New initiative seeks to diversify faculty

By Deborah Parker

From his office in Goldfarb Hall, Larry Davis, Ph.D., professor of social work, lauded the newly established Committee to Enhance Minority Faculty Recruiting Activities as a "noble, sincere effort.

Davis, a member of the committee, was talking with another black colleague in his office at the time — and that's when it occurred to him: "Twelve percent of the black faculty is sitting in my office right now," he said with a laugh.

Seventeen of the 536 tenured and tenure-track faculty members on the Hilltop Campus are African American. Other minorities include eight Hispanic, one American Indian and 44 Asian faculty members.

The committee, established by Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton, held its first meeting Nov. 16 and outlined a number of initiatives aimed at enhancing the faculty by strengthening its diversity.

Gerhild Williams, Ph.D., associate vice chancellor and special assistant for academic affairs, is chairing the committee. In addition to Williams and Davis, members are: Stephanie Baker, president of the African and Black Students (ABS); Gerald L. Early, Ph.D., professor of English and director of the African and Afro-American Studies program; Kenneth L. Goldfarb, M.D., associate professor of computer science; and S. Mark Heim, Ph.D. (See Minorities, page 2)

Weil new Lee Professor for arts collaboration

By Liam Utten

Mark S. Weil, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Art History and Archaeology in Arts and Sciences, has been named the first E. Desmond Lee Professor for Collaboration of the Arts. A formal installation ceremony will take place during the spring semester.

The professorship, which was established in May 1998 by a generous gift from philanthropist E. Desmond Lee, is designed to foster a stronger relationship among Washington University and other St. Louis arts institutions, notably the Saint Louis Art Museum.

"It is wonderful to have Mark as the first Des Lee Professor," said Edward S. MacLay, Ph.D., executive vice chancellor and dean of Arts and Sciences. "Mark has close ties to the Saint Louis Art Museum and to the community, as well as being a Washington University alumnus and active faculty member. I can't think of a better person to foster collaboration of the arts in St. Louis. I look forward to exciting developments in this area under Mark's leadership in the years to come."

Joe Deal, dean of the School of Art and director of the Visual Arts and Design Center, spoke enthusiastically of the appointment. "Both Mark Weil and Des Lee are deeply committed to the arts community of St. Louis," he said. "As the Des Lee Professor, Mark will be a wonderful ambassador for the University and for the Visual Arts and Design Center as we seek to forge stronger links with the Saint Louis Art Museum and other regional arts organizations."

Weil teaches courses in a variety of art historical fields, including Renaissance architecture, northern Baroque art, Rembrandt van Rijn and 16th- through 17th-century art theory. His scholarship falls into four primary areas — Italian Baroque sculpture, 16th- and 17th-century garden and stage design, the marvelous and connoisseurship — and has culminated in a book, "The History and Decoration of the Ponte S. Angelo" (1974), as well as numerous articles and exhibitions.

Weil helped organize the 1991 exhibition "The Age of the Marvelous" at Dartmouth College and, in 1983, the exhibition "Baroque Theatre and Stage Design" for the Gallery of Art here. He is working with the Harvard University Art Museums to study their collection of 17th-century Baroque art.

Striking gift from modest earnings

Alumna lived frugally, invested in savings bonds

By Gary Evinger

She spent a lifetime living frugally and investing her modest earnings in savings bonds. She befriended children, the aged and the disabled. She championed the cause of aid recipients who had lost their benefits. She had profound convictions about the importance of education. And even in death she proved the aptness of her name.

Elizabeth Toogood was born in 1909 and grew up on a family farm near Chanute, Kan. She completed a master's degree in social work at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work in 1947 and spent the next 27 years working in public welfare agencies in southeast Kansas, living simply and saving her money.

Before her death in 1997, Toogood set aside $500,000 of those savings to establish a scholarship endowment at the social work school. At her request, the annual Toogood scholarships will be awarded to students interested in carrying on her commitment to public welfare.

"Elizabeth was a small, wiry woman with a real sense of humor," said Velma Butler, Toogood's co-worker in social services for nearly two decades. "She liked to have fun, but she was all business at work."

Toogood was chief of social services for a state agency that administered various public welfare programs, including child protective services and the delivery of social services to the aged, blind and disabled.

"Her position carried a lot of responsibility and she always looked out for the people that she was responsible for," Butler said.

For many years, Toogood served on a committee on which her role was to represent the interest of welfare recipients who had lost their benefits for one reason or another.

"She really lobbied for people who had lost their benefits," Butler said. "If it was within the See Toogood, page 6
An ABS report citing the lack of American studies and of English.

New panel to expand diversity among the campus community. Dean of Arts and Sciences Rebecka Thach, M.D., professor of pediatrics and neuroscience at Washington University School of Medicine, said the lack of minority studies and of American and African-American literature is something that needs to be addressed.

The committee also plans to form a students' advisory committee for minority faculty members on campus.

Jai2@cec.wustl.edu or call the Payroll Office, campus Box 1080 for the Office of Shared Payroll.

Davis said the lack of minority faculty here makes it more difficult to recruit additional faculty, but he believes this program could have a tremendous impact on the diversity of the faculty and the student body.

For more information, call 454-6525.

Check those checks

In January, W-2 tax forms will be mailed directly to employees' home addresses, so it's essential for the Office of Shared Payroll Services to check the correctness of the information for faculty and staff.

An answer is correct, but the payroll representative will make an online correction to the W-2 form sent to the employee. If an error is found, the employee will be notified via email.

Answer: This stonework arches over a now-unused entrance on the south side of East Hall.

News Briefs

Campus quiz: This archway adorns which Hilltop building? (Clue: The phrase is incomplete; answer, nor does the arch crown an entrance. See below.)

SIDS study

The students of Washington University Army ROTC, are holding a series of events to promote diversity and provide toys and gifts for more than 200 children.

Making a difference

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Visitors program bringing minority scholars to campus

Visitors program bringing minority scholars to campus

By Gerry Ehrlich

Teaching courses, leading discussions and interacting with students will be high on the agenda for four nationally known minority scholars visiting the University next semester as part of a new program aimed at increasing campus diversity.

The Chancellor's Distinguished Minority Visitors Program, an initiative designed to support future recruitment and retention of minority faculty and students at the University, will begin next semester. Scheduled visitors are:

• King Davis, a professor of American and African-American literature at the University of Virginia, will join the campus community as chair of the minority faculty recruitment committee and will be part of an ongoing initiative bringing leading minority scholars to campus to help build and nurture leaders.

• Gerhild Williams, Ph.D., associate chancellor and special assistant for academic affairs, is directing the visiting scholars program as chair of the University's Committee to Enhance Faculty Minority Recruitment Activities, an advisory group formed to explore concerns about campus diversity.

The committee was sparked by an ABS report citing the lack of minority faculty members on campus.

Although the University's ultimate objective is to increase the number of resident minority faculty and students, the visitors program is viewed as an important intermediate step in creating greater diversity here.

We see the visitors program as one way to help our campus become more familiar with us," Williams said. "We want them to get to know us and, maybe in the future, to consider the University as a place they or their colleagues and students might like to join."

Still being formed, the visitors are likely to give lectures and lead workshops on issues related to their areas of expertise. Manning is expected to make his first visit to campus Jan. 18-20. Launched by Chancellor Mark N. Wrighton in October, the minority visitors program will be part of an ongoing initiative bringing leading minority scholars to campus to help build and nurture leaders.
**Saulo Klahr receives national award**

Saulo Klahr, M.D., the John E. and Adaline Simon Professor of Biochemistry of Sodium Transport, received the 1998 Christopher Reeve Research Medal from the American Paralysis Association (ASN). Klahr also serves as associate dean for clinical affairs, University of California-Irvine College of Medicine. The medal is named for actor David N. Menton, Ph.D., Robert H. and Adaline Simon Professor of Biochemistry of Sodium Transport, who previously had been chairman of the ASN Research Committee. Klahr's other honors include the 1992 Wakeman Award, the 1994 Decade of the Brain Award from the National Foundation for Brain Research and the Ho Am Prize — Korea's most prestigious scientific honor. He is president-elect of the Society for Neuroscience.

**Spinal cord injury**

**By Linda Sage**

Dennis W. Chen, M.D., D.Phil., the Andrew B. and Virginia J. Alexander Professor and head of the Department of Neurosurgery, received the 1998 Christopher Reeve Research Medal from the American Paralysis Association in New York City. The medal is named for actor Christopher Reeve, who presented it to Choi with a $50,000 prize.

"There is an urgent need to build up our understanding of the factors so that effective treatments can be found for this and other neurological diseases," said Dr. Brian A. Conti, director of Champions for Spinal Cord Injury, said at the ceremony honoring outstanding spinal cord injury research.

The fifth tactic is developing ambulatory care satellites in key geographic areas. According to Dr. Chavez, the FPP's second goal of focusing on outpatient care is critical to the future of the medical school's clinical practice plan. The fifth tactic is developing ambulatory care satellites in key geographic areas.

**Cutting costs through ambulatory care.** More recently, Klahr has used the tools of molecular biology to study the regulation of chemical transporters and channels that control sodium and potassium. He determined the biochemistry of sodium transport and its related programs. The joint office also develops service-line planning and has a reporting relationship to both the medical school and Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

**Practice Plan**

Leadership retreat addresses newly developed tactics

A **n** update on the Faculty Practice Plan (FPP) was presented to School of Medicine clinical leaders Nov. 14 at a retreat at the Eric.html

The FPP is designed to enhance the medical school's clinical operations so the school can compete more effectively in a rapidly changing and cost-conscious health care environment.

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Good music is where you find it and, Friday, Dec. 11, you’ll find it at Edison Theatre, where multi-award winning saxophonist Don Byron brings one of the foremost jazz composers working today will bring his Mini Big Band to town for a one-night-only performance of eclectic and entirely original creations.

The performance, a St. Louis premiere, begins at 8 p.m.

For more than a decade, Byron has made a career out of re-examining music often considered “square” by the jazz mainstream. His wide-ranging repertoire includes jazz standards, classical original compositions and covers such unexpected sources as the ‘50s Merimack Cookie Crumb Band, which he wrote music based on a tradition of Jewish folk tunes, and swing bandleader Benny Goodman, whose antics were often used as background music for Warner Bros. cartoons.

With “Bug Music” — also the title of his most recent album — Byron takes on the groundbreaking work of big band-arrangers Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn and others. Byron brings a genuine respect for his musical predecessors with a dedication to cutting-edge forms and ideas, Byron’s fiery playing style to classical and represents the way these seemingly disparate styles have to say to one another.

Byron grew up in a musical family. He’s the son of an actor and his father played bass in calypso bands — and from an early age he was exposed to everything from symphonies and ballet to Dusty Gilliom’s bebop and Miles Davis’ avant-garde explorations. He studied classical clarinet as a younger and, during high school, played in and arranged for a series of salas bands. He formalized his jazz training at Juilliard’s Music Conservatory of Music while spending his evenings with the Klezmer Conservatory Band and jazz clubs, on and off campus.

In recent years, Byron has garnered an internationallio to use that authoritative pose because the vocabulary and syntax can browbeat you into belief no matter how minute these ideas take the stage; to perpetrate crazy or impossible forms of reasoning.

"Part of what's interesting about publishing a book is watching people try to puzzle out things that you remember as just being glibly "added," I'll remember, writing some parts where I was just cracking myself up," explained Writer Robert Coover, a member of the Writers Center Advisory Committee and author of "One of a kind stand-up phenom, a comic writer of power and originality and creativity and-added: "The Age of Wire and Steel" marked the arrival of a unique new talent in American letters."

Byron grew in Chicago in 1967, and made up to 1975 in New York and Texas. He received an undergraduate degree in music at New York University and a master of fine arts degree from Brown University, where he now teaches creative writing. His work has been translated into French and German. "Bug Music" marks Byron's first book, and the first of a five-year project that Byron hopes to complete with his press, the literary journal Impossible Object.

Don Byron brings "Bug Music" to Edison Theatre

Don Byron has a bad reputation for being a stubborn and difficult musician, feared his jazz training at Juilliard's Music Conservatory of Music while spending his evenings with the Klezmer Conservatory Band and jazz clubs, on and off campus.

In recent years, Byron has garnered an international following as a composer and performer. He's the son of an actor and his father played bass in calypso bands — and from an early age he was exposed to everything from symphonies and ballet to Dusty Gilliom's bebop and Miles Davis' avant-garde explorations. He studied classical clarinet as a younger and, during high school, played in and arranged for a series of salas bands. He formalized his jazz training at Juilliard's Music Conservatory of Music while spending his evenings with the Klezmer Conservatory Band and jazz clubs, on and off campus.

In recent years, Byron has garnered an international reputation for his work with the Klezmer Conservatory Band and the Jazz Artist of the Year honors in 1995. He is also widely recognized as a leader in the world of contemporary music. His performances have been described as "inspiring" and "groundbreaking," and his compositions have been praised for their "innovative" and "eclectic" style.

With "Bug Music," Byron brings his signature style to a new album that features his take on traditional Jewish folk tunes, as well as compositions inspired by Latin ensembles. The album is recorded with the Klezmer Conservatory Band and has received critical acclaim for its "eclectic" and "groundbreaking" sound.

Don Byron brings "Bug Music" to Edison Theatre on Dec. 11, at 8 p.m., and the performance will be repeated on Dec. 12, at 8 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 935-6543.
Making music
Four choral groups present holiday concerts Dec. 5-10

Friday, Dec. 11
6:45 a.m. Office of Continuing Medical Education: "Contemporary Women's Health Issues." Eric P. Newman, Education Center. CME credit available; you must and students also may obtain free of charge to register; call 362-6891.

Saturday, Dec. 12
6:45 a.m. Office of Continuing Medical Education: "Contemporary Management of Acute Gastrointestinal Symptoms." Eric P. Newman, Education Center. CME credit available; you must and students also may obtain free of charge to register; call 362-6891.

Saturday, Dec. 12
9 a.m. Fine Arts Institute workshop: "Fireworks." John Back, Cost: $40. Room 212 Bixby Hall; 935-4643.

10:30 a.m. Fine Arts Institute workshop: "Portraiture." Jim Smith, Cost: $40. Room 212 Bixby Hall; 935-4643.

Sports
Thursday, Dec. 10
7:30 p.m. Men’s basketball team at Illinois College. Field House; 935-3207.

Saturday, Dec. 12
2 p.m. Women’s basketball team vs. Maryville U. Field House; 935-3207.

Indian life
Carol Diaz-Granados, Ph.D., adjunct assistant professor of anthropology, announced that four graduate students in anthropology in Arts and Sciences, along with Jim Duncan, guest lecturer, and 15 freshmen enjoy a fire, stories and a snack of dried meat and parched corn Nov. 13 inside a 16-foot tall. Plains Indian tipi in front of the Women’s Building. The students, most of them in the Hewlett Program, are learning about the North American Indians and their encounters with the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Other concerts include:
Monday, Dec. 7 — The University’s Black Composers Repertory Chorus will present a concert at 8 p.m. in Graham Chapel. David DeMaine, director in the music department, directs the program, which includes works by composers Leonard Bernstein, Mark Henderson, Donald Bryantamlet and Randall Thompson. The work of junior David Rentz will also be on the program.

Thursday, Dec. 10 — The Chamber Choir of Washington University performs its annual "Winter Concert" in Graham Chapel. John Stewart, director of vocal activities in the music department, conducts the program, which includes works by composers Leonard Bernstein, Mark Henderson, Donald Bryantamlet and Randall Thompson. The work of junior David Rentz will also be on the program.

Monday, Dec. 7 — The University’s Black Composers Repertory Chorus will present a concert at 8 p.m. in Graham Chapel. David DeMaine, director in the music department, directs the program, which includes works by Brian McKnight’s "The Sounds of Blackness."

Thursday, Dec. 8 — The University’s Vocal Jazz Ensemble will perform at 8 p.m. in Steinberg Auditorium. Christine Hilt, director in the music department, directs the program, which includes the music of Dave Grusin, George Gershwin and Duke Ellington.

Thursday, Dec. 10 — The Washington University Chorus will perform at 8 p.m. in Graham Chapel. Eric Anthony, choral director in the music department, directs the program, which includes works by George Frederic Handel and Ludwig van Beethoven. All four performances are free and open to the public. For more information, call 935-4894.

Sports Section

Women’s basketball wins tournament
The University’s second-ranked Women’s basketball team won its second tournament of the year in many ways with victories over Illinois College, 79-35, and Austin College (Texas), 87-80, at the 10th annual Washington University Invitational. The Bears opened the tournament with an easy win over Illinois College Friday, Nov. 27. WU led 48-16 at halftime and cruised to the win. Sophomore Ali Fischer led all players with 18 points and seven rebounds. Austin College took a 41-38 halftime lead but WU scored 35 points in the second half en route to a 73-59 victory. The Bears’ run of nine straight quarterfinal victories and marked the final match for 14-year coach Teri Clemens, who announced earlier this year she would step down from her position at the conclusion of the season due to health problems, finished her career with a 529-77 record and seven national championships. Her .873 career winning percentage is tops all-time in all of college volleyball. Both teams started game one even before WU rallied from a 7-4 deficit to take a 12-7 lead. The Eagles came back to take a brief 13-12 lead before the Bears tied it. Juniau put away the next two points to take an early 1-0 lead. The Bears rebounded well, taking games two and three easily. After Juniau tied the match with a 15-2 win in game four, it went to a deciding fifth game. Juniau took an early four-point lead and WU never caught up. Senior middle blocker Jennifer Martz led the way for WU with 19 kills and a .432 hitting percentage.

Two hurlers earn all-America honors
Four WU runners competed at the NCAA Division III Cross Country Championships Saturday at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa. Senior Emily Richards finished eighth in a field of 183 runners to earn NCAA All-America honors and Cross Country Coaches Association (CCCA) All-America honors for the second consecutive season. She completed the 6,000meter course in 18 minutes, 17.66 seconds. Juniau Tim finished fourth in the field of 181 runners, covering the 8,000-meter course in 25:35.77. He also earned CCCA All-America honors.

Compiled by Kevin Bergquist, director, sports information, and Keith Jenkins, asst. director, sports information.
Toogood
Benefactress lived simply and gave generously — from page 1

regulations to provide assistance, she would do everything in her power to make sure that these people would receive some help." Although Toogood was known as a "very private person" who seldom talked about herself, she made it clear that she put the George Warren Brown School of Social Work in its efforts to increase scholarship support for its students, now a central objective of the school's $250 million dollar fund-raising campaign and part of the Campaign for Washington University. "A school ultimately is only as good as its students," said Dean Shantl K. Khinduka, Ph.D., visit with Velma Butler, Elizabeth Toogood's co-worker and friend, and gave generously against the building's front door on the South Campus. It is working on a project that relates to the generations of students who have ever received," Khinduka said. "In fact, it is best to begin now to deal with all potential complications; otherwise, the problem can be minimized simply by resetting the system date on each one and weigh it against its potential Y2K problem potential. "A data recorder that loses valuable data might be difficult to identify," Fritz said. Any devices that require entering the date with a two-digit year can pose problems. Fritz suggested people "as a matter of fact that the newest models of computer hardware and software might be difficult to identify," Fritz said. "Any devices that require..."

Campus Watch
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Campus Watch

The following incidents were reported to University Police from Nov. 10-18. Readers with information that could assist in investigating these incidents are urged to call 938-5050. This release is provided as a public service to promote safety awareness and is available at the University Police Website at wwwpol.wustl.edu.

Nov. 18
8:42 a.m. — A contractor reported the theft of $2,200 worth of power tools from a locked utility van on the South 40 construction site. 1:19 p.m. — A Bon Appetit employee reported the theft of a power drill from the closed closet location in the Upper Campus. The estimate of loss was set at $900, from a Wohl Center office.

Nov. 20
1:01 p.m. — A contractor reported the theft of a power saw and nail gun from a locked pickup truck. The loss was set at $95.

Nov. 26
3:45 a.m. — University Police, responding to a false alarm at the former president of Lee-Rowan John M. Olin School of Business, is a fellow of the University in 1961 and master's degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, and also received an honorary degree from the University in 1985. He served as chair of the art history and archaeology department between 1982 and 1988 and was appointed to the position again in 1995. In August 1998 he be became acting director of the University's Gallery of Arts. He sits on numerous University committees as well as several community boards and commissions.

The E. Desmond Lee Professorship for Collaboration of the Arts is one of several major gifts Lee has made to the University. In April 1997, he endowed the E. Desmond Lee Professorship for Community Collaboration as part of the Centennial scholarship fund. Earlier this year he endowed the E. Desmond Lee Chair in Residency. ...Lee, a 1940 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, had a long career in the arts, including "Master Drawings From St. Louis Collections," which debuted at the Saint Louis Art Museum in 1990. Weil has pursued his interest in art history and archaeology department between 1982 and 1988 and was appointed to the position again in 1995. In August 1998 he became acting director of the University's Gallery of Arts. He sits on numerous University committees as well as several community boards and commissions.

Y2K problem potential pervasive, experts say

Sparking creativity
Sophomore architecture students Nathaniel Dewart (left), Suzanne Blair (center) and Matthew Weil are working on a project that relates to the generations of students who have ever received," Khinduka said. "In fact, it is best to begin now to deal with all potential complications; otherwise, the problem can be minimized simply by resetting the system date on each one and weigh it against its potential Y2K problem potential. "A data recorder that loses valuable data might be difficult to identify," Fritz said. Any devices that require..."

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Philip H. DuBois, professor emeritus of psychology

Philip Hunter DuBois, Ph.D., professor emeritus of psychology in Arts and Sciences, died Nov. 28 from complications from a brief illness. He was 95.

DuBois, a resident of Clayton for over 50 years, moved to California in 1996, joined the University in 1946 as professor of psychology in Arts and Sciences, died Nov. 28 from complications from a brief illness. He was 95.

DuBois was a member of the Psychology Department and a member of the American Psychological Association. He retained that title until his retirement in 1972 when he was named professor emeritus of psychology. He enjoyed using his knowledge to develop practical solutions for an array of challenges — selecting exceptional students for the University, excellent candidates for promotion in the St. Louis metropolitan area, and environmentalists for the national council. He helped and inspired his students in countless ways, "We'll miss him."

Born and reared in Canton, N.C., DuBois graduated from Union College in Schenectady, N.Y., and earned a doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1946 as professor of psychology in Arts and Sciences. During the war, DuBois served in the University Air Force in the Army Air Corps. During the war, DuBois served in the Army Air Force in the Army Air Corps. He enjoyed his knowledge to develop practical solutions for an array of challenges — selecting exceptional students for the University, excellent candidates for promotion in the St. Louis metropolitan area, and environmentalists for the national council. He helped and inspired his students in countless ways, "We'll miss him."

Jeanne S. Helmkamp

Jessie Hardges

Judith H. Baernstein

Trudy Karla Wright

Anna B. Bobbitt

Thomas Webb Brandt

Steven Mark Smith

Carole Moser

Rebecca J. Meininger

Lisa Ann Simmons

John Eugene Landis

Jean Alene Steiner

Deborah Ann Taylor

George Michael Tippey

Luella Johnson

Troy Eugene Jones

Deanna L. Kelley

Mary Ann Kelly

Eugene W. Clark

April E. Young

Vickie Jane Kellion

Rory P. Kidd

Lori Kaye Georgian

Mary J. Light

Kim L. Lipar

Ann B. Lewis

Sharone Goldmacher

Samantha B. McGaugh

Brian Dressel

Sherry Lynn Moe

Veclav A. Vrana

Beth A. Hilliwicz

Terry Kay Miller

Laura L. Winberg

Marybeth D. Madura

Marisol Rennery Mulholland

David Alan O'Donnell

Debra Lynn Usan

Jamest Michael Popovich

Constance Marie Rapp
d

Yadona Vtechuk Halliburton

Jeanne Margaret Rich

Carl J. Romano

Michael Todd Royland

Kathy Ann Schiefer

Kathy C. O'Connor Jr.

James C. A. Serda

Shontia D. Shears

Elizabeth J. Sill

Edie Louise Silvestri

Melanie Ann Simon

Andrea Denise Siler

Hyuma E. Saka

Kathy Lynn Spalding

Kathleen Megan Stacey

Therese Ann Skolar

Judith Ann Stadler

Kathy N. Royland

Geraldine V. Strum

Kathleen Jimmerson

Jamest M. Thomas

Deborah E. Thompson

Nanora G. Crum

Sherry Kay Vogt

Thomas William Watson

Celeste Wilkins

Sharon Williams

Mary Elizabeth Zollerman

Molecular microbiology

Clinical microbiology

Clinical virology

Clinical pharmacology

Clinical chemistry

Clinical hematology

Clinical pathobiology

Clinical microbiology

Clinical molecular biology

Clinical genetics

Clinical virology

Clinical microbiology

Clinical infectious diseases

Clinical microbiology

Clinical virology

Clinical microbiology

Clinical virology

Clinical microbiology
Thanks to a rat named Elvis...

A high school science project led Janet Duchek into her life’s work

BY NICOLE VINES

A white rat named Elvis sparked an interest in the field of psychology for Janet Duchek, Ph.D.

As a high school senior, the native St. Louisan was intrigued by a psychology research project in which she and her classmates used conditioning to train a rat to jump up on a tractor and slap his front paws on a miniature guitar to mimic playing.

The rat would only perform when he heard the song “Hound Dog” by Elvis Presley.

Duchek, associate professor of occupational therapy, said that the project hooked her on psychology — the study of music appreciation in rats because of the scientific principles of the learning process.

Today, she directs her own research toward attentional control and how this control changes with age.

“In order to have an efficient way of processing information, you have to be able to select information that is relevant to the task at hand and suppress irrelevant information,” she said. “We are interested in how a person controls attention in order to do this. By understanding how that works, we can explain some of the cognitive deficits that come with age and their impact on everyday behavior.”

When Duchek talks about her research, she speaks in the first-person plural to include David Balota, Ph.D., whom she met in a research lab during her senior year at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL). The two not only married but also teamed up as investigators.

Both Balota and Duchek agree their strengths and weaknesses complement one another and that it just felt natural for them to collaborate on research projects.

“It’s a lot of fun,” said Balota, professor of psychology in Arts and Sciences at Washington University. “We always can provide feedback to each other on research, teaching, and other faculty-related issues. Jan has excellent judgment about such matters.”

Kitchen collaboration

“We always have something to talk about,” Duchek added. “In fact, working together makes things very efficient. While other people have to have meetings during the day, we can have work-related discussions while cleaning the dinner dishes.”

Duchek was awarded tenure earlier this year. She is the first person to start out as a junior faculty member and reach tenure in the program.

“It has been a wonderful niche for me because it has allowed me to continue collaborating with Dave,” she said. “It has also allowed me to expand into more applied arenas related to cognition, such as my driving research.”

Driving with Alzheimer’s

This research is about driving ability in people with Alzheimer’s disease.

Hollen said. “Jan uses only constructive criticism while holding others’ best interests at heart.”

Committed to students

Duchek and Balota are both 60-year-old Alabamas who attend University City High School and 9-year-old Joseph who attends Jackson Park Elementary School.

The family loves to travel, ski and fish but with the agreement that no one talks about work on vacation.

Duchek also enjoys cooking — shrimp etouffee is a favorite of Baltic’s — and running. “I like to keep the cooking,” Duchek said with a laugh.

Duchek has a knack for juggling all of her roles as parent, researcher and teacher.

“Given that she is the first faculty member in occupational therapy to go up for tenure and get it, I’d say she is doing a wonderful job of balancing everything,” he observed.

In her modest way, Duchek insisted that the impact she will make as an educator is far greater than the impact she will make as a researcher.

“I think my greatest personal accomplishment will be made through my children,” she said. “And my greatest professional accomplishment will be made through my students.”

Duchek and her family — daughter, Angela; husband, David Balota; and son, Joseph — at Lake Tekapo near Queenstown, New Zealand, in 1996. Balota was a Visiting Erskine Scholar at New Zealand’s University of Canterbury.