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A question I am often asked by prospective KU students and their parents is: What benefits come from a liberal arts and science education? Similarly, I might be asked: What can I do with a major in X (where X is one of the numerous disciplines we have in the College)? KU’s new Provost, Richard Lariviere, recently asked all deans for a statement in less than 30 words expressing essentially the same thing: Why are you here? Why does our work matter to the people of the state, the country and the world? The short answer to all of those questions is because the humanities, sciences and social sciences advance our understanding of the universe and illuminate what it means to be human.

I tell students a liberal arts and science education from KU will provide them with the intellectual tools to deal effectively with the many changes they face in their lifetime, changes that will affect what positions and jobs they will hold, where they will live, their relationships with family and friends and their effectiveness as a citizen in our society. In essence, the College at KU is attempting to present students with a variety of learning experiences that hone a variety of basic academic skills that can be used in a variety of situations. We are attempting to enhance the analytic and creative thinking capacities of students, to bolster problem-solving skills and to expand our students’ understanding and appreciation of the country’s and world’s varied cultures and peoples.

Are we successful at this? Judging by the accomplishments of the poet, astronaut, university provost, biotech scientist/entrepreneur and public administration scholar who we honored with our 2007 College of Liberal Arts and Science Alumni Distinguished Achievement Awards, I would say the answer is a resounding yes (see page 9 for a story on these remarkable individuals). Indeed, we fully expect that the students here in the College at KU today will be tomorrow’s leaders and that we will be singing their praises sometime in the future!

Joseph E. Steinmetz
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
SPENCER TO ACQUIRE 10,000 ANTHROPOLOGY ARTIFACTS

BY ABBY LEE

The artifacts in Spooner Hall’s ethnographic collection have traveled a long way and are about to go even farther. Approximately 10,000 artifacts will be moving from the former Museum of Anthropology in Spooner Hall to the Spencer Museum of Art.

The collection includes items from all continents, with most artifacts dating from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The Museum of Anthropology closed in 2002 due to budget cuts and thus the ethnographic collection has only been available for viewing for research purposes. With the move to Spencer, the artifacts will again become available to the public for viewing.

“The public’s access to these collections will inspire new ways of thinking as well as new ways of creating art,” said John Hoopes, an associate professor of anthropology.

The ethnographic collection will remain in Spooner for the time being as the Spencer Museum plans for an expansion. Saralynn Reece Hardy, the Spencer’s director, hopes that the addition of this collection to Spencer’s holdings will help facilitate more interdisciplinary research and discussion.

“What’s really compelling and exciting for the university and certainly for the Spencer is the chance to broaden the kinds of objects that we have, to have an inclusive framework for art and to think of objects around the globe as having power and meaning,” Hardy said.

The ethnographic collection began with the L.L. Dyche collection, named after a former KU professor of anatomy and physiology from 1888–1915. After a mammal and bird expedition to Greenland in 1895, he returned with 142 ethnographic items from the Inuit of Greenland. Among these items were objects like boots, jackets, bags, rugs, blubber lamps, a kayak and harpoons. Additions to the initial collection included the Karl F. Baldwin Collection in 1944 and the James Sleeper Collection in 1968, which each brought artifacts from Australian Aborigines like boomerangs, bark paintings, spears, woven bags and garments. Since then the collection has grown in size through other donations, purchases and collecting missions.

If you would like to view any of the ethnographic collection online, you may do so at http://www.arcc.ku.edu/ethno_collections.shtml.

ABBY LEE IS A HUTCHINSON SENIOR MAJOURING IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.
A young researcher is walking down a trail in the Brazilian Amazon with a colleague when a boy runs up, yelling, “Start running, and don’t stop until I tell you!” The two men run, heavy backpacks and all, crawling over and under fallen trees, until instructed to stop. They turn around and see a mass of ants following their path. “Those ants, if they had caught up to us, would have crawled over our bodies and eaten all three of us, seriously.” This is just one of the stories Professor Bill Woods, director of the environmental studies program, has to tell of his research expeditions in the Amazon.

Woods’ work in Brazil focuses on terra preta, or “dark earth,” created by previous human settlements, some of which date back 2,500 years ago. The dark patches correspond to the middens of these populations and the agricultural areas where the garbage was charred and spread over the fields. The waste provided nutrients to the deficient soil, and the charcoal worked to retain these nutrients and water, creating a thick, black loam that allowed the people to successfully grow and harvest food in otherwise hostile ground.

“People change the physical and chemical properties of their environment both positively and negatively,” Woods said. “People realized over hundreds and thousands of years which activities worked for a positive change, but they are now dead and their knowledge is lost.”

By studying the soil, we can regain knowledge of successful land management practices of the past.

“Our understanding of the past can be applied to the present so we can learn to sustainably support more people from a smaller area of farmland,” Woods explains.

Another important application is related to the current problem with global warming. The most common method of clearing land in tropical rain forests is slash and burn agriculture, where the vegetation is cut, dried, and then burned; releasing enormous amounts of carbon. Another method, slash and char, instead burns the wet plants at a much lower temperature, releasing nearly half as much carbon. The end result is a charcoal that acts as a fertilizer, a method that hearkens back to the original settlements that farmed on terra preta. Since the richer soils will prevent people from having to cut down more trees to find better land to farm, an ultimate result would be to help stop deforestation.

At the time of this interview, Woods was working with a colleague, Dr. Herrmann from the University of Goettingen in Germany. Herrmann declared that Woods’ research is “the most important at the University of Kansas” since the results of his studies in the Amazon are helping to find solutions to serious environmental, social and political problems that threaten South America and the world at large.
The work of the KASC does not stop with student academic programs. Every summer, schoolteachers from across the region travel to Lawrence for an intensive two-week program on how to incorporate Africa into their curricula. This year’s program, “A Dialogue of Cultures,” touches on subjects ranging from economic development on the continent to traditional dance and art forms. The Ujamaa Brown Bag Series provides informal forums throughout the year, intending to bring together Africanist faculty, students, and Lawrence community members for discussions on African topics and issues.

The moment you meet Dr. Khalid El-Hassan, you instantly understand why the spirit of Africa is alive and well at KU. With his enthusiastic handshake and wide grin, El-Hassan is the very picture of the passionate group of scholars who make up the Kansas African Studies Center. The KASC is one of four renowned international centers at KU, and the only African Studies center west of the Mississippi to receive federal Title VI funding, which is awarded to the top international studies centers throughout the U.S.

“The future depends on gaining outside experience,” stresses El-Hassan. “There is no guarantee that students at KU will work or live only in the United States.”

Rebekah Heacock, a 2006 KU graduate, is one of many students who have drawn on the knowledge they gained by taking classes on African issues. Heacock currently lives in Uganda, and works as a campaign manager and Web developer for a Ugandan children’s advocacy agency.

“I took classes to get a better foundation of knowledge about Africa and African history,” she says. “I hoped this would help me in my approach to conflict resolution and post-conflict rebuilding in northern Uganda. As I work here, a lot of what I learned in those two classes has proved applicable, both in practice and in theoretical discussions with colleagues.”

Above all, the mission of the Kansas African Studies Center is to raise awareness of the importance of Africa’s past and present, and to address contemporary issues challenging world scholars, politicians and business leaders.

“If you believe it,” says El-Hassan, “Africa is the origin of the human being. I cannot imagine turning on my television without seeing music, entertainment, sports — the contribution of Africa to the development of the United States, as well as the rest of the world, is huge.”

To find out more about the Kansas African Studies Center and how you can support the center’s scholars and outreach programs, visit www.ku.edu/~kasc.

Robert Gordy is an Omaha, Neb., sophomore majoring in history and pre-dentistry.
If information truly is dangerous, then learning to speak a language is the WMD of education. Studies abound indicating the positive influence of second language acquisition, from an increase in brain matter to a better understanding of cultural education. And with classes in more than 30 languages to choose from, students at KU shouldn’t lack gray matter.

The Modern Language Association reports that enrollment in less commonly taught languages (LCTL)—all languages except English, French, Spanish, Italian and German—accounts for just 17 percent of foreign language enrollment in the U.S. With such a small percentage of students enrolling in LCTLs nationally, the variety of languages available at KU offers distinct advantages.

Adam Benfer, Clay Center sophomore, is a student of Kechwa, an indigenous language to South American countries including Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

“I was interested in Peru as an anthropology major, and I knew that Kechwa was the primary indigenous language of Peru,” says Benfer.

While spending this past summer in Peru, Benfer discovered the importance of Kechwa to his future career. Although Spanish is the primary language in the cities, Benfer says that Kechwa will be useful in his archaeological studies in rural Peru.

His instructor, Professor Nina Kinti-Moss, makes the case for studying Kechwa: “The United States is increasingly dependent on the rest of the world, and can’t function well without understanding the other peoples on whom it depends.”

Marc L. Greenberg, chair and professor of Slavic languages and literatures, agrees, saying that “having any meaningful engagement with another country, another culture, requires knowledge of the local language.”

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“There are almost endless reasons to [teach LCTLs], but the fundamental one is that our country needs to have a constant supply of people with expertise in all languages, alongside expertise in every imaginable field from commerce to science to the humanities,” Greenberg said.

Lucas Lux is a Topeka sophomore majoring in German and economics.
KU grads are drawn to the bright lights of Hollywood and New York City, working in film and television as actors, directors, writers and executives.

Every generation has their own Jayhawk entertainment idol. The late Moses Gunn’s name appeared in lights most frequently in the 1970s and 1980s. He is best remembered for his portrayal of mobster Bumby Jonas in the “Shaft” movies, was nominated for an Emmy for his role in the TV mini-series “Roots” and starred in “Heartbreak Ridge” as Sergeant Webster. Others have enjoyed more recent fame, including actor Paul Rudd who appeared in “Clueless,” “Cider House Rules” and “Friends.”

Jayhawks Generating Laughs
One of the latest Jayhawks to succeed in comedy is Rob Riggle, theatre and film ’93. Riggle performed in Rock Chalk Revue as an undergraduate, but he says he learned the “nuts and bolts” of comedy at the Upright Citizens Brigade in New York City. After several years with UCB
and appearances on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien,” Riggle earned a spot on “Saturday Night Live” and later appeared on “Arrested Development” and “The Office.”

In 2006, Riggle became a correspondent for “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart,” cable television’s premier fake news show. Riggle served abroad in the Marines before pursuing professional comedy. His time as a Marine is occasionally referenced when Riggle appears as the show’s “military analyst.”

When asked if the two professions resembled each other, Riggle said, “Well, they’re both professions that require commitment. They’re both very difficult at times. They can both be hazardous to your health. They both require you to become self-reliant. I wouldn’t trade a single minute of my time in the Marine Corps nor would I trade a single minute of my time doing comedy.”

DEBUTING IN KANSAS
What is it about KU that helps future stars like Riggle succeed in the entertainment industry? Graduates say experienced faculty and plentiful opportunities to get on stage helped jumpstart their careers.

After earning his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English from KU in ’70 and ’74, English professor Paul Lim was encouraged to move to New York but chose to maintain his creative output in Kansas, writing 12 plays produced Off Broadway and in Los Angeles. Lim later founded the English Alternative Theater as a venue for students’ original plays.

“It became apparent immediately that to effectively teach playwriting we’d have to produce student plays as well,” Lim said. “That was the birth of EAT in 1989.”

EAT offers production opportunities to playwrights whose names and work are unknown. Several EAT productions have been accepted at prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. For example, Michael O’Brien, English and creative writing ’03, took his one-act play “Bunnies”—a fictitious comedy about the life of Hugh Hefner—to the 2001 KCACTF regional festival. O’Brien later became a writer for “Late Night with Conan O’Brien.”

William Inge, speech and drama ’35, wrote extensively for both stage and screen, including “Come Back, Little Sheba,” “Bus Stop,” and “Splendor in the Grass.” KU’s Experimental Theatre in Murphy Hall was named for Inge in 1974. His Oscar for “Splendor in the Grass” and Pulitzer Prize for “Picnic” are housed in the University Theatre.

Greg Gorman is a renowned celebrity photographer working in Los Angeles. Gorman was a Sigma Nu at KU in the late 1960s and early 1970s before getting his start in L.A. by a “stroke of luck” after photographing a series of rock concerts. He then began to seriously pursue photography, taking pictures of stars such as Jack Nicholson, Michael Jackson and Sophia Loren.
Phyllis Smith is an actress currently playing Phyllis Lapin in the comedy series “The Office.” After attending KU on a full dance scholarship, Smith toured the country in a burlesque company and was a cheerleader for the St. Louis Cardinals before the football team moved to Arizona. She got her role on “The Office” while working for a casting agency. The producers were so impressed with her readings that they created Smith’s role in the pilot, and Lapin later became a regular character.

Kevin Willmott received national acclaim for his 2004 film “C.S.A.,” a hypothetical documentary in which the South won the Civil War. Willmott also produced and co-directed “Ninth Street” starring Martin Sheen and Isaac Hayes. Willmott is currently working on “Bunker Hill,” a speculative piece about a terrorist attack on the United States. “Wilt of Kansas” about KU basketball legend Wilt Chamberlin, is scheduled to begin filming in the summer of 2007. Finally, Willmott is slated to direct “On the Shoulders of Giants,” based on a memoir by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.
FIVE COLLEGE ALUMNI EARN DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS  BY LINDSEY HOOVER

The Notre Dame provost, a NASA astronaut, a distinguished public administration professor, the founder of a genomic company and an award-winning poet have all been selected as recipients of the 2006-07 Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award, the highest honor bestowed by the College on its graduates. The winners were honored on April 13, 2007, at the annual Deans Club banquet.

David Holmes, Chancellors Club Teaching Professor at KU, describes Thomas G. Burish’s administration as, “… productive and dynamic and people are consistently happy with Tom’s leadership. They love him.” Burish is recognized for his impressive career in higher education administration. He was appointed provost of Notre Dame in 2005. He also has served as president of Washington and Lee University, and was Vanderbilt University’s longest-serving provost. Burish’s scholarly career includes extensive work with the American Cancer Society, where he previously served on the national board of directors.

Steven Hawley carried a book on his first shuttle mission that was given to him by KU professor of astronomy Stephen Shawl. Hawley said, “It was certainly my pleasure to have it on board with us as a remembrance of KU and the program that certainly helped me get up there in the first place.” Hawley has truly gone farther than most CLAS graduates with 770 hours and 27 minutes orbiting the Earth in five spaceflights. Hawley joined the NASA space program in 1978 as a member of the first group of shuttle astronauts. He is currently serving as the director in the Office of Astromaterials Research and Exploration Science at NASA’s Johnson Space Center. Hawley is known for being a loyal Jayhawk and even decorated the shuttle on his first mission with various Jayhawk stickers.
Barbara Romzek, associate dean for social sciences and professor of public administration at KU says, “Professor Rosemary O’Leary exemplifies the kind of academic success we want to present to students at KU: a Kansas native who received a fine educational grounding at KU, and has demonstrated in her subsequent endeavors that she is among the best of the best.”

O’Leary is well known for her impact as a teacher, a scholar and an expert in public administration. She is currently a distinguished professor at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, a school universally recognized as the top graduate school in public affairs. O’Leary is an elected member of the U.S. National Academy of Public Administration, and has served as a consultant for organizations such as the U.S. Department of Interior, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Kathy Suprenant, professor and chair of molecular biosciences says, “We give awards every year to our very best students and it is very gratifying to see an award-winning student turn into an award-winning scientist and entrepreneur.”

Randy W. Scott’s achievements include over 40 publications and 32 patents. He is a cell and molecular biologist who co-founded Incyte Genomics, the first genomic information business with peak sales of over 200 million. Incyte developed one of the world’s largest recombinant DNA therapeutic product portfolios. Under his leadership, Incyte also created the LifeSeq Gold™ gene sequence and expression database, considered at that time to be one of the most comprehensive collections of biological information in the world. Recently, Scott co-founded a new company, Genomic Health Incorporated. He has also been recognized by Genome Technology Magazine and Forbes magazine.
Gary Sick, professor at Columbia University and previous KU Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award recipient says, “I truly believe that his achievements speak for themselves. Actually, pick up one of his books and read any poem at random…and you will recognize this great talent.”

B.H. “Pete” Fairchild has been called Kansas’ greatest living poet. His poetry captures the essence of Kansas and has gained recognition and awards from many organizations. His latest book, “Early Occult Memory Systems of the Lower Midwest,” received the National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, the Bobbitt Award from the Library of Congress “for the most distinguished book of poetry in the previous two years,” and the Gold Medal from the California Book Awards.
AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
Elizabeth MacGonagle, assistant professor of history, has been conducting fieldwork at the slave forts in Ghana to support her ongoing research on identity formation in Africa and the African Diaspora. She published an article on the changing use of Ghana’s slave forts in the Journal of Contemporary African Studies. MacGonagle collaborated with Ken Lohrentz, of the KU Libraries, to digitize a portion of the Onitsha Market Literature Collection held at KU’s Spencer Research Library. Selections of this popular Nigerian literature are online at http://onitsha.diglib.ku.edu/.

AMERICAN STUDIES
The American Studies Program at KU was ranked No. 8 in the nation by the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index. It examines the number of book and journal articles published by each program’s faculty, as well as journal citations, awards, honors, and grants received. Bill Tuttle, professor of American studies, is currently in the Netherlands, where he is the 2007 John Adams Distinguished Fulbright Chair in American History. Ruben Flores, assistant professor of American Studies, participated in a panel discussion of the Mendez v. Westminster desegregation case, the 1946 landmark case that challenged racial segregation in California schools, at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Topeka, Kansas.

ANTHROPOLOGY
Professor Michael Crawford was awarded a Balfour-Jeffries Higuchi Award for Research Excellence at the University of Kansas in 2006. Professor Jane Gibson has been awarded a Keeler Fellowship for the Spring 2008 semester to study ethnobotany with Dr. Kelly Kinscher. Professor Akira Yamamoto will retire at the end of this Spring 2007 semester. Akira came to KU in 1973 and has been an extremely valuable member to the Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics, working on Native American languages and endangered languages.

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE
Michael Roberts received the American Psychological Association’s award for Distinguished Contributions to Research and Training. Professor Edward Morris is president-elect of KU’s chapter of Sigma Xi, a science honorary society. The Life Span Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary with a two-day conference featuring Jose F. Cordero, the U.S. Assistant Surgeon General. Professor Glen White received a $3.25 million grant from the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research to help people with disabilities participate more fully in their communities.

BIOINFOMATICS
Yang Zhang, assistant professor, won in the most important and prestigious category of automated server predictions at this year’s Critical Assessment of Structure Prediction (CASP) competition, a biannual worldwide competition in blind protein structure prediction. Zhang just completed his first year on the faculty as an assistant professor. Zhang’s laboratory was recognized as No. 1 in the world by winning the international CASP protein-folding competition.

CHEMISTRY
George Wilson, Higuchi Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, was presented with the Reilley Award, named for the late researcher Charles N. Reilley, at the Pittsburgh Conference Awards Symposium in Chicago. Wilson received the award for his contributions to the theory, instrumentation development and applications of electroanalysis which have led to a sensor, small enough to be injected under the skin, that has the capability of monitoring blood glucose levels of diabetics. Out of 23 Reilley Award winners, five have had some connection to KU, whether they earned degrees from KU or have held faculty positions in Chemistry.

CLINICAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGY
The professor instrumental in starting the Clinical Child Psychology doctoral program at KU has been honored with the American Psychological Association’s prestigious Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education.

There is always something exciting happening in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Each of the more than 50 departments and programs host unique events and celebrate accomplishments throughout the year. Below is a snapshot of a few of the many things taking place in the largest academic unit on campus.

Left to Right: Ghana slave fort; Ruben Flores, assistant professor of American studies; George Wilson, Higuchi Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry; Professor of anthropology, Michael Crawford, with graduate students.
and Training in Psychology. Michael Roberts, professor and director of the clinical child psychology program, was presented with the award at the association’s 114th annual convention last August. This award recognizes psychologists for evidence-based applications of psychology to education.

COMMUNICATION STUDIES
Communication studies faculty continue to win major awards. Associate Professor Beth Manolescu became the 10th COMS faculty member to win the prestigious Kemper award last fall. In October, Professor Donn Parson was honored with the Chancellor’s Club Career Teaching Award. The award-winning KU Debate program, which is hosted by the department, has maintained the No. 1 ranking that it achieved last year, when it finished ahead of 2nd and 3rd ranked Harvard and Dartmouth.

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES
The Center for East Asian Studies is pleased to host Taka Shibata, Chancellor’s lecturer; this year, Shibata, a former Japanese diplomat, is lecturing at KU this spring on subjects based on his work experience, ranging from drafting the Kyoto Protocol to inspecting agricultural conditions in North Korea. He has held positions in Sweden, Pakistan, Italy, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, New York and Tokyo.

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY
Professors Michael Engel and Helen Alexander received prestigious teaching awards for their prowess in the classroom (a Kemper for Engel; TIAA-CREF Award for Alexander); Professor Daphne Fautin was selected as only the third woman Commissioner of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in its long history; Professor Deborah Smith co-authored a paper in Science magazine about honey bee genetics and biogeography; and Professors Leonard Krishtalka, Linda Trueb, Michael Engel, Robert Timm, and others received a half-million dollar NSF grant to help house Natural History Museum collections in the Public Service Building on West Campus.

ECONOMICS
Professor Elizabeth Asiedu is among a group of 10 researchers and educators chosen by Diverse magazine as an Emerging Scholar for 2007. Elizabeth caught the attention of the magazine for her research into the role of foreign nations’ direct investments in Africa’s economy. Professor William Barnett was interviewed on a special January 16th broadcast of “Bloomberg on the Economy” on Bloomberg radio. Professors Paul Samuelson and Barnett were interviewed for one hour about their just-published book, “Inside the Economist’s Mind.”

ENGLISH
Professor Richard Hardin has been selected as the inaugural Frances L. Stiefel Professor of English for 2006-2009. The Stiefel Professorship will be awarded every three years to a full professor of English who has compiled a distinguished record in all three of the profession’s evaluative categories of teaching, research, and service. The Stiefel Professorship honors Frances L. “Pat” Stiefel, a 1926 KU graduate.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
J. Christopher Brown, assistant professor of geography and environmental studies, was presented with a $5,000 W.T. Kemper fellowship in recognition of teaching and advising excellence. The W.T. Kemper Fellowships for Teaching Excellence recognize outstanding teachers and advisers at KU as determined by a seven-member selection committee.

EUROPEAN STUDIES
The European Studies Program has chosen Europe’s strong commitment to protecting human rights around the world as one of its central topics in coursework, study abroad, and outreach efforts. The summer institute in Europe regularly visits such institutions as the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France and the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands. Through co-sponsorship of public talks by international scholars and dignitaries
and course cross-listings with partner program HWC, European Studies offers students many opportunities to examine such issues as Europe’s role in conflict resolution, accountability for war crimes, Nobel Peace laureates and their work, and EU human rights policy and position on capital punishment.

FRENCH AND ITALIAN
The Department of French and Italian organized the Tournées/KU French and Francophone Film Festival, with cosponsorship by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, several other units in the College, and Kansas Memorial Unions. Six films were shown from October 17 through November 13, 2006. 850 students attended the various showings.

GEOGRAPHY
Professor Bill Woods was a co-organizer of the Amazonian Dark Earth Soils (Terra Preta and Terra Preta Nova) session at the World Congress of Soil Science in July 2006. He also presented talks entitled: “A Tribute to Wim Sombroek”, and “Terra Preta Research: The pre-Sombroek and Sombroek Periods.” Woods also presented a talk at the Seminário da Amazônia 2006, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia, entitled “Human Influences to Soils at Occupation Sites” in Manaus, Brazil, and a talk entitled “Success or Collapse: Is It Still Our Choice?” presented at the ECM Center’s University Forum in Lawrence.

GEOLOGY
An environment of rapid growth is the best way to describe the Department of Geology these days. They welcome their new distinguished professor in invertebrate paleontology, Paul Selden, who in addition to teaching and research, will take over the editorship of the Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology. In addition, three faculty members have expanded their labs into a beautiful new facility, the Multi-disciplinary Research Building on West Campus.

GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures hosted the annual Deutsches Wochènende of the Kansas Association of Teachers of German at KU’s Max Kade Center for German-American Studies. In addition to programs on teaching German language and culture in Kansas, the weekend event featured a talk on what it means to be an “Afro-German” and the history of blacks in Germany by KU graduate student Nguvi Kahiha, a native of Berlin, Germany.

HALL CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
A few highlights of the fall semester at the Hall Center for the Humanities include visits from Andrei Codrescu, Nuruddin Farah, Richard Dawkins and Nancy Cott in the Humanities Lecture Series, and co-sponsorship of the “Difficult Dialogues at The Commons—Knowledge: Faith & Reason” series with the Biodiversity Institute. The Center also held the concluding conference of The Shifting Borders project, a two-year collaboration with Haskell Indian Nations University funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation. Over 4,900 people attended these public programs.

GERONTOLOGY
Susan Kemper, Roy A. Roberts Distinguished Professor of Psychology and senior scientist at the Gerontology Center, was granted $1.3 million by the National Institute on Aging to study how aging affects the ability to produce language over the next five years. Kemper hopes that her kind of sensitive, moment-by-moment analysis of speech production during dual tasking might be used as a tool to identify and track people in the very early stages of Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias and provide a way to monitor the effects of drugs developed for these conditions.

HISTORY
Professor Jennifer Weber’s new book “Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln’s Opponents in the North” has been getting good press from publications including The New Yorker. As Weber reveals, contrary to popular belief, the North was not unified behind Abraham Lincoln and his policies during the Civil War. In fact, Northerners were deeply divided about the conduct of the war and issues like emancipation. Weber’s story of the rise and fall of the Copperheads, as the Northern antiwar Democrats were known, is relevant in our own time of war, dissent, and political polarization.

HISTORY OF ART
Sherry Fowler, associate professor of Japanese art, was a fellow at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures at the University of London. She is currently working on a project that examines the development of the Six Kannon cult in Japan, with particular emphasis on recovery of its lost associated sculptures and how the patronage of the Six Kannon cult changed from an elite practice
beginning in the 10th century to a popular practice centuries later. She is also researching Japanese printed religious imagery, especially temple and shrine precinct prints from the 19th and early 20th century.

HUMANITIES AND WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS
February 2007 marked the 20th anniversary of the James E. Seaver Lectures on Continuing Issues in Western Civilization. The Seaver Lecture Series recognizes KU faculty in early to mid-career who have distinguished themselves in teaching, research or creative artistic activity, and other contributions to the life of the university and the community. The 2007 Seaver Lecturer is Marni Reva Kessler, assistant professor of art history, who spoke on February 13 on “Anxiety and the Creole Feminine: Degas’ Woman with Bandage.”

INDIGENOUS NATIONS STUDIES
Director of indigenous nations studies and KU Law professor Stacy Leeds has announced her candidacy for Cherokee Nation Principal Chief, the top leadership position in the Oklahoma-based tribe that has 260,000 members nationwide. The principal chief is responsible for the execution of the laws of the Cherokee Nation, establishment of tribal policy and delegation of authority as necessary for the day-to-day operations of all programs and enterprises administered by the Cherokee Nation Tribal Government. Its jurisdictional service area covers about 7,000 square miles, including all or parts of 14 counties in northeastern Oklahoma. The general election is June 23, 2007.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
The International Studies Program had a non-thesis option approved by the Graduate School for the master’s of arts degree. It requires a comprehensive exam and two additional elective courses in place of thesis hours. Many international studies students and applicants work full time and will be glad to have this option. The program was fortunate to recruit Richard Lynn Ground, a former World Bank official specializing in post-conflict development, to teach World Development for Spring 2007.

KANSAS AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER
Garth Myers, KASC director and associate professor of geography and African studies, has published a book that he co-edited with Martin Murray of Binghamton University, “Cities in Contemporary Africa,” and authored an article on Lusaka, Zambia in the Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography. A third publication is forthcoming in Social and Cultural Geography, co-authored with Mohamed Dosi and Leonce Rushirwa on Tanzanians in Kansas. He will be conducting research in Finland and Tanzania in 2007 on his current NSF grant project on land reform and political and economic reform in Zanzibar.

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
Professor Elizabeth Kuznesof presented “Domestic Labor, Slavery, and Household Organization in Colonial and Nineteenth-Century Brazil” at the 2006 LASA Conference, Puerto Rico. She is an invited speaker for the CPDOC-BRASA Symposium on Brazilian History and Society at the Fundação Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro with the topic “The Social Construction of Brazilian Citizenship: A Problem of Politics, Gender and Race.”

LINGUISTICS
Professor Alison Gabriele is developing a new Second Language Acquisition Research Laboratory. Gabriele’s research focuses on the acquisition of syntax and semantics by second language learners and bilingual children. Her dissertation research looks at the acquisition of aspectual morphology by adult learners of English and Japanese, and her lab is beginning a project that will look at the L2 acquisition of the semantics of bare nominals by learners of Japanese. The department has hired a neurolinguist, Robert Fiorentino, who studies language processing through experimental psycholinguistic techniques as well as neuro-imaging techniques. Professor Fiorentino is currently setting up a neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic research laboratory.

MATHEMATICS
The University of Kansas mourns the death of G. Bailey Price, distinguished professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Mathematics at KU. Price was a pioneer during the golden age of mathematics and the earliest development of computer science nationally, as well as at KU. He was instrumental in the development of the “New Math” nationally and in the purchase of the first computer at KU in 1956, an IBM 650, the granddaddy of today’s desktop models. Price was named the first E. B. Stouffer Distinguished Professor of Mathematics at KU in 1974, and retired in 1975. During retirement, Price completed two mathematical monographs. He also turned his interest to documenting the history of mathematics, publishing a history of the KU Department
of Mathematics and publishing articles on the contribution of mathematics to the World War II effort and related topics. Price passed away at the age of 101.

MOLECULAR BIOSCIENCES
Assistant Professor Kristine Neufeld received the Kansas IDEA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) Faculty Scholar Award of $10,000 for research by an outstanding junior member of the faculty. K-INBRE is funded through the National Institutes of Health Center for Research Resources for the purpose of strengthening biomedical research and training researchers in Kansas.

MUSEUM STUDIES
Students in the Public Education Class (MUSE 705), taught by Teresa MacDonald, presented a free public science education event, Jell-O Nation, at the Natural History Museum. Jell-O Nation’s goal was to teach children about the art, science and history of gelatin.

PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY
Matthew Antonik has accepted an appointment as an assistant professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, joining the faculty beginning fall 2007. Antonik’s expertise is in the area of biophysics, specifically emphasizing methods of quantitatively determining structures and dynamics via fluorescence by examining in detail the behavior of single molecule photon counting signals. Antonik received his PhD from the University of Maine and has most recently been employed as a researcher in Physical Chemistry at the Heinrich-Heine-Universitat, Dusseldorf.

POLITICAL SCIENCE
A recent ranking of doctoral programs in Political Science ranks KU’s doctoral program 6th in the nation. The ranking is based on the scholarly output of the faculty. The results are reported in the January 2007 edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education.

PSYCHOLOGY
Professor Chris Crandall received the Morton Deutsch Award for Justice Research from the International Society for Justice Research. The International Society for Justice Research is a non-profit organization that is interdisciplinary in nature. The Morton Deutsch award is presented annually for the best article published in Social Justice Research every year, with preference given to contributions from investigators who are early in their research careers. The award is named after one of the society’s most prolific and influential contributors, Morton Deutsch.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
John Nalbandian, chair of the Public Administration Department and former mayor of Lawrence, has been selected as the first Emma and Greg Melikian Visiting Urban Scholar at Arizona State University. Major Terence Ray is completing a M.P.A. degree at the University of Kansas. Major Ray graduated with a B.A. in Spanish from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He has served for 15 years as an Army officer in both the Infantry and Civil Affairs. His military experience includes support of military operations in Albania, Kosovo, Paraguay, Colombia, Haiti and Afghanistan. After completing his degree in May, he will be joining the staff of Lt. General David Petraeus at the Combined Forces Land Component Command in Iraq.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES
We continue to expand our work in Jewish studies. Professor Jonathan Boyarin has been seeking external funding to support Jewish studies generally as well as Hebrew and Yiddish languages. Assistant Professor Sergey Dolgopoliski is now here teaching in Judaica. Dolgopoliski is a scholar of the Talmud. He holds two doctoral degrees, one from the Russian Academy of Sciences and one from the University of California at Berkeley. His new book, “What is Talmud? The Art of Disagreement” will be published by Fordham University Press.

CENTER FOR RUSSIAN, EAST EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES
During the spring 2007, the KU Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies is celebrating the Balkan semester. The Balkan region is a crossroad of peoples and cultures, and the site of many critical historical events. The Balkan semester highlights contemporary and
historical issues in the region through concerts, public lectures, art displays and training sessions for Kansas secondary school teachers. The Balkan semester will showcase some of KU’s outstanding and unique resources in language and cultural studies.

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
Professor Maria Carlson received the Award for Excellence in Post-Secondary Teaching from the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. The award was given at a lavish reception at the Russian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

SOCIOLoGY
The seventh annual Carroll D. Clark Lecture was delivered by Professor Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, associate professor of Asian American Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Davis. Parreñas’ lecture was titled, “The Global-Local Gender Clash: Women, Migration, and the Modernization Building Project of the Philippines.” A revised version of the lecture will appear in a future issue of the KU Sociology Department graduate student journal, Social Thought and Research.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE
The Department of Spanish and Portuguese celebrated recent faculty research achievements. Associate Professor Lee Skinner published her book “History Lessons: Refiguring the Nineteenth-Century Novel in Spanish America.” Associate Professor Jonathan Mayhew received a highly competitive National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to complete his book, “Apocryphal Lorca: Translation, Parody, and Kitsch,” which examines the impact of Spanish poet, Federico García Lorca, on American poets who came of age in the 1950s.

THEATRE AND FILM
Theatre groups earned top recognition at the Region V Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, held in January at Iowa State University in Ames. Based on the awards, University Theatre’s production of “Hay Fever,” directed by Jack Wright, professor of theatre and film, and “Suicide by Punchbowl,” written by Whitney Rowland, Olathe sophomore, are being considered for the national festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Rowland’s play was named the top 10-minute play at the regional festival.

WOMEN’S STUDIES
Marta Vicente, assistant professor in women’s studies and history has just recently published her book, “Clothing the Spanish Empire: Families and the Calico Trade in the Atlantic World.” The book narrates the lives of families on both sides of the Atlantic who profited from the craze for calicoes, and in doing so helped the Spanish empire to flourish in the eighteenth century.

Left to Right: Maria Carlson, professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, with American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages President, Ben Rifkin; museum studies students at the Jell-O Nation event at the Natural History Museum; John Nalbandian, professor and chair of public administration; Jonathan Mayhew, associate professor of Spanish & Portuguese; Marta Vicente, assistant professor of women’s studies and history.

SAMANTHA BENNETT IS A 2006 GRADUATE IN PSYCHOLOGY WHO WORKS IN THE COLLEGE DEAN’S OFFICE.
“Let’s save the world through science fiction,” is often uttered by James Gunn, KU professor emeritus of English and director of the Center for the Study of Science Fiction.

“H.G. Wells said that the world was in a race between education and catastrophe. I think [science fiction] is a major part of that education, and we all can help by introducing more people into its charms and values, particularly young people,” Gunn said.

Gunn was recently honored by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America as a “Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master” for his outstanding lifetime achievements in the field. In an interview with KU Collegian magazine, Gunn discussed his inspirations, influences, and what it means to be named a Grand Master.

Above: Author and professor James Gunn in his Wescoe Hall office in 1981, the year before he founded the Center for the Study of Science Fiction at KU.
What initially attracted you to Science Fiction?

I got hooked on imaginative literature when I was young like Andrew Lang’s fairy tale books, as well as Hugh Lofting’s “Doctor Doolittle” books. I discovered a stash of Edgar Rice Burroughs’ “Tarzan” novels in my grandmother’s back closet and read them all. Then my father began bringing home some hero pulp magazines like Doc Savage, The Shadow, Operator #5 and The Spider about 1933, in the depths of the Depression. I immersed myself in them until I discovered a used-magazine store called “Andy’s” in downtown Kansas City, and in the back of the store were stacks of dusty copies of “Amazing Stories,” “Wonder Stories” and “Astounding Stories of Super Science.” This was what finally captivated me—stories of adventure wrapped around new ways of looking at the world, humanity and the universe.

You’ve recently been named a Grand Master of Science Fiction by SFWA. What is the significance of this award to you?

The Grand Master award is the science fiction writer’s version of the Nobel Prize. Only twenty-four writers have been named grand masters, and it is humbling and exhilarating to be mentioned in the same group as Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, Williamson, Pohl and all the others. It doesn’t get any better than this in my field.

Where did the inspiration for your numerous works come from?

Most of my stories and novels have come from the ideas of speculative science, even when the speculators themselves were unaware of their science fiction potential. I read an article about “Feeling” in an edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, which discussed how we feel happy and ended with the statement that “The true science of applied hedonics is not yet born,” and I wrote a novel about the invention of a science of happiness and turned it into a novel called “The Joy Makers.” Some research into the causes of aging turned into “The Immortals.” A book by Walter Sullivan called “We Are Not Alone,” described efforts to communicate with other worlds which I developed, after further research, into “The Listeners.” Some novels came out of personal experience, like “Kampus,” which was based on my experience in KU public relations during the 1960s, and “The Millennium Blues” came from my speculations about the end of the second millennium and our infatuation with catastrophe.

You were influential to other writers, such as the late Carl Sagan whose book “Contact” was inspired by “The Listeners.” What authors were the most influential to you?

Among the mainstream, my favorite writers are Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe—two far different writers. My favorite science fiction writers are Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Theodore Sturgeon, A. E. van Vogt and Frederik Pohl among many others. It’s difficult to pick a favorite book because one likes different books at different periods. One of my favorite periods was the 1950s, when many of the books I teach in my science
SpOTLIgHt ON FACuLty

[Grand Master James Gunn at a glance]

- Penned 28 books, edited 10 books, and written almost 100 published stories.
- Began teaching in the English department at KU in 1950 and writing science fiction in 1948.
- Most notable works include “The Listeners,” “The Immortals,” “The Joy Makers” and “Isaac Asimov: The Foundations of Science Fiction.”
- Founded the Center for the Study of Science Fiction at KU in 1982.
- Received his B.S. in journalism in 1947 after three years in the Navy during World War II and his M.A. in English in 1951, both from KU.
- Other Grand Masters include Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov.

Why do you feel it is important for young people to be aware of science fiction literature?

For aspiring writers, science fiction offers an opportunity to get published—there are still science fiction magazines and on-line magazines that accept and even pay for fiction, and almost one thousand new books are published each year.

If new ways of thinking and writing appeal to a writer, science fiction is a good place to begin. It’s a way of life as well as a way to think, but not a way to make a living. I don’t encourage anybody to go into writing for economic reasons; most writers make very little. Only those ought to go into it who can’t be discouraged.
As college students we struggle from time to time with thoughts of the future. We know what we want to do: be happy, have enough money to be comfortable and have a great family. We just don’t know how to get there.

This is difficult to explain to our parents’ generation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, less than half as many people attended a postsecondary institution a generation ago as do today. So it makes sense that admitting to majoring in communications draws the inevitable: “What are you going to do with that?”

People who ask this question, however, fail to understand what college is about. The university is not—and should not be—a vocational school. The English department should not replace Shakespeare with business memos any more than a vocational school should trade engine manuals for a class on Western civilization.

A liberal arts education is not for everyone. A liberal education system does not make engineers or doctors irrelevant. Doctors need dense knowledge particular to their field, knowledge no patient would want them to lack. Nor does the need for vocational degrees signal the irrelevance of liberal arts degrees. Neither is better than the other; rather they complement each other.

Today’s liberal education system equips each student with a set of intellectual tools and the knowledge to use them. The skills to perform a particular task can always be acquired; the ability to acquire these skills, sometimes independently, is more important.

Finally, liberal arts institutions promote the progression of ideas. Although not a physically useful tool, the character “V” in “V for Vendetta” was right when he said “there are not enough bullets in the world to stop an idea.” The freedoms we possess today are, after all, products of ideas. No engineering feat or medical miracle can create liberty or democracy. Ideas, although not a replacement for vocations, are just as important. Thinking is powerful. And a liberal arts education teaches students to think.

So the next time someone asks you what you’re going to do with your major, remind him or her to thank liberal arts majors like you for the liberties the arts have created. Or just grin and remind yourself that, according to the U.S. Department of Education, those with college degrees earn twice as much as those without.

Lucas Lux is a Topeka sophomore majoring in German and Economics. This column first appeared in the University Daily Kansan on January 19, 2007. Reprinted in part with permission of the Kansan.
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