashville offered no support groups for people dealing with the loss of a parent, and I found it challenging even to get to the clubhouse. But toward the end of my first semester, as I really started to struggle with my mom's death, I learned about Gilda's Gang—a program started by a Gilda's Club member, Gail Addlestone, MD'97, who died of breast cancer in 2007. The “gang” combines volunteer fundraising with a 16-week course of fitness training, which culminates in the group's participation in the Country Music Half Marathon, held each spring in Nashville.

I thought participating in this effort would be a great way to challenge myself and to meet other people who had been affected by cancer. So, in January 2008, I joined Gilda's Gang and started training for the Country Music Half Marathon—having never run a mile in my life.

For the next 16 weeks, I would wake up at 6:15 a.m. and walk over to Gilda's Club for our 7 a.m. long runs. I remember how much I would struggle and question why in the world I was running 10 miles at 7 a.m. on a Saturday. But then I would remember my mom, how strong she was, and how hard she had fought for so long.

When I crossed the finish line, I was nearly in tears. My mom never would've believed I ran one mile, let alone 13.1 miles. I had done it all for her and to raise money for Gilda's Club, which had helped me so

much throughout that stressful year.

I decided to participate in Gilda's Gang again in 2009 to give back to this organization that was becoming a huge part of my life—and an extension of my family. I had another incredible marathon experience with the team, even though my friends still thought I was crazy for waking up at 6:15 a.m. and my roommate didn't really appreciate it.

A couple of weeks after the 2009 half-marathon, I was in the glass-painting group at Gilda's with several other Gilda's Gang participants. As we talked about how much fun we'd had during the Saturday morning runs, how we'd loved getting to know other members of the Gang, and how much fun the actual half-marathon had been, an older man who I had never met came in. His name was Mo Mantus. I learned he had been training for a half-marathon before his cancer diagnosis. He talked about how much he loved running, how he had previously completed half-marathons, and how it was his dream to do another one. He talked about how he no longer would be able to do a half-marathon on his own because he can only walk short

*continued on page 86*

# A.P.O.V.\*

\*Alumni Point of View

## How I Played the Game

*Vanderbilt gave me one heck of a solid liberal arts education—and some of it even happened in the classroom.* By CHUCK OFFENBURGER, BA'69

**M**Y VANDERBILT University education has been such a blessing to me for four decades that I've never really been able to put it into words. But I had lots of opportunities to reflect about it last October when my wife, Carla, and I attended my 40-year reunion.

It was a great weekend on campus, except for unusually cold weather. The temperature was in the upper 30s, and there was a stiff wind during the Saturday afternoon football game. The outcome of that—the Georgia Bulldogs beat our Commodores 34–10—was harsh, too. But our turnout of more than 200 classmates set a new attendance record for 40-year Reunion classes, as did the class's special Reunion fund drive of more than \$5 million.

Until about September 1964, when I was starting my senior year of high school in Shenandoah, Iowa, I knew of Vanderbilt only from the agate score lists in the sports sections of the *Des Moines Register* and *Omaha World-Herald*. I thought I'd probably go to a college or university in Iowa or Nebraska. I knew there'd have to be major financial help, as my dad had died when I was 13 and my mother provided for both me and my sister four years younger. But one morning a letter arrived in the offices of *The Evening Sentinel*

in Shenandoah where, despite my young age, I was in my fourth year as sports editor.

"Dear sports editors," the letter began, "Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., is the alma mater of the late Grantland Rice, one of the best and most famous sports writers in America in the first half of this century." It went on to say that we might know Rice from his poetry, including one poem

Sports editors were asked to look around their coverage areas for just such a high school senior, and nominate him or her for the Grantland Rice Scholarship.

So I did! I gathered up a bunch of my clippings. I solicited letters of recommendation from *Sentinel* Managing Editor R.K. Tindall, St. Mary's Catholic Church pastor Msgr. Paul Marasco, Shenandoah High School Principal Alvin Carlsen and Athletic Director George Haws, and maybe a few others. I sent it all off to Nashville, expecting nothing would come from it.

Within a couple of weeks, Vanderbilt requested my high school transcript and told me that while I had already planned to take the ACT college-qualification test, I also needed to take the SAT. In early 1965 I learned I'd been accepted as a potential student at Vanderbilt, but the results of the scholarship contest would not be announced until March or early

April. Therefore, I also sent applications to the University of Iowa and Creighton University, schools that some of my brothers and sisters attended.

Then in early spring, the letter arrived. I was not the Grantland Rice Scholarship winner, but I was runner-up. Vanderbilt was trying to broaden its student body, which up to then had been mostly from the South and



At Chuck's 40th Vanderbilt Reunion last fall, the Offenburgers (center) met up with Dr. Jay Popp, BA'69, and Carol Adzick Popp, BE'70.

called "Alumni Football," which ends with the lines: "For when the One Great Scorer comes to write against your name, He writes not whether you won or lost, but how you played the game."

The letter said that an organization had endowed a four-year, full-ride scholarship to Vanderbilt each year "for a high school senior who is a promising sports writer."



New England. When they saw “Iowa” on my application, it got their attention. They offered me a scholarship and low-interest loan that would cover more than half the \$4,000-per-year costs. It was the best financial offer I’d received—better than Creighton’s and Iowa’s—so I accepted.

I had never seen the place, other than in a couple of impressive brochures I’d received. I think I’d had two long-distance telephone conversations with administrators on campus. But I had learned about the long list of successful sports writers at national publications who’d gone to Vanderbilt, as well as other media figures, and that was good enough for me. My big brother, Tom, drove me to Nashville so I could enroll in early September 1965.

It was a beautiful, stately campus, about half the size it is today. You could see and feel Southern tradition everywhere. I’d never been any place like that before. Tom and I walked and drove the campus, looking for the Landon House freshman dormitory to which I’d been assigned. We were finally told, oh, that’s not really a dorm—it’s an old brick house on the west edge of the campus, right next to the football stadium and gym. There were 964 freshmen in the new class, too many for the beds available in the regular dorms, so Vanderbilt had quickly renovated three rickety houses for the overflow.

Landon House, in my view, looked to be a dump. I began feeling like a real outsider. There’d be 11 other freshmen living there, with a law school student as our resident adviser. The others were coming from New England, the South, California and Wisconsin. I felt even more out of it. I was one of the first arrivals. I hauled my stuff to my second-floor room, said goodbye to my brother, and started setting up my desk, manual typewriter and reference books.

Soon the door swung open, and in walked my roommate, Nicholas Rutgers Duke, BA’69, a prep-schooler from New Haven, Conn., wearing a blue blazer, button-down oxford cloth shirt, club necktie, khaki pants and penny loafers. After we talked a bit, he answered my obvious question: Yes, he was indeed related to the families that had founded Rutgers University and Duke University. I now *really* felt out of it. Why, I finally asked, had

he picked Vanderbilt?

“Well, because I am a five-string banjo player,” Duke said, “and Nashville is the country music capital of the world.” I nearly fell off my chair!

In that little flash, everything began to change



**Down on the farm: long-time *Des Moines Register* “Iowa Boy” columnist Chuck Offenburger and his wife, Carla**

for me. I quickly began to realize that Vanderbilt was full of people who might be brighter than me and who thought a whole lot differently than I did. A lot of them came from wealthy families, many had graduated from exclusive prep schools, and I was the first Iowan most of them had ever met. But when I talked to them—and I was as curious and inquisitive as a somewhat experienced sports writer might be—I quickly realized they were some of the most imaginative, talented, fun and downright peculiar people I’d ever been around.

Landon House turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to me, and through the years I’ve stayed in touch with many of the dozen other fellows who lived there with me. It was a like a mini fraternity house. In my freshman year I met the fellow who 44 years later is still my best friend, Douglas T.

Bates III, BA’69, another small-town nerd like I was. We stayed with Doug and his wife, Molly, last October in his hometown of Centerville, Tenn., where he is a country lawyer.

I was a mediocre-to-poor student most of my four years at Vanderbilt. I was a political science major and English minor, and I took as broad a range of courses as I could get—including art appreciation, Russian history, music appreciation, geology, poetry and economics.

I threw myself wholeheartedly behind the racial integration happening at Vanderbilt, including our school’s breaking of the “color line” in the Southeastern Conference my sophomore year. I attended as many curious-sounding guest lectures, concerts and theatrical productions as I could. I seldom missed home sporting events, and I followed the Commodores on the road several times for games against the big bully state schools in the SEC.

I worked for the student newspaper, *The Vanderbilt Hustler*, as well as the sports department of *The Tennessean*. I played baseball as a freshman and until I got cut as a sophomore. I co-founded a campus humor magazine. I wrote for Nashville’s city magazine. Several times I hired out as a pallbearer for funerals of indigents at the nearby Catholic Cathedral in Nashville.

Sometimes to get back and forth between Nashville and Shenandoah on my infrequent trips home, I rode passenger trains connecting Nashville and Hamburg, Iowa, with transfers in Kansas City and St. Louis. Other times I hitchhiked all 800 miles. In my last couple of years, I’d fly student stand-by, or drive my third-hand Volkswagen bug that had no radio or heater.

I’d carry Nick Duke’s banjo case for him to jam sessions at Nashville honky-tonks with many country music stars like bluegrass legends Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. I was in the audience for tapings of Johnny Cash’s TV show, and I squeezed into a Nashville studio to listen while Elvis Presley recorded “In the Ghetto.” Brother Tom, based in Atlanta, introduced me to his boss, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and other leaders of the American Civil Rights Movement. I covered the early 1968 anti-war march on the Pentagon. And that spring in Memphis, Tom’s pals took me in to stay up all

*continued on page 86*

# Alumni Association News

## The President's Corner



I've been fortunate to know and experience this great institution from many perspectives: as a student, member of staff, parent, faculty member, alumni volunteer—even as a patient. In each of these roles, I've come to understand more deeply the needs, concerns, hopes and contributions that bind the Vanderbilt community—on and off campus—in its pursuit of excellence.

During the past six years, my predecessors and fellow board members have built a new foundation for our association. Through their initiatives we've revitalized our chapters and become engaged with students in more meaningful ways. We've revamped our governance and restructured our board to create a more agile, active leadership team. And we've developed the association's first-ever strategic plan to strengthen alumni engagement.

I believe these changes will encourage and enable alumni to benefit from their continuing association with Vanderbilt and play a more active, purposeful role in the life of the university.

We have today what I believe is the strongest, most committed volunteer leadership team our association has ever assembled, including seven outstanding new directors, as well as a talented, dedicated professional staff. Our challenge now is to ensure these initiatives bear fruit—for alumni and for Vanderbilt.

As we move forward with that purpose in mind, I welcome your support and advocacy in making both our association and the university we love stronger institutions. And as I take up my duties as your president, I also welcome your thoughts, suggestions and ideas. Most of all, I ask for your engagement. Although we are Vanderbilt's largest and most diverse constituency, only through individual involvement can we make the greatest difference together.

JOHN HINDLE, BA'68, PHD'81  
President, Vanderbilt Alumni Association  
[john.hindle@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:john.hindle@vanderbilt.edu)

## VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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James Stofan  
Associate vice chancellor  
for alumni relations



**Alumni  
Association**

## Common Connections: What's Your Interest?

Let's face it. We feel most connected to Vanderbilt when we associate with alumni who share our interests—whether it's a former student activity, current career or professional interest, religious or lifestyle affiliation, or cultural passion.

Common Connections, a new Vanderbilt Alumni Association program, celebrates this collective spirit. From established groups like the Association of Vanderbilt Black Alumni, Naval ROTC and Original Cast to recent groups like Vanderbilt Catholics, men's lacrosse and former cheerleaders, these groups represent a growing trend. Once a group forms, members plan events, pursue professional networking and other continuing education opportunities, or simply stay in touch through informal gatherings, newsletters or Facebook fan pages.

"We try to stay on the pulse of how our alumni want to connect with one another," says James Stofan, associate vice chancellor for alumni relations.



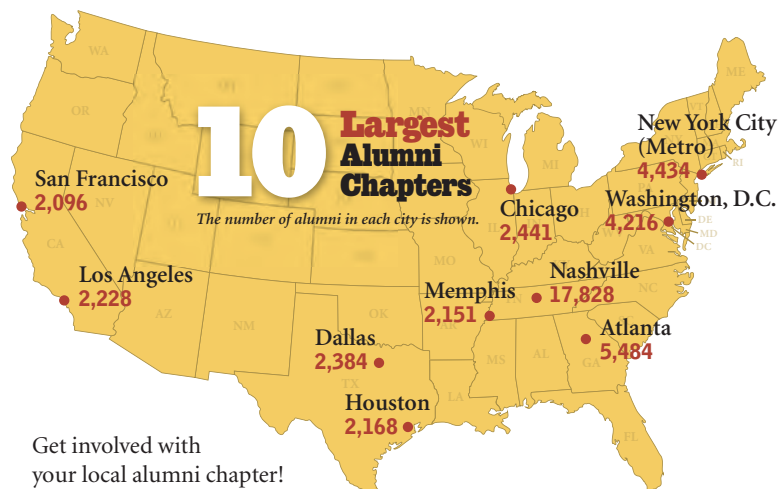
"More and more we hear from alumni who say they want to build connections based both on their time as a student and on their current shared interests."

The program has expanded into other Alumni Association outreach efforts, too. This fall, for example, the Vanderbilt Travel Program will offer niche travel adventures designed specifically for alumni with Common Connections. At Reunion in October, alumni will enjoy "Mini Reunions" centered on shared history or interests.

New Common Connections groups are forming all the time. Go to <http://snipurl.com/vu-cc> and let us know what kind of group you'd like to start.

### Find out more:

[www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/  
common-connections](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/common-connections)



Get involved with your local alumni chapter!

<http://vuconnect.com/chapters>

## New Members Added to Alumni Association Board

The Vanderbilt University Alumni Association announces seven new members on its board of directors:



**Erik Baptist**, BA'01, of Arlington, Va., is an attorney-adviser for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Office of Enforcement, Division of Investigations. He majored in American studies and sociology at Vanderbilt before earning his J.D. degree. At Vanderbilt he was involved with student government, Alternative Spring Break, Habitat for Humanity, VUcept and Zeta Beta Tau.



**Margaret Callihan**, BA'77, EMBA'04, of Longboat Key, Fla., is president of the Southwest

Florida Region of SunTrust Bank. A longtime Vanderbilt supporter, she is active in her community and serves on several nonprofit and civic boards. Her husband, Matt, BA'77, and two of their three children also attended Vanderbilt.



**Barbara Cresswell**, BA'68, of Berwyn, Pa., an English major while at Vanderbilt, has

built a career in information technology and communications services, currently managing two consulting businesses. Cresswell helped revitalize the Philadelphia Vanderbilt Chapter as its 2005–2007 president by establishing a new structure and leadership team.



**Sara Huddleston**, BA'00, MEd'01, of Raleigh, N.C., is director of human resources for Johnson Lambert & Co. LLP, a public

accounting firm. She majored in German and communication studies at Vanderbilt before earning her master's at Peabody. She is president of the NC Triangle Vanderbilt Chapter.



**Cathy Bender-Jackson**, BS'82, of Nashville was the recipient of the second full athletic scholarship for women's basketball at Vanderbilt as a student. She is now a vice president for Merrill Lynch & Co. Currently serving her third term on the Metropolitan Nashville Sports Authority Board, she has been involved in dozens of community service activities.



**Amy Lee**, BS'95, of Houston majored in psychology at Vanderbilt. She recently concluded service with her husband, Gentry Lee, BA'94, as co-president of the Houston Vanderbilt Chapter. Actively involved at St. John's School, St. John's Church, and on numerous boards in Houston, Lee is dedicated to serving her family and community.



**Michael Sheridan**, BA'84, of Nashville is executive vice president, general counsel and secretary of Ceridian Corp., an information services company specializing in the human resources, transportation and retail markets. A political science major at Vanderbilt, he was active in student government. He and his wife, Pam, have two children.



## Travel Program Expands for 2011

Explore the world *your* way with other Vanderbilt alumni on an unforgettable journey presented by the Vanderbilt Travel Program. Whether you're a seasoned Vanderbilt alumni traveler or have never taken a Vanderbilt trip before, the expanded slate of trips for 2011 offers something for everyone.

Seventeen exciting itineraries are planned to destinations including Scotland, France, Russia, Costa Rica, the Canadian Rockies, the Caribbean, Peru, Rome, New Mexico and much more. And this year, for the first time, each trip falls into one of five categories, intended to accommodate every lifestyle, educational travel interest and budget:

- **Classics** trips are quintessential Vanderbilt—global destinations with educational programming led by faculty members.
- **Common Connections** trips are niche travel adventures for alumni with shared interests.
- **Family Friendly** destinations offer exceptional guided summer vacations for Vanderbilt families and friends.
- **Closer to Home** trips are distinctive U.S. getaways.
- **Excursions** are unique journeys with an uncommon twist, like traveling by private jet or yacht.

“With all the new categories this year, there are many affordable options,” says James Stofan, associate vice chancellor for alumni relations. “It’s my hope that our most loyal travelers will be pleased with the expanded program, and that we can attract some new travelers to the mix. As always, all our trips offer educational opportunities to exceptional destinations. That is something for which Vanderbilt travel has always been known.”

For more details visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/travel](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/travel), or request additional information for your particular travel interest by going to [www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/2011-travel-request-page](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni/2011-travel-request-page). You also may call (615) 322-2929.

For personal accounts written by past and current alumni travelers during their trips, visit the Travel Program Blog at [www.vandytravelblog.blogspot.com](http://www.vandytravelblog.blogspot.com).

# The Classes

“ Donald C. Orr, BE'56, spent 25 years

as an official in the NFL, working in three Super Bowls. ”



Dr. Alexis Rodriguez, BA'05—with Dr. Liliana Belskus, another volunteer—after a successful emergency C-section.

COURTESY DR. ALEXIS

## Medicine on the Fly

Dr. Alexis Rodriguez had just earned his medical degree from the University of Illinois when he headed to the Guatemalan highlands last fall for three months' work as a volunteer physician at Hospitalito Atitlán, a small, nonprofit hospital serving an impoverished community in Sololá.

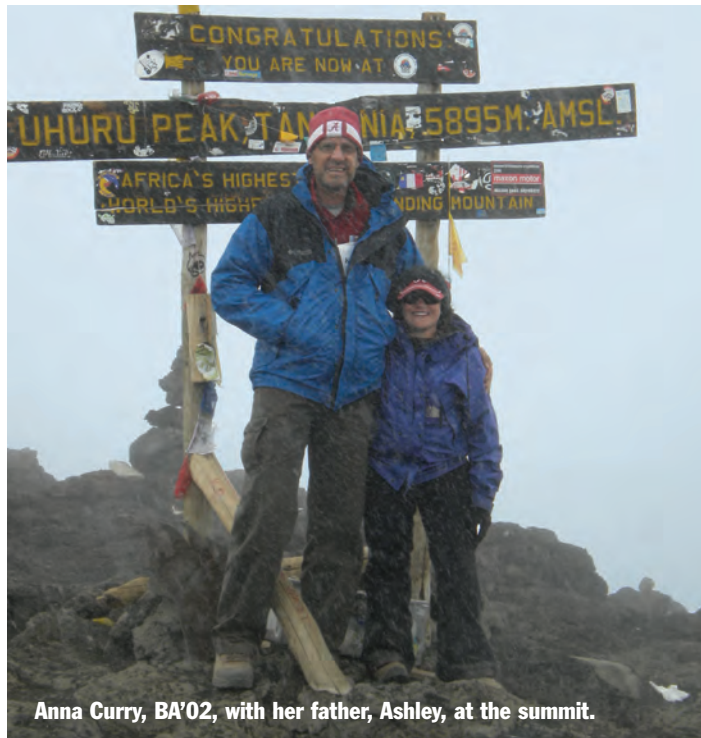
Having not even completed a residency, Rodriguez suddenly found himself staffing an emergency room by himself, reading manuals to learn how to shoot his own x-rays, and performing crash C-sections without an anesthesiologist. "The hospital was in a converted house, with a fireplace in the operating room," says Rodriguez, who just recently began a residency in emergency medicine at Hartford (Conn.) Hospital. "At night insects would fly into the O.R. and crawl around the lights."

The Sololá area was hit hard by Guatemala's civil war. Patients seen at Hospitalito Atitlán—currently in a temporary facility, as the original was destroyed by a hurricane and mudslide—are treated for such conditions as machete wounds, diabetes, malnutrition, complex obstetrical issues, and chronic pulmonary diseases caused by open cooking fires in homes.

"Probably the most gratifying part of the trip was the fact that we had good outcomes in high-risk labors under some very adverse conditions," says Rodriguez, who designed his own undergraduate major in ethics and social responsibility while at Vanderbilt. "Seeing happy, smiling parents with their babies made it worth the risk."

—Phillip B. Tucker

“ Annemarie Iverson, BA'83, is senior vice president of creative



Anna Curry, BA'02, with her father, Ashley, at the summit.

COURTESY ANNA CURRY

## The Climb of Her Life

In January 2007, Anna Curry stunned friends and family when she announced her intentions to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's highest freestanding mountain.

Curry has osteogenesis imperfecta, or brittle bone disease, a genetic disorder characterized by fragile bones. She estimates that she has broken around 200 bones in her lifetime, and has endured surgeries too numerous to count. Her small, 4-foot-5 stature is a condition of the disease.

Having used crutches most of her life, she had reached a point of walking independently until two major surgeries in 2006 set her back, and she was wheelchair-bound. "I set this climb as a goal to help get me through physical therapy and start walking independently again," says Curry, a labor and employment law attorney in Birmingham, Ala. She also used the climb to raise awareness about the disease and money for the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation, for which she serves on its national board.

After nearly three years of recovery and training, Curry—joined by her father, Ashley, and her friend Dr. David Arehart, BS'91—departed Birmingham for Africa on Sept. 23, 2009. *The Birmingham News* reported on the event, and family members posted daily blog updates. On Oct. 4—one day earlier than expected—they safely reached the mountain's summit.

"The way I see it," she says, "I have a limited window of independent mobility, so I wanted to do something extraordinary while I could." Read more at <http://snipurl.com/vu-climb>.

—Phillip B. Tucker

“Margaret Elaine Johnson, BS'97, MSN'06, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner



Leslie Lava, BA'78, on the court with her doubles partner, a San Quentin State Prison inmate.

COURTESY LT. SAMUEL ROBINSON, SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON

## Conviction on the Court

San Quentin State Prison, California's oldest penitentiary, is home to 5,400 prisoners, including the nation's largest population of male death-row inmates. It also has a heck of a tennis team.

Every other Saturday morning, Leslie Lava, a municipal bond attorney with her own practice in nearby Sausalito, plays doubles matches with inmates as part of San Quentin's extensive recreation program. She is one of 20 individuals—and the only woman—authorized by the Department of Corrections to bring in volunteers from the outside to participate in the program, which is geared toward social rehabilitation.

About 20 inmates—an elite group of lifers or “three strikers” who have demonstrated trustworthy behavior—make up the prison's Inside Tennis Team. They play on a donated court, surrounded by an inmate-constructed fence, in the center of the recreation yard. Lava volunteers to help improve her game.

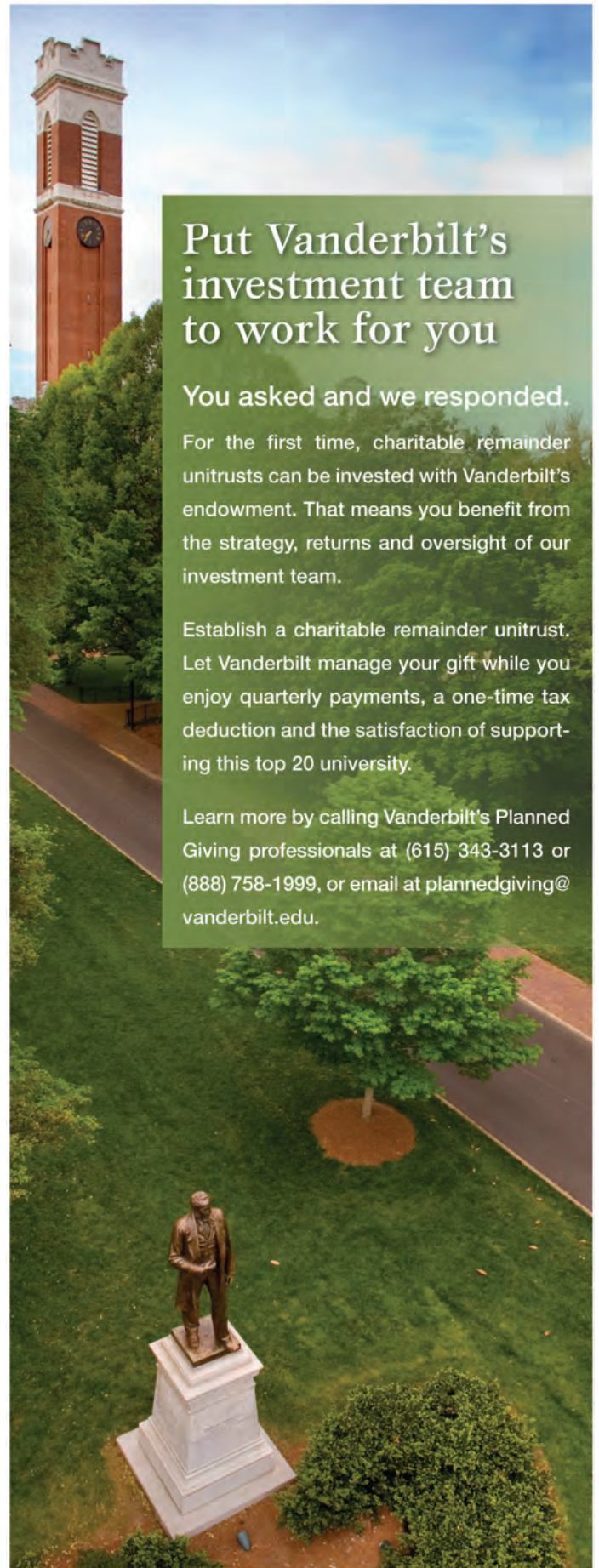
“Participation in this program is viewed by the inmates as a very special privilege, and these guys are really good players,” says Lava. “By the end of our three hours of playing, the yard is full of thousands of guys, so it's a great way to learn concentration. And even though I am typically the only female on that yard, and the matches are being observed by armed guards from gun towers, I feel absolutely safe.

“The guys are so very nice and respectful, and appreciative of the chance to interact with the community.”

—Phillip B. Tucker



*working with wounded warriors.* ”



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“ Logan Del Vecchio, BS'09, has been assigned to an oil-drilling platform in

*the South China Sea.* ”









**S.P.O.V.** continued from page 69

loved running, how he had previously completed half-marathons, and how it was his dream to do another one. He talked about how he no longer would be able to do a half-marathon on his own because he can only walk short distances.

Immediately I volunteered to push him in a wheelchair for the half-marathon, and one of the staff members agreed it could happen. Why I agreed to push a man twice my size in a wheelchair 13.1 miles is beyond me, but I guess it is kind of representative of my personality.

I spent the next few months working on finding a wheelchair and organizing a team to help me push Mo. We trained with the “gang” on Saturday mornings, and I developed a greater awareness of all the hills in Nashville. Mo made a little notecard indicating the pace we needed to maintain in order to finish in four hours. We told Mo we would get him across the finish line—but we were not promising to finish it in four hours.

April 24, 2010, is a day I will remember for the rest of my life. We were fearful about the weather throughout the race. Thunder and lightning held off until mile 11, at which point we were determined to finish. No way were we going to stop, even if we were pushing a metal wheelchair in a thunderstorm.

The rain held off just long enough for us to finish the race. Mo pushed his wheelchair across the finish line at 3:38:59. Literally, a minute after we crossed the finish line, it started



**“Why I, a college student, agreed to push a man twice my size in a wheelchair 13.1 miles is beyond me, but I guess it is kind of representative of my personality,” says Michelle Eckland. For a larger photo of “Team Mo” helping cancer survivor Mo Mantus reach the finish line, turn to page 2.**

to downpour.

On that day we helped make a man’s dream come true.

Gilda’s Club Nashville has provided me with more love and support than I ever thought possible. The members and staff have truly become my family. I know that anytime I need a hug, I can walk through the club’s signature red doors, and there will be at least 10 members with open arms ready to hug me.

Many of the women there remind me of my mom through their personalities, laughter and gentleness. There is now a “young adults grieving the loss of a parent” group, and during the past year and a half, I have grown close to the girls in my group. Twice a month I am able to talk about what it’s like to lose a parent to a group of people who completely understand.

That quote from *Lilo & Stitch* really res-

onates for me, now more than ever. Gilda’s has become my family, and therefore Mo has become part of my family.

So many things in life are out of my control. But helping Mo complete this race was one thing I could do to ensure that a new member of my “family” didn’t get left behind ... and that my mom will never be forgotten. ▼

*Michelle Eckland is a child development major at Peabody College. She has received both the Mina Lanham Latimer Scholarship and the Jere Pinson Phillips Honor Scholarship at Vanderbilt. This essay was originally published in the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center magazine, Momentum.*

**A.P.O.V.** continued from page 71

Civil Rights Movement. I covered the early 1968 anti-war march on the Pentagon. And that spring in Memphis, Tom’s pals took me in to stay up all night with them in King’s room at the Lorraine Motel after their leader had been assassinated on the walkway outside the room door. I covered riots in Nashville and demonstrations on our campus and others. I never missed the appearances of any U.S. presidential candidate who came through Nashville.

I wound up being editor of the student newspaper for a semester—a rather radical editor, befitting the crazy times in the late 1960s. Because I was out of money, I lived in my editor’s office in Alumni Hall. But then

I was removed as editor after I quit going to classes that fall and rang up a 0.0 grade point. Newspapering had been more fun and more important, according to my 21-year-old reasoning. The kindly dean of men persuaded me I’d made a major mistake, reinstated me as a student, and gave me a dorm room and a cafeteria meal ticket good for that spring. “We’ve decided you’re good for Vanderbilt,” he explained to me.

He may have saved my life and career. That spring I redeemed myself as a student and became the journalism comeback player of the season. Doug Bates and I decided to cover Vanderbilt baseball like it had never been covered before, and through our enthusiastic, colorful stories, we turned home

games into major campus events. Ever a sports writer at heart, I guess.

Much about my college experience of long ago wouldn’t happen today. But for current high school students, I hope it demonstrates that even if you’re a poor kid from a small town in the Midwest, if you jump on opportunities when they pop up in front of you, if you throw yourself into sometimes uncomfortable challenges, if you make yourself become curious about everything, if you seek out and get to know people who are different than you are, and even if you go to a college a long way from home—well, 40 years from now, you’ll probably be heading off to a reunion at a place you’ll love as much as I love Vanderbilt. ▼



**Southern Journal** *continued from page 88*  
grass blades,” says Shipp, “it’ll do some damage, but the grass will snap back. But if it gets in the sediment and kills the roots, then it will be years.”

There is also the deep-water counterpart to the marsh. Some 20 miles or more offshore, vast beds of sargassum, or floating seaweed, serve as a nursery for the eggs and juveniles of more than a hundred species of fish. With the oil slick already lapping at the marsh and drifting inexorably toward the seaweed, the potential for long-term damage is vast—made worse, many say, by BP’s massive use of dispersants.

Immediately after the April explosion that killed 11 workers and unleashed a gusher at 5,000 feet, the company began to spray Corexit, a toxic chemical that breaks up the oil and causes it to sink. In early May, Shipp and fellow scientist George Crozier, director of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, met with BP officials to argue against the use of the dispersant. The meeting did not go well. The BP scientists, as Shipp later told the *Mobile Press-Register*, didn’t want to hear about the dangers of sunken oil or the long-term threat to the Gulf’s food chain. “When we started talking about the sediments and the food web,” Shipp said, “they just turned off.”

With such stories making their rounds on the coast, there is, as I sit down to write, a palpable intermingling of anger and despair. In Louisiana, where the damage so far has been the worst, people often struggle to put it into words. “You can’t sleep no more, that’s how bad it is,” John Blanchard, an oyster fisherman, told Bob Herbert of *The New York Times*. “My wife and I have got two kids, 2 and 7. We could lose everything we’ve been working all of our lives for.”

What Blanchard and others find hard to explain is that they have been part of an ancient bargain, dating back as long as people can remember. Avery Bates, an oysterman in Bayou La Batre, who saw his community devastated by Katrina, then slowly rebuild, was sustained like many of his neighbors, he says, by the fundamental logic of what he was doing. As Bates understood it, the bounty of the sea was always there, offering a good and honorable living, with rewards that were roughly equal to your work.

“You’re part of a heritage going back for generations,” says Bates. “You sweat hard, but you know why you do it. You’re feeding your family and the people around you. You know you’re a part of something worthwhile.”

But now many people on the Gulf Coast believe something fundamental has been lost. They know the story of Prince William Sound—how the oil that spilled from the *Exxon Valdez* killed off whole populations of herring, and how, more than 20 years later, thousands of gallons can still be found in the coastal sediments of Alaska. And today on the Gulf, even the old-timers who are used to the struggle—the summer hurricanes, the seasons when the harvests are thinner than normal—say they don’t know what will happen next.

“This whole thing could shut us down,” says Billy Parks, who runs a seafood shop in Bon Secour, Ala. “I’ve been here for 35 years selling seafood fresh out of the Bay and Gulf. My grandfather did it before me and then my dad. I could get frozen, imported seafood and sell it, but that’s not what I do. They’re out there trying to make billions of dollars a year, and they put us all at risk. I’m praying and trusting God to take care of us, and I believe he will. I put it in his hands. If it puts us out of business, I’ll do something. I don’t know what, but something.”

For Parks and many others, that’s all that seems to be left at the moment: some hybrid of fatalism and faith, as the poisonous scar of BP oil spreads slowly, inevitably across the Gulf. ▼

*Frye Gaillard, BA’68, is writer-in-residence at the University of South Alabama. He lives on Mon Louis Island just south of Mobile.*

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# Southern Journal

Reflections on the South

## In the Path of the Oil

*On the edge of the continent, an ancient bargain is unraveling before our eyes, and even the old-timers don't know what comes next.*

By FRYE GAILLARD, BA'68

**I**N THE LITTLE FISHING VILLAGE OF Bayou La Batre, Ala., maybe 10 miles from where I now live, the old-timers like to tell stories about the storms. These are mostly unembellished tales, some of them handed down for generations, about hurricanes roaring in from the Gulf. Nancy McCall, a veteran community activist in the Bayou, remembers growing up in a Baptist church where the minister, Will Prichard, would preach sometimes about a vision that came when he was still young.

It was just before the storm of 1906, and God appeared to Prichard in a dream, telling him he needed to move from his home. The preacher obeyed, and when the winds came ashore a few weeks later, the tidal surge from the deadly hurricane swept away the house where he had lived. The worst part was that others didn't get the warning, and the image that stayed with Prichard through the years was of mothers and babies in the tops of pine trees. Some were alive, clinging to the limbs that saved them from the flood, while others had drowned, their bodies wedged between the branches by the water.

"He would cry, even in the pulpit, when he told that story," says Nancy McCall. "He could never get that picture from his mind."

Such stories are a staple all across the Gulf Coast, a place where residents freely acknowledge that life on the edge of the continent is hard. But there's a different feeling in the air these days. The old salts will tell you that the hurricanes come and the hurricanes go, requiring resilience of those who survive. Now, however, there's the BP oil spill, by far



**A shrimp boat returns to harbor in Bayou La Batre, Ala., where family businesses were still struggling to rebound from Hurricane Katrina before the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster.**

the worst in U.S. history, and for all of us living here on the water, there is a fear of devastation that could last for decades.

"It's like a monster that's out there," says Bayou La Batre Mayor Stan Wright.

For some of us, the stakes are first of all aesthetic. We love the pelicans and the great blue herons, the cypress trees and the white sand beaches, and that haunting, subtle beauty of the marsh. Now, suddenly, the images of oil-soaked birds and deep red stains in the sawgrass savannah are themselves enough to break people's hearts. But the damage, of course, goes deeper than that. Bob Shipp, a marine biologist at the University of South Alabama where I teach, has spent his career

studying both the ecosystem and the coastal way of life it supports. He knows the shrimpers and charter boat captains, the oystermen and blue-collar families in the seafood shops, and as the oil slick spreads across the northern Gulf, he is not optimistic about their future.

There is, most immediately, the killing of the animals—the fish and shrimp, oysters and crabs—that remain at the heart of the coastal way of life. Almost certainly, there are bad times ahead. But the deeper worry for Shipp and other scientists has to do with the habitat, the estuaries and coastal marshes where 80 percent of the marine species spend at least part of their lives. "If the oil coats the sea-

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