Medical News: Post-op treatment for heart irregularity shows promise

Music: Gateway Festival Orchestra begins free summer concerts July 16

Washington People: Neuropsychologist Richard Wetzel helps those in dire situations

In an effort to strengthen diversity among the University’s students, faculty and staff, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton has appointed Leah Merrifield as special assistant to the chancellor for diversity initiatives.

Merrifield, director of community relations in the Office of Governmental Community Relations, will assume her new position July 1. She will report to Wrighton.

“I think we need to apply new energy and creativity to our work on the campus to build a stronger faculty and staff by strengthening diversity and improving gender balance where that is an issue,” Merrifield said. “Leah Merrifield has done a wonderful job in her present position as director of community relations, and I have no doubt that she will bring much enthusiasm and wisdom to our new efforts.”

While steady progress in strengthening diversity has been made over the past few years, the diversity accreditation review by the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission concluded that the University had not done as much in this area as it had done in other important areas that have contributed to the University’s success.

Wrighton said that the initiatives will be “University-wide and will include efforts to strengthen both faculty and student diversity.”

Merrifield is asked to work with the school and major administrative area designate a person who will serve as a point person in connection with the renewed effort to strengthen diversity. Merrifield will be the coordinator of this new University-wide group.

“I am honored to have been asked by Chancellor Wrighton to lead this challenging and important effort to strengthen the University’s diversity and contibute to change,” Merrifield said.

See Merrifield, Page 6

Pakrasi to head Energy Department ‘grand challenge’

BY TONY PETERFALK

WUSTL researchers will partner with the W.R. Wiley Environmental Molecular Science Laboratory (EMSL) at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) to embark on a “grand challenge” — an innovative, multidisciplinary project to explore scientific enigmas in microbiology.

Choosing Pakrasi as the leader of the Grand Challenge Project, marks the first time that the Energy Department has chosen a university scientist to lead such an endeavor in a National Laboratory.

“This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity,” Pakrasi said. “If successful, it could open the doors for similar projects in the future.”

Another project, not involving Washington University, is led by PNNL laboratory fellows and PNNL laboratory fellow Da- vidi Koppeisen, Ph.D., will investigate the mechanisms of membrane proteins in cyanobacteria, important microorganisms involving photosynthesis in the world’s oceans.

Muglia

Richard A. Gephardt addresses the 12,000 people — including some 2,500 new graduates — gathered in Brookings Quadrangle May 20 for Commencement.

Gephardt reminds graduates of the Golden Rule’s value

BY ANDY CLINDENNESS

Much has changed in the world since Richard A. Gephardt attended his own college graduation more than 40 years ago, the former U.S. House minority leader said in his address at the University’s 144th Commencement May 20 in Brookings Quadrangle.

But what hasn’t changed is the certainty that faces recent college graduates.

“We had no idea what we were heading into as we left on our graduation day,” Gephardt said. “Neither, I suspect, do you. And it would be a reckles”

Gephardt praised the advances in technology that has brought breakthroughs in medicine and memory. These enzymes are so essential that they support neural function and contribute to learning and memory.

The researchers reported their findings in two recent articles in the Journal of Neuroscience.

The genes studied make enzymes called adenylyl cyclases (AC), which are so vital to the brain that they are found in almost every cell in the body.

Himadri B. Pakrasi’s Grand Challenge Project will focus on the amazing cyanobacterium Cyanobacterium (right), the only bacteria with a circadian rhythm, or biological clock.

Genes affect sensitivity to alcohol

By Gwen Ericson

Can you blame your genes if you can’t handle your liquor? A new study conducted at the School of Medicine may pave the way to finding out.

Researchers found that the brain’s response to alcohol is partially under the influence of two genes. The genes, studied in both adult and newborn mice, were found to affect sensitivity to alcohol intoxication, interest in alcohol consumption and risk of developmental brain damage from alcohol.

“Now that we understand these genes are involved in neural processes affected by alcohol, we think they will be good candidates to look at in the human population,” said Louis Mungia, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of pediatrics, of molecular biology and pharmacology and of obstetrics and gynecology. “It will be interesting to see if there are human variants of the genes associated with either fetal alcohol syndrome or addictive behaviors in adults.”

To uncover the genes’ effect, the research team, led by Mungia, inactivated the two genes in mice.

In newborn mice with the genetic inactivation, ethanol (the alcohol used in beer, wine and spirits) caused significantly more neurodegeneration than it did in normal newborn mice. In adult mice with the genetic inactivation, the sedative effect of ethanol lasted up to twice as long.

Furthermore, when ethanol was freely available, adult mice with the inactivation drank much less ethanol than normal animals.

The researchers reported their findings in two recent articles in the Journal of Neuroscience.

The genes studied make enzymes called adenylyl cyclases (AC), which are so vital to the brain that they are found in almost every cell in the body.

Two forms, AC1 and AC8, are found mainly in neural tissue. Both are also found in the brain and certain other areas of the body.

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**Frahm Family Professorship established in Olin School**

**BY BARBARA REA**

A lumna Donald R. Frahm has established a professorship in the Olin School of Business. The gift of $1.2 million, which has been augmented with $500,000 from the University's Sesquicentennial Endowed Professorship Challenge, was announced by Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton. It will create the Frahm Family Professorship, which will soon be awarded to an Olin School faculty member.

"This generous gift from Donald Frahm is a wonderful tribute to his alma mater," Wrighton said. "We are deeply appreciative that he has chosen to support Washington University in this way."

"Faculty support is an important priority for the University. With this gift, we will be able to attract and retain outstanding faculty for generations to come. We are honored to have the Frahm name associated with Washington University in perpetuity."

Concurring with Wrighton, Stuart I. Greenbaum, Ph.D., dean of the School of Business and a Bank of America Professor of Managerial Leadership, said the gift is "extremely grateful for Don's support of the Olin School, for this gift, and for all he has done for the school over the years.

"To all of our dedicated alumnus, he is genuinely interested in the needs and programs helping our students realize their dreams."

The 1953 graduate of WUSTL's business school was very active during his time here, joining Sigma Chi fraternity, playing part-time baseball, and participating in Thurtene Honorary events. He continued his dedication to the support of the University and Olin School through his years as an alumnus.

Over the years, he has helped raise funds for two capital campaigns, has been a member of the William Greenleaf Eliot Society and has established the Jean and Donald Frahm Scholarship through the Olin School Foundation.

Following in his footsteps, Frahm's son, Mark, graduated from WUSTL, with a master's degree in business administration in 2000. He is the member of the Olin School National Council. In recognition of his efforts on behalf of the University, which include membership in the Boston Regional Cabinet, as a member of the University's Regional Leadership Council in Regional Campaign Committees, he received the School's Distinguished Alumni Award in 1989 and the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1999.

In 1997, he retired as chairman, president and chief executive officer of The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc., a company he joined 23 years earlier as executive vice president of ITT Hartford and its principal Hartford Fire Insurance Co.

Quickly rising through the ranks, he became president and chief operating officer of the company in 1983. Five years later, he was named chairman of the board and chief executive officer of ITT Hartford and its principal Hartford Fire Insurance Co.

Under his leadership, the company's revenue grew to exceed $12.2 billion.

During that time, Frahm was recognized by BusinessWeek as one of the country's best managers. The Hartford Co. became independent in 1995, returning to its headquarters to Hartford, Conn., and boosting economic conditions in the region.

In 1996, The Hartford CEO named him "Business Leader of the Year."

Community involvement for Frahm and his wife, Lina, is an important component in their life. They are involved in Hartford Hospital and the Children's Medical Center. He also serves on the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce.

As an industry leader, Frahm was a member of the American Insurance Association, where he chaired a special committee on the "Superfund." He also was a chairman of the Insurance Information Institute and a leader in the Advocates for Business and Auto Safety program.

Wallace distinguished professor Martin Cripps, Ph.D., professor of managerial economics and chair of the M.B.A. alumni committee at the Olin School of Business, gives a presentation of his work at his installation as the John K. and Ellen A. Wallace Distinguished Professor of Managerial Economics on May 11 in the Charles F. Knight Executive Education Center. "Martin is a world-class economist," says Stuart I. Greenbaum, Ph.D., dean of the Olin School of Business and the Bank of America Professor of Managerial Leadership.

Shuttle system to offer new Blue line in fall semester

**BY ANDY CLENDENEN**

The University shuttle system is adding getting more colorful. Shuttle riders are familiar with the Gold, Red and Green lines — and now comes the Blue Line.

Starting in the fall, the Blue Line will take some of the stops currently on the Red Line, dramatically decreasing travel time. The Blue Line will connect the Hilltop, West and North campuses.

"The Green Line has been a route that was intended to serve a number of groups and it's targeted at students that live in University City, Greenway Apartments and at Curtiss Commons and Auto Safety pro-

American Team, which will be announced June 25.

Baseball wins one, loses two in regionals

The baseball team won 1-2 at the NCAA Regional May 19-21 in Bloomington, Ill.

The Bears dropped a 4-2 decision in the opening game of the regional to Wartburg College, the eventual regional champion. In the second game, junior Bryan Brown went 5 for 5 with 4 RBIs and 1 home run in leading WUSTL to a 12-9 win. Wustl won 13-9 over top-seeded Aurora University. Junior Kent Wallace picked up the win on the hill for the Bears. Green; classmate Jim Haley went 4 for 6 with three RBIs.

The Bears' record ended against Edgewood College, losing 4-0.

Corning is third-time academic All-American

Senior Liz Swary has been named to the 2005 ESPN The Magazine College Division Softball Academic All-American of the Year, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Swary, a three-time Division II and Academic All-American selection, became the fourth WUSTL student-athlete to earn the award.

A first-team All-American selection in 2005, Swary batted .415 with seven home runs and a school-record 57 RBIs. She also led the team in runs scored (44), doubles (22) and slugging percentage (.726).

Swary's honors and her career ranks in Division III history include: doubles (35) and RBIs (174) and in 268 at-bats (26).

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Method helps immune system attack its invaders

**BY MICHAEL C. POYER**

School of Medicine scientists have uncovered a method the immune system uses to label foreign invaders as targets. Researchers showed the immune system can brand foreign proteins by chemically modifying their structure, and that these changes increased the chances cells known as lymphocytes would recognize the transient modifications and attack them.

"Now that we know some T cells need to see these types of modifications to identify an invader, we can see if incorporating such changes into the proteins is helpful for vaccinations," said assistant professor Emil R. Unanue, M.D., the School's John F. McDonnell Professor and head of the Department of Immunology.

The finding may also have relevance to autoimmune conditions, in which the immune system erroneously attacks healthy tissues. Such disorders include rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and type 1 diabetes.

"This study shows that during some infections, these same types of modifications can be made to our own proteins, potentially leading to T cell attacks on the self," said Unanue.

Unanue and his colleagues, who recently published their results in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, conducted the research in vitro and in cultures of mouse cells.

"The beta cells could be making their own foreign proteins in the same way that antigen-presenting cells are making foreign proteins," he said. "We're now investigating whether such modifications can cause T cells to attack beta cells."

Damaging oxidative reactions are also believed to play a role in autoimmune diseases. Scientists suspect oxidative damage in the blood walls may lead to immune reactivity that contributes to nar- rowing and stiffening of blood vessels.

Scientists have known for some time that a second class of immune system cells, known as antigen-presenting cells, help T cells determine what to attack. They do this by displaying fragments of proteins they have picked up on their surfaces for inspection by T cells. Fragments of proteins are called peptides.

Researchers also knew that when antigen-presenting cells are activated by inflammatory factors or microbial products, they start putting out chemically modified compounds such as nitric oxide and superoxide. Together, these compounds generate peroxynitrite, a highly potent chemical that modifies and blocks inflammation of heart tissue.

Unanue's group showed that these chemical modifications of peptides presented by antigen-presenting cells in different settings. For example, they attach a nitrate group to the amino acid tyrosine in the peptides, changing it to nitrotyrosine.

Unanue's lab then showed that these changes increased the chances various types of T cells would react to the modified peptides shown to them by antigen-presenting cells.

Unanue's group is working to substantiate their findings and explore their potential relevance to different areas of biomedical research. He notes that insulin-producing beta cells, the pancreas cells that produce the hormone insulin, are also believed to have a role in autoimmune conditions.

"The beta cells could be making their own foreign proteins in the same way that antigen-presenting cells are making foreign proteins," he said. "We're now investigating whether such modifications can cause T cells to attack beta cells."

Villareal hopes to replicate these findings over a longer time period in a larger group.

His team is recruiting people ages 65-80 who are at least 60 pounds overweight. Volunteers cannot have diabetes or heart disease.

Volunteers will receive physical exams, blood and urine tests, electrocardiograms and treadmill tests to see if they qualify. They will also fill out questionnaires about their lifestyle, physical capabilities and limitations as well as cognitive function.

Those who qualify will receive additional tests, including an X-ray screening that helps deter- mine total body fat; magnetic resonance imaging to measure fat in the abdomen, thighs and liver; and tests to measure flexibility, strength, balance and exercise endurance.

Participants in the new study will be divided into four groups. The groups will either continue their normal lifestyle; go on a weight-loss diet, start a super- intensive exercise program or begin a diet-and-exercise program.

Volunteers will receive medical screenings and assessments at the start of study, after six months, and at one year.   •

Highly appreciated Project ARK child the specialist Stacey Slovacek (left) and case manager Alaine Nolan enjoy ice cream at the School of Medicine's Employee Appreciation Day picnic at Hudlin Park. More than 8,000 medical school employees attended the June 10 picnic, which featured food, games, music and prizes, including American Airlines and Cardinals tickets. Slovacek and Nolan work with Project ARK (ADHESION Resources and Knowledge), a University organization that enhances the lives of those infected, affected or at risk for HIV/AIDS through coordinated medical care, social support and prevention services.

Older overweight adults needed for study

**BY JIM DODSON**

Older obese people can improve physical function and lessen frailty by losing weight and exercising, according to a School of Medicine pilot study.

"We have known for a long time that exercise and weight loss can lower the risk of obesity-related problems in younger people but until now were not sure what to determine if it has the same protective effects in older obese people," said principal investigator Dennis Villareal, M.D., assistant professor of medicine.

"This preliminary study shows that exercise and weight loss seem to provide these benefits, but we need to conduct these findings in a larger study."
Florence: a summer program and the School of Art will launch an art-history semester abroad program to Florence, Italy, this fall.

The program begins on June 17 and runs through July 21 at the Renaissance University in St. Louis campus. The program is designed for students with an interest in art history, painting, sculpture and architecture.

Applicants must have a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and be sophomores or juniors. They must also have completed at least one semester of Italian.

Students will receive 3 credits of art history, 3 credits of Italian and 3 credits of art restoration.

The program includes two weeks of intensive study in Florence, followed by excursions to local museums and churches. Students will also have the opportunity to take part in an art restoration course at the Centra Fiorenza, a Florence-based art restorer who specializes in lace, an internationally recognized craft.

The restoration course will be taught by Bettina Schindler, a professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Florence. She will be assisted by a local restorer who will provide hands-on training.

The program will include lectures by local experts, including a speaker from the University of Florence, and an art historian from the University of Rome. Students will also have the opportunity to visit local museums and galleries.

The program is open to students from all backgrounds and disciplines. Interested students should contact the School of Art at 314-935-4643 or cpapageo@wustl.edu for more information.

For the most current information, call hr.wustl.edu. For more information and the Hilltop Campus application, visit www.wustl.edu/campuslife.

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Staff Day features sports, friendship and fun

Staff Day is a time for University staff members to let their hair down, recognize their peers — and perhaps win a few prizes along the way.

Staff Day May 25 featured a variety of events, including a drawing for various goodies.

The winners of the drawings were Susette Williams, financial planning (airline tickets); Ralph Thuman, facilities (Dell Pocket PC); Dan Strazakowski, environmental health & safety (Kodak digital camera); Pat Hallquist, accounting services (brunch for two at The Ritz Carlton); Gina Bredehorst, accounting services (two tickets to an OVDONDO event at Edison Theatre); Scott Weiskopf, admissions (lunch for eight at the Charles F. Knight Executive Education Center); Ginger Willenborg, University billing (lunch for eight at the Knight Center); Tosie Burns, treasury services (beercan and portfolio); Lisa Lawrence, social work (Cardinals tickets); Sandra Compton, office of General Counsel (Cardinals tickets); Carol Antoniewicz, Olm Library (Cardinals tickets); Ray Barber, facilities (Cardinals tickets); Bob Nieswonger, general counsel’s office (a night at Chase Park Plaza); Margo Mueller, earth & planetary sciences in Arts & Sciences (dinner for two at Whitmone House); Chris Doherty, accounts payable ($45 gift certificate for Bass Pro Shop); Kathy Daniel, international & area studies in Arts & Sciences ($50 gift certificate for Knight Center take-home menu); Ron Byun, information & communication ($30 gift certificate for Knight Center take-home menu).

Eileen Hagan, public affairs (one-year membership to McWilliams Fitness Center); Chuck Wurth, accounting services (one-year membership to McWilliams Fitness Center); and James Conder, earth & planetary sciences in Arts & Sciences (gym bag with $20 coupon for South 40 Fitness Center; T-shirts, towels and water bottle).

Tourney winners

Winning sports trophies were the Spin Docs of public affairs (softball); Danielle Hubson and Sarah Nelson (golf, women’s team); Terri Nepper and Joe Floyd (golf, co-ed team); Paul Landgraf and Neil Schaeffer (golf, men’s team); student financial services (volleyball) and Rachael Stulce and Bill Botez (washers).

The food drive collected 265 pounds of food, which provides 177 meals to needy families.

Employees recognized for service

On Staff Day, several University employees were recognized for various years of service.

The following people were recognized for 40 years of service:


The following people were recognized for 35 years of service:

- Thomas Adams, Theresa Baird, Paula Canoy, Mickey Clarke, Mark Comay, Carolyn Craig, Erle Craig, Charlotte Ellis, Jonath-an Elson, Cynthia Haynes-Brown, Greta Lacy, Jim McLeod, Linda Sanford, Mary Vander Puy, Shery Winters.

The following people were recognized for 30 years of service:


The following people were recognized for 25 years of service:

- Barbara Johnson, Bill Orrick.

The washers tournament, a new event for Staff Day, proved to be a popular activity, with dozens of teams participating. The duo of Rachel Stulce and Bill Botez took the first-place trophy.

Amidst the myriad Staff Day events (clockwise, from above): a volleyball tournament in the Athletic Complex; Jim Burrel-ler’s campus tour, which in-cludes a visit to the roof of Brookings Hall; and drawings for prizes in Bowles Plaza. At the softball tournament, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton was up as he playfully “argues” a call, and George Warren Drum School of Social Work Dean Eddie Lawlor guns the ball in from the outfield.

White award goes to Clay

Also on Staff Day, Rudolph Day of Olin Library was presented the G. W. White Distinguished Service Award in a ceremony in Edison Theatre. An article about Day will be featured in the next issue of the Record.
specifically, Pakrasi’s project will focus on the sensing cytoplasmic bacterium Cyanothoezer, a one-
clariﬁed marine organism, the only bacteria with a circadian rhythm, or biological clock. In particular, Cyanothoezer has the unique ability to ﬁx oxygen through photo-
synthetic processes and thus make nitrogen ﬁxing through the mitochondria.

Indeed, even though the organism has a circadian rhythm, its gene grow and divide every 12 hours.

"We are hopeful that this project will become a model for collaborative research at EMSL and the entire Paciﬁc Northwest National Laboratory.

EMSL Director Allon Camp-
bell said, "We are bringing to-
gether experts from various ﬁelds to advance an area of science in ways that are not possible in the absence of a comprehensive, world-class research facility such as EMSL." In addition, researchers will be able to apply the most sophisticated analytical tools to look at speciﬁc and vexing problems in the biological and environmental sciences.

EMSL’s primary mission is to provide an integrated approach to understand the network of genes and proteins that govern metabolism and the functions of membranes and their compo-
nents in biology, bioinformatics, genomics, and chemistry.

Dr. Pakrasi has assembled a great team of experts focused on a specific problem that will lead to a better understanding of the organism’s capabilities.

This systems approach integrates all temporal information into a process that will help to understand the function of a cell and the cell’s membrane.

Cyanothoezer’s signiﬁcant contributions to harnessing solar energy, photosynthesis, and photosynthesis and metabolism will be a cornerstone of the Paciﬁc Northwest National Laboratory’s mission.

EMSL’s unique and broad-
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In 2000, Merrifield was named director of community relations, a position serving the University’s primary liaison to local civic associations and high-technology organizations to be the organization for the University’s neighbors and coordinate regional efforts to retain great individuals from diverse backgrounds to the University.

Merrifield said, "Like many other top-tier institutions, Washington Uni-
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**Byron wins prestigious Reid Prize**

Byron wins the Reid Prize for his fundamental contributions in the areas of pole-placement by output feedback, output regulation for nonlinear systems, and spectral estimation and robust control.
Richard D. Wetzel, Ph.D., first came to St. Louis to attend Concordia Seminary. But when he arrived at the seminary, he wasn’t dreaming of a small country church. He wanted to become a college professor.

He comes from an extended family that includes nine college professors, and almost all of them taught at Lutheran colleges. His relatives advised him that if he was going to be a college professor at a Lutheran college, he should become a minister. So, that’s what he did, completing a master’s degree in divinity in 1963.

But while he studied theology, he also took counseling courses. That started back in 1957 when he was at Concordia College in Fort Wayne, Ind. Now he’s a professor of psychiatry and of neurology and neurological surgery, but during his college days, Wetzel also tutored students in Greek. He was the swimming coach, too. With interests in physical education, counseling and the classics, he did a lot of thinking about how he could contribute: “There had been too many bright people in the classics for me to make first came to St. Louis to there, and I didn’t think I would

From suicide prevention to divinity studies, neuropsychologist Richard D. Wetzel puts others first.

At Washington University in St. Louis, Wetzel conducted all of the Wada assessments on epilepsy patients. That test, named for the scientist who invented it, involves injecting a drug to cause one side of the brain to go to sleep, helping neuropsychologists like Wetzel determine where language and memory centers reside in the brain. If those centers are not on the side involved with epileptic seizures, it’s often possible to eliminate the seizures with surgery.

“Wetzel says, ‘They are very important but also very involved, and they normally would take three or four hours. When something didn’t go right, we would have to fix it and add another hour.’

Saving the suicidal

From his earliest days studying psychology, Wetzel also was interested in learning about and preventing suicide. His first peer-reviewed publication appeared in the American Journal of Psychiatry and involved a study of 55 people who called a suicide prevention hotline. The first author on that paper was George E. Murphy, M.D., professor emeritus of psychiatry and one of the pioneers in the study of suicide.

“It was clear from the start that Dick had an exceptional intellect,” Murphy recalls. “He also has a marvelous sense of humor that he often turns upon himself. He’s provided me with many ideas over the years, and he’s been a delightful collaborative in following up those ideas.”

Wetzel was the first person to manage the hotline at Suicide Prevention Inc. of St. Louis, assuming the position in 1967. He also helped launch, “Call for Help” across the river in Illinois. He interviews callers to learn about who took advantage of hotline services — work that sometimes exacts an emotional toll.

“If you want to help people, sometimes you have to pay a price,” Wetzel says, referring to some of the stories he heard that the anxiety he’s endured as a result of working with people at high risk for suicide.

“To save people from suicide, you sometimes have to experience somebody’s death,” he says. “I confess, I don’t like it when people kill themselves, but when you work to save people who are high risk, you have to understand some are going to die. The good news is you can help others live.”

In almost 40 years of working with and studying people at risk for suicide, Wetzel has learned many facts. For instance, depressed people don’t take their lives because they’re worried about making a mistake with their children. Others who are at risk may be saved by a law of the land that says if you commit suicide on Christmas Day, you would be guilty of a crime.

“Wetzel says the facts involving suicide during the holidays contrast conventional wisdom in some ways,” he says. “A lot of people think suicides go up at Christmas, when in fact, they go down,” he says. “The lowest day of the year for suicides is Dec. 25, and in both December and January there tend to be about 10 percent fewer suicides than in other months.”

These days, a large chunk of Wetzel’s time involves evaluating people involved in civil and criminal litigation, including accused criminals in death penalty cases. He has conducted evaluations and been an expert witness both for the prosecution and the defense, but he doesn’t support the death penalty.

“I think the process is flawed by politics and financial matters,” he says. “But whatever one thinks of the death penalty, the people forced to make the decision as well as it can be made.”

Because different parts of the country set different standards for when to seek the death penalty, Wetzel says it often involves expertise at the University. Of the 18,000-20,000 people arrested for murder each year, only 60-80 are executed. He believes the advantage of the death penalty is that it occasionally helps prosecutors get guilty pleas from some defendants, but the disadvantage is that some people may be innocent.

Family focus

You might think a seminary graduate with a psychology degree, an interest in the death penalty and an expertise in neuropsychology and suicide risk is one of a kind. But that wouldn’t exactly be true. Wetzel has an identical twin brother.

He and his brother, Rob, were adopted when they were 2 weeks old. Richard and Robert Wetzel’s real parents — as opposed to their biological parents — also have two daughters.

The family lived in Chicago. Not long ago, the boys met their biological mother in Iowa on her 86th birthday.

Wetzel and his wife have two sons, Jim is a lawyer in Florida who earned a law degree at the Washington University School of Law. He’s married to Laura Wetzel, who holds a doctorate in earth and planetary science.

But according to Wetzel, the couple’s greatest accomplishment so far is their 3-year-old granddaughters.

“Wetzel says, ‘Like most grandparents, we think she’s particularly bright and particularly cute compared to other children.”

His son Rob’s wife, Carrie Gilson-Wetzel, has a master’s degree from WUSTL’s George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

Wetzel jokes that with all of the former University students and employees in his family, it might be appropriate to call the whole family “Washington People.”

Richard D. Wetzel, Ph.D.

Hometown: Oak Park, Ill.

Education: B.A., Concordia Senior College, 1961; Ph.D., Saint Louis University, 1974.

University position: Professor of psychiatry and of neurology and neurological surgery

Family: Wife, Mickey; children, Jim and Rob; grandchildren, Anna Ruth; twin brother, Robert; sisters, Ann and Pat; and dog, Moxie.