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It’s a “bonito día” in the neighborhood

Immersing residents of Boston’s Roxbury neighborhood in Spanish language and Hispanic culture

Beyond race—examining the nature of African American literature

Women investors, take note

Creative Writing widens its scope around the world

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A great education is a gift. Pass it on.
with another academic year well under way, I can’t help noting how much has changed since this time last year, when the world was spiraling into a profound economic crisis. Although the economy is still a long way from recovery as this issue of arts & sciences goes to press, I am proud that we remain a healthy, vibrant institution, thanks to the skilled guidance of President Robert Brown and his leadership team and the campus-wide collaborative efforts to meet the challenges.

What are the signs of this institutional strength and health? Most important, a terrific new undergraduate class has matriculated. Students and their parents have more reason than ever to consider their options carefully, and we came through that test with flying colors. Our newest undergraduates are academically strong and have a fascinating diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Their class is more international than ever. Not surprisingly, they are also more financially needy than previous classes.

Attracting great students requires that we continuously refresh our education and find out what is happening here. For other web-based opportunities, we launched a new webinar series last spring with a discussion of climate change and global development led by Adil Najam, a CAS professor and director of the Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. Forty-five alumni from 17 states and six countries participated. We have created a new annual report, summarized in this magazine beginning on page 25 and available in full multimedia form online at www.bu.edu/cas/ar.

Another great sign of our institutional health is that, unlike many peer institutions, we undertook an ambitious program of faculty recruitment. More than 30 impressive new professors joined Arts & Sciences this fall in diverse fields across the humanities and the social, natural, and quantitative sciences. And we didn’t just replace faculty who left or retired; we expanded into critically important teaching and research areas, as the University’s strategic plan outlines for our future.

We also have been working hard to develop stronger linkages with you, the Arts & Sciences alumni. One great accomplishment is the creation of the more informative, interesting, and effective new CAS website (www.bu.edu/cas). The alumni section features rich content, including streaming videos of some of the fascinating and provocative lectures and discussions that have taken place on campus. Take yourself back to your alma mater to refresh your education and find out what is happening here.

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With a lifelong interest in international issues, BU Overseer Robert Hildreth is enabling the Creative Writing Program to extend its reach around the world.

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“There are multiplicities in the Islamic world,” says Emine Fetvacı, an assistant professor of art history who specializes in Islamic visual arts and architecture. “Islam is not homogeneous. Persian is not the same as Arab is not the same as Turk is not the same as Indian is not the same as Pakistani—even among themselves, these people are so diverse and different from one another. I tell my students to remember that we’re dealing with human civilization and its richness.”

In the classroom, Fetvacı draws on her current research in Asian and Middle Eastern countries to illustrate “the diversity and the colors of the Islamic world.” She invites students to compare, for example, the late 14th- and early 15th-century architecture of Timurid Iran and Central Asia, where mosques and imperial tombs were decorated with geometric designs crafted from blue-and-white tiles, to Egyptian architecture of the same period, whose structures were made completely of stone and embellished with carved inscriptions.

Books, like buildings, show the divergent aesthetics of Islam at any given time. In the 16th century, Ottomans in what is now Turkey had a penchant for illustrated books on historical subjects—a genre Fetvacı has researched extensively—while the contemporary Safavid Empire in Persia preferred luxuriously bound and crafted but unillustrated books about mythological kings and heroes, and epic love stories.

In 2008, Fetvacı was one of three researchers at BU to be awarded a three-year, $50,000 Peter Paul Career Development professorship, designed to help promoting junior faculty enhance their research program. Fetvacı used the award to travel to India, Syria, Turkey, and other countries to examine and photograph historically significant art and architecture.

Highlights of her research trip included the tomb of the emperor Akbar in Sikandra, India, and Delhi’s Qutb Minar, a tower begun in 1199 AD as a testimonial to the strength of Islam and which, at 238 feet, is the tallest brick minaret in the world.

Now Fetvacı has trained her camera and her attentions on Turkish manuscripts dating to the 1500s, the height of the Ottoman Empire. During that era, she says, political chicanery and public relations posturing by high-ranking members of the Ottoman court contributed to published and subsequently accepted revisionist history.

“I’m working on a monograph about identity formation during this period, how books played into it and how art helped the process along,” she says. “I’m studying the ways that we think about the past and how certain things have come to be accepted as fact as a result of campaigning and writing.” Books were a means of shaping identity, and the high-level government officials and courtiers who financed their production typically expected a starring role in exchange for their patronage. “One person appears to be very important to a battle described in one book because it’s written by a historian he’s paying; another book shows someone else as the hero of the same conflict because the author is his protégé. I have to read between the lines.”

Fetvacı plans further travel to Islamic countries, as well as to Spain and Italy, and also hopes to visit the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, which houses a valuable collection of Persian manuscripts relating to Islamic art. The Peter Paul award will help her purchase digital images of manuscripts for more detailed study in Boston, and she will use the photos she’s taken of Islamic art during her travels as learning tools in the classroom.

“I find it really important in my teaching to remind and to show my students that when we talk about the Islamic world, we’re talking about a lot of cultural diversity,” says Fetvacı. “We’re talking about good and beautiful things as well as the negative images that we see so often in the media today—it’s imperative we remember that there’s a lot more there.”—Pamela Cooley

Portrait of Ottoman Sultan Selim II (1524–1574), Getty Images
Rediscovering the Passion to Learn

ALUMNI ARE FLOCKING BACK to CAS to be students again—minus the term papers and late-night review sessions. For those living in the Boston area, or who have access to YouTube or iTunes University online, the Discoveries lecture series provides an opportunity to learn about compelling issues affecting today’s world from BU’s most distinguished faculty members. Participants at the lectures, which are hosted by the Arts & Sciences Alumni Relations office, also get to mingle with fellow alumni and BU faculty and staff during the receptions that follow. Recent lectures have explored such topics as and staff during the receptions that follow. Recent lectures have explored such topics as

Q: What motivated you to study Cuba?
A: I had written my dissertation on the urban poor in Mexico, and I started questioning why there was so much poverty there, even though the country had undergone a revolution that was supposed to create more equality. I wanted to look at what different revolutions accomplished, so I decided to compare the outcomes of revolutions in Latin America. I covered Mexico first, but I did the most work on Cuba.

Q: What have you enjoyed most about studying Cuba?
A: It is interesting to go beneath the surface, beyond the rhetoric on both sides. For me, the goal was to find out what it is like to live under a socialist regime, and it is a lot more complicated and less ideological than you might think. I have been to Cuba about 10 times, and I am in contact with a lot of academics there. In Miami, where I’ve gone about six times, I’ve kept my contacts deliberately broad. I interview people in business, politics, the media, and academics.

Q: Your new book, The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the U.S. and Their Homeland, is about the waves of Cuban immigration to Miami. How do the new Cuban immigrants to the United States differ from older immigrant families who came over soon after Castro took power in 1959?
A: The first wave was very anti-Castro and anti-Communist. They were upper and middle class. They’d had a marvelous lifestyle in Cuba, with country clubs and a lot of resources. Recent arrivals are more similar to other Latin American immigrants. They don’t have a ton of money. They are starting to become U.S. citizens, and they generously want to share some of their U.S. earnings with the family they left behind.

Q: How has socialism affected social development in Cuba?
A: I think economic stagnation has been a problem for the country. Cuba hasn’t been able to improve the standard of living sufficiently for its people.

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A: It is really a welfare state, one of the only developing countries with cradle-to-grave benefits. The rationed food is really cheap. The country provides free healthcare and education. Cuba has the highest number of teachers and doctors per capita of any country in Latin America. So there has been some real social benefits of the revolution.—Jeremy Schwab

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From our readers

Classic Dean

MY SPRING ISSUE of arts&sciences arrived a week or so ago, and I casually thumbed through the magazine. When I reached page 12, the article about Dean Melville, I let out a very loud scream of delight and amazement! You must have heard that scream in Westwood all the way into Boston.

The picture evoked a flood of wonderful memories for me. There I was in my 1956 “body”—feeling so very proud. I was able to go to my college scrapbook and pull out the newspaper clipping that appeared in The Boston Sunday Globe, January 20, 1957. Dean Melville is picking Lester S. Dewis (then of Natick) who is directly behind the Dean, and beside me is Sadie J. Garner (then of Roxbury). Two others were cropped out of the picture: Shayna A. Chapman (then of Malden, stood behind Lester), and behind Sadie on the far right stood Nancy E. Fowler (then of Milford, Connecticut)....

I have a story that I would like to share with you. In 1955–1956, I served as president of the Harriet Richards Co-op House. In that capacity, I had to report to Dean Melville regularly. In those years, the Dean’s secretary was Marion Parsons, who lived in Medford. Marion drove a young man who lived near her in Medford (and went to her church) back and forth to BU. Russell Downes was attending the BU School of Education on the GI Bill. Well, Dean Melville and Marion Parsons conspired to fix me up with Russell. A “blind date” was arranged in the Dean’s office, and that is where I met Russ. August 29 of 2008 marked our 50th wedding anniversary....

My major at BU was music (from CAS, not the School of Music). Since college, I have always held a church music position. Beginning in 1960, I have served as Director of Music at the First Baptist Church right here in Westwood. I direct the Chancel Choir, play the organ, and direct the Westwood Ringers. The ringers have been on European concert tours three times!

I have enjoyed carrying the CAS magazine around. I shared the photo with my church choir, and we all had a good laugh over it. Actually, the way I look in the photo is essentially the way I looked when I started at the church in 1960. There are several people in the choir who have been there longer than I have, and who remember very well how I used to look! Oh dear, time marches on!

Please thank Natalie Jacobson McCracken for such a nice article on Dean Melville, who was such a special person to so many of us who knew her.

Marilyn Augusta (Estabrook) Downes (CAS’57)
Westwood, Massachusetts
Read more at www.bu.edu/cas.

Thank you for the wonderful feature on Dean Melville. The pictures were classic—just like she was. I, too, was on the Student Panetals Committee (representing West Campus) in 1968–1970, chaired by Dean Melville. It was one of the most challenging experiences of my years at BU. She would have been an excellent professor of debate, philosophy, forensics, or just about anything. Sharp, clear thinker—she was a true leader.

Ed Meadows (DGE’70, CAS’72)
Holt, Michigan

In addition to serving as a staff attorney for the Home School Legal Defense Association (“HSLDA”), I also serve as an adjunct professor of constitutional law for Patrick Henry College.

As someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ and believes that the Bible is God’s word and that it is true, I have found the editorial perspective of your publication almost entirely humanistic in perspective and authorship, but maybe I’ve missed something. If I have, I welcome your rebuttal. In particular I read in the most recent edition of the magazine the article about Geomorphologist David Marchant’s trek to the South Pole where he discovered boulders (among other things) that were in the same place as they were “74 million years ago.” Dr. Marchant is entitled to his beliefs, as you are to yours, and I mine. But we ought to at least mutually recognize that our views regarding the origin of the world are beliefs and that evidence (like Dr. Marchant’s) can be explained in other ways than the idea that the earth is billions of years old.

Michael Donnelly (CAS’90, LAW’97)
Purcellville, Virginia
Read more at www.bu.edu/cas.

The past season witnessed the growing strength of the Arts & Sciences alumni connection: More of you stepped forward to enable CAS/GRS to serve our students better and attract, retain, and nurture the careers of a terrific faculty of superb teachers and cutting-edge researchers. Despite the economic crisis, more alumni gave to the Arts & Sciences Alumni Fund and contributed more dollars than in the previous year. Some of you made very special leadership gifts. Thank you for this critical commitment to the Boston University of tomorrow.

Please enjoy this issue of arts&sciences. As always, I welcome your feedback (casdean@bu.edu) and encourage you to get involved with the Alumni Association. Stay in touch with your Boston University College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Virginia Sapiro
Dean of Arts & Sciences

from the dean continued

We are also developing new “live and in person” opportunities for alumni. For Boston-area alumni, the Discoveries lecture series, now in its third year, draws large crowds for varied topics, such as the financial crisis bailout, the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution (see story on page 4), the problem of forgiveness, and the creation of a dictionary of sign language. See this year’s topics at the Discoveries website, www.bu.edu/cas/ alumni/discoveries/, where you can also view videos of past sessions. The “Arts, Culture, and Ideas” lunchtime discussion series, cohosted by the BU Humanities Foundation, is a new and already popular offering. We are also increasing the number of alumni events with great substantive content in cities around the country and the world.

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Virginia Sapiro
Dean of Arts & Sciences

Holt, Michigan
He likes to tackle problems. When computer science major David House (CAS’10) sees a computer, he sees a way to find solutions. Through UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program), he does real research to help create new tools for science.

DAVID HOUSE arrived at BU with a theory: the professor with “the most interesting stuff on the door” would be a professor doing fascinating research. He spent his first few days at CAS wandering the halls, investigating professors’ doors, looking for one crammed with flyers, pictures, posters, and inspiration.

He found computer scientist Margrit Betke, whom House calls “the hardest-working professor I have ever known.” Through BU’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, which funds faculty-mentored undergraduates conducting original research, House and Betke teamed up to develop a computer program that helps to track and model cell behavior by using infrared thermal imaging.

“Tha’t’s the job of a computer scientist: finding ways to solve problems. Each of us has the capacity to change the world using the creative. We are only limited by our imaginations.”

Unlike more conventional tools, such as standard infrared cameras and flash photography, infrared thermal imaging produces much higher resolution images by recognizing electromagnetic waves and converting them to electrical signals that a computer can then read and understand. The program uses algorithms to generate data about the pictures. Betke’s lab has already participated in studies that use this program to track the nocturnal movements of bat populations by reading their heat.

“I knew about computer science,” House says, “but Professor Betke encouraged me to increase my biology knowledge in my free time in order to really understand all aspects of the program. It’s amazing what you can accomplish with the proper team and the right encouragement.”

After creating and setting up the algorithms with Betke, House collaborated with Joyce Wong, associate chair of the graduate biomedical engineering program, to fine-tune the system to model cellular behavior. “The algorithms can be applied to a variety of biological systems—cells, mammals, anything with heat,” he says. “We want to make it open-source, so eventually any college can use it in many different ways.”

Computers and the possibilities they offer have fascinated House since childhood, when he watched “those ‘80s hacker movies in which an unwitting teen sticks it to The Man and wins,” he says. Now he sees computer science for what it can do and how it can change the world we live in. “The real computer science is in the abstract,” he says. “It’s about taking a situation and using computers to model that situation to see how something works. Right now, I help computers understand what cells look like and how they behave so they can recognize cells and model their behavior. But the range of possibilities for what computer science can do is enormous.”

Although House doesn’t want to hack into any government supercomputers, he maintains a strong stance on governmental and environmental accountability. He founded the BU chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery, which helps drive local technology-based improvement projects like technology training for local high school teachers. He also lives in "pika," a coed, environmentally friendly, MIT-affiliated cooperative in Cambridgeport “full of mathematicians and engineers” who do their own cooking, gardening, and composting; allow pets; and have constructed an enormous tree house attached to the building.

At his core, House likes helping out and untangling obstacles, which is why he finds the field of computer science so rewarding. “I like that people can come to us and say ‘We have a problem and we want you to fix it’,” he says. “That’s the job of a computer scientist: finding ways to solve problems. Each of us has the capacity to change the world using the creative. We are only limited by our imaginations.”

After graduation, I want to go somewhere that lets me continue this research, to make a real, tangible difference. It’s very hard work, and we may fail a bunch of times trying for an answer, but when we come up with a solution, it’s so rewarding.”

This image demonstrates the BU MicroSight system’s ability to automatically record a cell’s lineage through time.

Computing Solutions

BY RACHEL JOHNSON
Associate Professor of English Gene Jarrett

**He speaks in your voice:**

AMERICAN.

GENE ANDREW JARRETT began his 2006 book Deans and Truants with a deceptively simple question: What is African American literature? The term, after all, refers not merely to the subject matter of the works it describes but to literature that both represents the African American experience and is written by authors who are themselves black. But what, then, of black authors who have written works without black characters? Or of those who are of mixed race? “You can’t take this question for granted, because it’s at the heart of so many questions of human identity and, in particular, race,” says Jarrett, an associate professor of English.

The editor of such books as African American Literature Beyond Race: An Alternative Reader and The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892–1938 (with Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates, Jr.), Jarrett has spent his career studying racial representation in American literature—in particular, how African Americans have been understood both as characters in and as authors of literary works over the last two centuries. His Deans and Truants looks at black authors throughout American history who have used literature to challenge beliefs about race that were accepted as truths in their day. And in his forthcoming book Representing the Race: The Politics of African American Literature from Jefferson to Obama, Jarrett examines the political implications of African American literature—from the role that Phyllis Wheatley’s poetry played in Thomas Jefferson’s disparagement of African American political unity to the role that Barack Obama’s Dreams from My Father has had in shaping the bipartisan, pragmatic political culture of his presidency.

Like other authors who have spoken on behalf of historically disenfranchised groups, African American writers have long understood that the way a group is represented in literature can influence or transform how the members of that group are perceived—and, by extension, how they are treated—in life outside of books. Following the Civil War, for example, a new literary type began to appear in works by African American authors. Known as the “New Negro”—in contrast to the “Old Negro,” the submissive, unrefined, dialect-speaking plantation slave—this figure was well dressed and well educated, a speaker of formal English who was culturally sophisticated and politically active; a character, in other words, who might inspire fondness and admiration in readers, rather than an object of pity or scorn.

The poet, novelist, and essayist Paul Laurence Dunbar could have been a model for the New Negro type. Born to former slaves in 1872, Dunbar became one of the most celebrated black authors of his generation for a series of poems that were pastoral analogies to the Old Negro, written in dialect and much lauded for capturing an “authentic black voice,” says Jarrett.

But the dialect poems that earned Dunbar a reputation during his lifetime as the “poet laureate of the Negro race”—a well-intentioned designation, albeit one based on a tacit assumption of difference in kind and ability between races—represented only a small part of his oeuvre. He was also the author of many poems in the American Romantic and Victorian styles, works in formal English on topics of nature, love, and other subjects popular at that time. Additionally, he wrote four novels and more than 100 short stories, only some of which focused on the African American experience.

Jarrett, who has edited several collections of Dunbar’s writings, is now at work on his biography, “Paul Laurence Dunbar was a man of contradictions,” says Jarrett. “Whereas other writers of his time were working with New Negro images, he was, in his poetry, working with images of the Old Negro in order to make money and to achieve fame. And yet in some ways he was ahead of his time. He wanted to be considered not as a black writer but just as a writer; yet in that time after slavery, perhaps society was not ready for someone like him. Because of the expectations people had, he couldn’t be just a writer; he had to be the ‘poet laureate of the Negro race.’ That was the burden he had to bear.”

**Books by 19th-century author Paul Laurence Dunbar, whose biography Gene Jarrett is writing:**

*Deans and Truants*

*The New Negro: Readings* (with Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)

*The Negro: A Race of People, Not a Race of Men* (with James Weldon Johnson)

*Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Life* (with Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)

*The New Negro* (with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)

*The New Black*

*He wanted to be considered not as a black writer but just as a writer; yet in that time after slavery, perhaps society was not ready for someone like him. Because of the expectations people had, he couldn’t be just a writer, he had to be the ‘poet laureate of the Negro race.’ That was the burden he had to bear.”
Breaking into the Club

BY CORINNE STEINBRENNER

Initially Jane Williams was snubbed by the financial services industry. Now she’s managing a billion dollars in assets and recently has been named by Barron’s as one of the country’s top 100 independent investment advisors.

JANE WILLIAMS (CAS’71) knew exactly what she wanted to do when she received her degree in economics: become a stockbroker. So after graduation she applied at brokerages in Boston, and when her husband’s company transferred him to Chicago, she applied at brokerages there too. In both cities, she recalls, the response was the same: “They said, ‘Gee, we’d love to hire you. How fast do you type?’”

When Williams explained that she wasn’t interested in typing (she didn’t even know how), there was no interest in being licensed as a stockbroker so she could provide investment advice, she was encouraged to take a typing class. “They said, ‘We can hire you as an assistant, but we couldn’t possibly hire you as a broker,’” she says.

Speaking this summer from her office in Palo Alto, California, where she is CEO of a financial advisory firm that manages $1 billion in assets, Williams is diplomatic about her early struggles with the financial services industry. “The business world just didn’t have much experience with women, and I think there was honest concern at the brokerage level that male clients wouldn’t relate well to female brokers,” she says. “And you hire people who are like you—and I wasn’t like those guys because I wasn’t a guy.”

During the three years she spent trying to convince brokerages to hire her, however, she wasn’t as understanding. “I was angry,” she says. “When you’re faced with irrational behavior, you can’t relate well to your own mind it’s irrational—it doesn’t make you discouraged, it makes you angry.”

Even Williams’s first seemingly positive experiences with financial firms turned out to be lessons in gender discrimination. After failing to find suitable work at Chicago-area brokerages, Williams was hired into a management training program at Harris Trust & Savings Bank—not exactly the work she was looking for, but a step in the right direction. She later learned Harris Trust had paid her a far lower salary than it paid her male counterparts. (Thanks to a class action lawsuit against the bank, she eventually received a check that made up the difference.)

In 1973, Williams got what she thought was her first big break in the brokerage world when she moved to Merrill Lynch’s Ottawa branch and was asked to take the aptitude exam for prospective stockbrokers. “I took this thing,” she says, “and I thought, ‘Wow, I really nailed this. This is no problem. I’m in.’” When she returned to Merrill Lynch for a follow-up interview, however, she was told the brokerage couldn’t hire her because she’d done poorly on the exam. She later was able to verify that she had, in fact, passed the test handily. The gentleman at the brokerage couldn’t hire her because he didn’t want to hire her.

“I think male brokers, at some level, were conquering a new frontier every time they finished with the last sale. Women were building relationships and looking for their clients to help them build their business.”

But a year later—after seeing the excellent work she’d done on contract for the Economic Council of Canada—he hired her. “Williams became, as far as she knew, the only female stockbroker in Merrill Lynch’s Canadian system. And when she and her husband moved to Palo Alto a short while later, she opened a Merrill Lynch office there and became one of a handful of female brokers in California.

“Much to the brokerage community’s surprise, and much to my satisfaction,” she says, “men were very happy to deal with women brokers.” Williams and her female colleagues seemed to have a different style of doing business; she says, a style that many customers preferred. “I think male brokers, at some level, were conquering a new frontier every time they finished with the last sale. Women were building relationships and looking for their clients to help them build their business.”

A highly personalized approach to offering investment advice became the key to Williams’s success. In 1982, she and a male colleague left Merrill Lynch to form their own company, and today, she says, Sand Hill Advisors remains successful because it continues its commitment to forming quality relationships with its clients. “Where a Merrill Lynch broker might have two or three hundred clients, our entire firm has 155 clients,” she says. These customers include non-profit organizations, small retirement accounts, and wealthy individuals—“our average individual client has about $6 million of assets with us”—who rely on Williams and her staff to provide in-depth financial planning and execute that plan.

Sand Hill Advisors specializes in helping people through financial transitions, and Williams herself specializes in helping women in transition—divorcees fighting for their fair share of family assets, widows managing their own finances for the first time. While the old-school approach to such situations, says Williams, is to “pat the woman on the head and say, ‘Don’t worry, dear, we’ll take care of you,’” her approach is more empowering. She teaches women clients about risk, long-term investment returns, estate planning—things that, even today, she finds, women often know less about than men do. Williams’s goal is to help these women take control of their own financial lives, to prove to them—just as she proved to the brokerage community 30 years ago—that women and finance can be a winning combination.

Financial Tips for Women

Wraith manager Jane Williams offers the same advice to all her clients: understand your priorities, educate yourself about the investment vehicles available to you, and develop a financial plan and stick with it. For her female clients—who often seem more squeamish about managing their personal finances than her male clients do—she adds these words of wisdom:

Understand Your Priorities

“Understand what’s important to you. If you’re motivated to be philanthropic, as many women are, recognize that as a legitimate financial goal. Don’t be shy about placing philanthropy among your financial priorities.

Educate Yourself

...Read, read, read.

A few books to check out:

- Prince Charming Isn’t Coming by Barbara Stanny. This is Not the Life I Ordered by Deborah Collins, Stephens, et al.; and The Informed Investor by Frank Armstrong III.

Develop a Plan

Understand where risk fits.

Women tend to be more protective of their money, and therefore more risk-averse, than men. But risk does have a proper place in your financial portfolio. Learn to understand risk and then use it to your advantage.

Stick with the Plan

Be honest with your advisor.

When men are dissatisfied with a business relationship, they tend to be aggressive in steering that relationship back on course, while women tend to avoid conflict by simply ending the relationship and starting over with someone else. Part of sticking with your plan, however, is sticking with your advisor. If you feel your advisor has lost sight of your priorities, don’t jump ship—confront the issue so it can be resolved.

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LESLIE McCONNELL is part of an unlikely group of language learners who congregate each Wednesday in the common room of the Camfield Garden Estates housing development in Boston’s Roxbury neighborhood. Taught by Graduate School of Arts & Sciences student volunteers, many of the class participants are senior citizens, though there are teenagers and working professionals in the group, too. They come from a range of backgrounds: mostly African American, but also Hispanic, Irish, and Lithuanian. And all of them come to class each week not because they have to, but because they want to be able to communicate with Spanish speakers in their lives, or just out of intellectual curiosity.

“I felt I needed to take the class because we live in a bilingual society, and I want to be able to communicate with more people,” says McConnell, a social worker at Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury. “I work with Spanish-speaking people every day, and now I try out my Spanish with them.”

The course, which began in March of 2008, is the brainchild of BU alumna Jewelle Anderson (CFA’84). A retired Boston Public Schools teacher, Anderson has been a community volunteer for years.

She decided to launch the class after senior citizens at the Women’s Service Club of Boston, where she then served as vice president and remains a member, told her they wanted an opportunity to learn Spanish. The club is a community service organization founded for black women.
With only a tiny budget for the class, Anderson decided she needed volunteer teachers. So she approached BU Romance Studies Professor James Iffland, then head of the Spanish section and now department chair, to see if he could recommend any graduate students who would volunteer their time. “I knew that BU would have great teachers,” she explains. Iffland promised her he would send along some of his best.

He saw an opportunity not just to help senior citizens and other local residents, but also to enrich the graduate student experience in the Romance Studies Department. “It seemed to be a perfect project for our students to provide a service to the community,” says Iffland. “It also gives graduate students a chance to teach in an environment that is very different from the environment they’ve been teaching in at BU. I think that universities should be doing more of this type of activity.”

The class took off from the start. Twenty students showed up the first day, drawn by flyers and newspaper advertisements Anderson posted, and, over the next few months, all but three attended regularly. As the students and teachers got to know one another, they developed a strong camaraderie. Last December, the students organized a party to celebrate the end of their first year together, and to thank the three instructors: Megan Gibbons, Maria Luisa Martinez, and Peter Mahoney.

The three instructors, all 2011 classmates who plan to become Spanish professors, say the experience has broadened their perspective on what learning can be. “I have gained a continuing appreciation that learning is, or can be, a lifelong process,” says Gibbons. “It is a small opportunity to begin to improve the relationship between African Americans and Latinos,” says Iffland. “I just think that if more African Americans begin to learn Spanish and learn about Latino culture, and if Latinos learn more about African American culture, some of the friction that has marked the relationship may begin to disappear.”

The class is a prototype of how positive intercultural learning can work. The teachers are patient. The students are motivated and ask a lot of questions, particularly about the Spanish-speaking countries their teachers have visited. They want to know how life is lived in those countries, and not just through secondhand instruction. Earlier this year, Anderson guided her students on a trip to Madrid, Spain, to experience the culture and language firsthand.

The students took up the challenge with gusto. Since May, they have held potluck fundraisers, offering fried fish, barbecued ribs, peach cobbler, candied yams, and a whole array of other dishes to local residents in return for contributions for their trip. Betty Lou McGuire single-handedly provided sweet potato pies, candied yams, and peach cobbler. “They were from heaven,” remembers Anderson.

The planned trip will add a new dimension to the continuing classes. “The value of going to a foreign country is meeting other people—not just speaking a foreign language but getting to know about other people,” says Anderson.

To learn about Hispanic culture closer to home, the class takes field trips, such as a recent visit to Casa Romero restaurant in the Back Bay for a private lecture by chef-owner Leo Romero and one of the most basic and pleasant forms of cultural exchange—sampling food. Romero lectured the class about authentic Mexican cuisine as they munched on mole poblano, chiles, and skirt steak.

There is a real misconception in this country by people who talk about Tex-Mex food: they think everything is all meat and cheese and spices,” he said. “But the food is not as spicy in Mexico. They put chile and other condiments on the table, but chefs don’t put it in the food much.”

Romero’s lesson was simple—cultural misunderstanding comes in many forms, including culinary ones. The implication was that the best way to correct these stereotypes is for people to learn about other cultures beyond the surface.
ENGLISH PROFESSOR DAVID WAGENKNECHT once summed up a student’s final paper as “profundely wrongheaded.”

“That struck me immediately as true,” recalls Keith Johnson (GRS’99, ‘08), the critiqued student, now assistant professor of English at Augusta State University in Georgia. “Nevertheless, David continued, ‘I always learn from your papers.’ And this, too, struck me immediately as true. Basically everything he ever said struck me immediately as true.”

As Wagenknecht retires, students, alumni, and colleagues echo Johnson’s praise, calling him “an extraordinarily generous reader and listener and profoundly humane” (Emily Rohrbach, GR1996, ‘07, assistant professor of English, Northwestern University); “gracious and accommodating” (Sharifah Aishah Osman, GRS'05, senior lecturer in English, University of Malaya); and “an absolute dream of an advisor and a tremendously influential teacher” (Johnson).

“The first thing every student encountered was his extreme brilliance and kindness,” says William Carroll, Wagenknecht’s faculty colleague for 38 years and now department chair. “David was one of the most important intellectual presences in the department for decades.”

As a student, Wagenknecht (CAS’62, GRS’64) had no thought of teaching in the department where his father, Edward, was a professor. Having earned a BA and MA in English, David taught for a year at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts and then at the University of Hull, England. Edward, was a professor. Having earned a BA and MA in English, David taught for a year at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts and then at the University of Hull, England. “Under David's editorship it has become a crisis-prone and well-researched institution,” writes Alex Bove (CAS’93, GRS’95, ‘05), instructor in English, SUNY Buffalo. “I learned from David that learning, thinking, teaching, and writing don't require you to be on solid ground, and that, in fact, the best results often come when your feet leave the ground. I felt as though when I was in one of David’s seminars I was taking part in a rare and valuable event.”

Rohrbach characterizes the seminars as “encounters with the irreducible difficulty and strangeness of aesthetic experience.”

Says Jonathan Mulrooney (GRS'01), associate professor of English, College of the Holy Cross, “He is fundamentally concerned with leading the authentic life of the intellectual, without capitulation to professional trends, and to modeling that for his students. I feel his influence daily in my own journey as a teacher and scholar.”

Along with the generations of literary scholars he sent out to educate and inspire younger generations were the equally appreciative undergraduates on distinctly nonliterary career paths. “I can’t tell you how many times I’ve sat in his office, just chatting,” says advisee Katie Hairston (CAS’11), an English major planning to be a large-animal veterinarian. “He helped me to develop the intellectual passions I have.”

“I feel his influence daily in my own journey as a teacher and scholar.”

—Jonathan Mulrooney (GRS'01)

Those passions center on the Romantics, William Blake particularly (Belknap Press of Harvard published his Blake’s night: William Blake and the idea of pastoral in 1973), and Sigmund Freud and the arcane psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan. In 1978, Wagenknecht began editing Studies in Romanticism. “Under David’s editorship it has become the journal in the field of British and Continental Romantic literature and the arts,” says Professor Charles Rzepka, who after a year under Wagenknecht’s tutelage will succeed him as editor. “Part of what makes it so good is David’s own intellectual curiosity and broad-ranging openness to new approaches, and his encyclopedic knowledge not only of what’s out there, but also what direction it’s taking.”

Teaching has been his other intellectual passion. “David's seminars were always extremely challenging and daring,” writes Alex Bove (CAS’93, GRS’95, ‘05), instructor in English, SUNY Buffalo. “I learned from David that learning, thinking, teaching, and writing don't require you to be on solid ground, and that, in fact, the best results often come when your feet leave the ground. I felt as though when I was in one of David’s seminars I was taking part in a rare and valuable event.”

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Says Bove, “There should be a Nobel in teaching.”

Music of the Gods

The retirement gift presented to David Wagenknecht by his English department colleagues seems at once markedly imaginative and inevitable: an aeolian harp, the first most had ever seen. Wooden instruments played on only by the wind, they were a fashionable feature of genteel 19th-century homes, resting before open windows, where their strings, all tuned to the same key but of varying thicknesses, produced random, overlapping harmonics. To Romantic writers, they often represented nature as muse, inspiration of artists.

These days aeolian harps can be ordered on the Internet, but the English faculty wanted something special. Their gift was custom-made by Toby Rzepka, professional craftsman of fine string instruments and son of English Professor Charles Rzepka. Based, appropriately, on an early 19th-century English design, its body is of dramatically figured maple, with red cedar, blondewood, and Brazilian rosewood elements and veneer trim, including a blue-and-white rosette suggesting gusting wind. It is, as its delighted owner says, simply “beautiful.”

As the Twig Is Bent

Over a long career, Edward Wagenknecht (1900–2004), father of David as well as Walter (CAS’69, STH’73, MED’79) and Robert, and BU professor of English from 1947 to 1965, published essays and reviews beyond number and some 70 books. They include studies of American literature—his scholarly specialty—English literature, and a steady stream of biographies focused on character rather than chronology (remarkable in the late twenties, when they began), with subjects ranging from Poe, Henry James, and Whister to Shakespeare and Dickens to silent movie stars. “He was passionate about early cinema,” David recalls. His The Movies in the Age of Innocence (1962) remains a classic.
Beyond

Our Borders

Overseer Robert Hildreth Advances Creative Writing Internationally

As Jordan Coriza (GRS’09) continued to read aloud from his short story “Skinned” in Leslie Epstein’s Creative Writing Program fiction workshop, one listener was moved by more than Coriza’s considerable literary gifts. Robert Hildreth, the vice chair of Boston University’s Board of Overseers and founder and president of International Bank Services (IBS), Inc., was sitting in on Epstein’s workshop that day. A philanthropist with a deep and multifaceted interest in Latin America, Hildreth was struck by the eye-opening perspective brought to the class by Coriza, who is himself Argentine.

“There’s a magic in Leslie’s workshops that really draws the students out, and this story had such a unique topic and a unique sensibility,” recalls Hildreth. “And it got me daydreaming: What would it be like if every writer here could know what this student knows, could share that experience?”

Now the program’s students will have just such an opportunity. In the spring, Hildreth presented the Creative Writing Program with a $2 million gift to create two new, globally focused initiatives. The Robert Pinsky Global Fellowship in Creative Writing, honoring the professor and past U.S. Poet Laureate, will send MFA students to the international locales of their choice to write, study, and experience life abroad. The Leslie Epstein International Visiting Professorship, named in honor of the celebrated novelist who has directed the Creative Writing Program with a dual passion for education and international and immigration issues and a historically distinguished writing program with a growing global focus. “Because of Bob’s interests and his thinking, the gift will bring another unique emphasis to our program: international awareness,” Pinsky says. “The very existence of these imaginative and substantial new programs should inspire all of our students to enrich their work with an awareness of other languages, other cultures, other possibilities.”

Hildreth knows firsthand the potentially life-changing power of immersion in a foreign culture. The seeds of his philanthropic and career focus on international issues were planted by his father, Richard (SMG 37, SED 49), a history teacher who first piqued his son’s interest in the world outside the U.S. International issues were common topics of conversation in the Hildreth household, and by the time young Robert reached his freshman year of college, he was eager to travel abroad.

Joining a Spanish-language immersion program, he traveled to Zacatecas, Mexico. During the four months he spent living with a family there, he found himself powerfully drawn to the people, who were open and friendly and interested in hearing about life in the U.S., and to the region’s culture. After graduating from Harvard University and earning master’s degrees from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and George Washington University, he returned to the region—this time to La Paz, Bolivia—where he worked for several years as an economist specializing in Latin America for the International Monetary Fund. “My interest in international issues, and in immigrant issues in particular, flowed directly out of my experience in Latin America,” he says. “Once I got back to the States, I very much wanted to help the people I knew. My philosophy is that immigration is critical to our country. And of course like most Americans I believe that education is something—is the thing—that can advance you, something that you own and nobody else owns. But I am not a philosopher; I am a doer.”

“I’m trying to break down some barriers, and I have two battering rams: to send our students there, and to bring their best here.”

After returning to his home state of Massachusetts, Hildreth became a supporter of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership in the immigrant-populous Chelsea Public Schools, beginning a strong relationship with his father’s alma mater that culminated in his election to the Board of Overseers. His evolving role as a member of the BU community, coinciding with a lifelong fascination with poetry, soon led him to Robert Pinsky’s Favorite Poem Project (www.favoritepoem.org) and, in turn, to the Creative Writing Program. The academic home of the historic workshops where Robert Lowell once taught Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, and George Starbuck had grown into a program with a global focus, drawing writers from across the U.S. and around the world to study in a community of distinguished fiction writers, poets, and playwrights. The faculty includes Chinese-born novelist Ha Jin (GRS’93) and Irish-born playwright Ronan Noone (GRS’09), and past writer-teachers have included the poets Derek Walcott, born in St. Lucia, and Charles Simic, from the former Yugoslavia; British novelist Penelope Mortimer and Margot Livesey; and Russian translator Victor Golyshin.

Hildreth’s gift will broaden the program’s reputation as an international literary force while providing student writers with a rare opportunity to expand their personal and literary world views. “There is no other gift of this kind in any other program we are aware of,” says program director Epstein. “Our students can go anywhere in the world they like and do whatever they want when away. They don’t have to write, because we have every faith that having to be on their own, drawing on what they see and hear as well as their own wits, will in the not-very-long run enhance their skills as poets and novelists and playwrights. Things that shake you up, that break the routine, that give you a new pair of eyes tend to do that.”

Support the Leslie Epstein Professorship

Robert Hildreth has challenged all supporters, admirers, and friends of Professor Leslie Epstein to join him in building the endowment for the Leslie Epstein International Visiting Professorship. Hildreth will match each gift, dollar for dollar, up to a total of $1 million. To make your gift online, go to www.bu.edu/alumni/giving/online/index.html and enter “Leslie Epstein Professorship” in the space provided in the “your gift designation” section. For more information, contact Karen Weiss Jones, chief advancement officer for Arts & Sciences, at karenwj@bu.edu or 617-358-1214.
Meet CAS’s Warren Professors

FACULTY MEMBERS RECOGNIZED FOR SCHOLARLY, CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS

BU’s founding president, William Fairfield Warren, had a vision for an institution where students would receive an exceptional liberal arts education without regard to sex, race, or religion. His groundbreaking approach and forethought are reflected in the professorships created in his name in 2008. The William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professorships, established on the recommendation of an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Council, recognize the University’s most distinguished faculty. According to BU President Robert A. Brown, the award is intended as the highest honor for senior faculty members who continue to be involved in research, scholarship, and teaching, as well as the civic life of the University. “Professors Kopell, Kotlikoff, and Winn stand out for their fundamental scholarly contributions to their fields, and their tireless efforts as citizens of Boston University.”

Kopell, who also is the cofounder and codirector of the Center for Biodynamics in the College of Engineering, said, “I think BU is an extraordinary place for people to work collaboratively on interdisciplinary questions.”

Kotlikoff, who has been at BU for 25 years, said he was “deeply honored” by the award. “It’s been a great pleasure to work with my colleagues and the administration to build a world-class economics department and university.”

Winn, who also is director of the BU Humanities Foundation, said, “I think of this award as a symbolic endorsement of the broad and deep investigation of cultures that we call the humanities, the respect for past wisdom that drives all historical work, and the willingness to cross disciplinary borders that often enables fresh thinking. I hope that my being singled out for this award will be encouraging to others who work in these vital areas.”

We’re not just saving paper. We charted new territory this year by publishing the Arts & Sciences annual report online for the first time. The electronic report allows us to use interactive multimedia techniques and high-impact graphics to showcase the College’s many accomplishments with a contemporary edge. Our message is clear: we are healthy and strong despite the challenges of the global financial crisis, and we have continued to make steady progress toward the goals laid out in Boston University’s Strategic Plan.

Topping our list of accomplishments:

- We hired 32 new faculty members who are working at the frontiers of their disciplines. Of these, 19 replaced professors who retired or left BU, and 13 expanded our numbers to add strength in critical areas of research and teaching as we made progress toward adding 100 new faculty to Arts & Sciences over 10 years. Our impressive new faculty hail from top universities, including University of California-Berkeley, Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Michigan, and Princeton.
- We have continued transforming our classrooms and laboratories, enabling us to offer CAS/GRS students state-of-the-art teaching, and provide our researchers with the facilities they need to make path-breaking research contributions.
- A Task Force on the First-Year Experience studied principles and best practices that should guide the curricular and co-curricular offerings for freshmen from the moment they arrive on campus through the end of their first year to give them a strong foundation for success in and beyond college.
- We attracted more alumni engagement than ever before, with a total of over 10,000 for the fourth consecutive year, including a freshman class of 1,953 that far exceeded our goal of 1,807, with no significant loss in standard quality measures. We made substantial enrollment-driven additions to and subtractions from the class
Financial Strength

The College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences achieved a balanced unrestricted expense budget of $88,604,641 at the close of the 2009 fiscal year. The College provided almost $750,000 in one-time restricted funds to its departments and centers to support needs identified as priorities during the FY 2009 budget planning exercise.

- Roughly $382,000 of annual giving funds were used to support laboratory equipment and supplies.
- More than $202,000 in unrestricted endowment income was provided to support computing requirements and faculty travel.
- Approximately $163,000 of indirect cost recovery funds were provided to support research and miscellaneous operating needs.

Development & Alumni Relations

Gift revenues to Arts & Sciences totaled $7,375,967. While this is a decline of 16.5 percent from FY08, pledges (future gifts to be paid in one to five years) increased 12 percent, indicating a strong gift pipeline for the next few years. A positive trend is the increased solicitation activity that gifts to the CAS/GRS Annual Funds (unrestricted gifts) increased 9 percent to a total of $893,958, reflecting renewed, successful outreach to alumni, parents, and friends of the College.

Dean Sapiro traveled extensively across the nation to visit alumni, parents, and friends of Arts & Sciences and continued building a base of support.

More Good News

The African Studies Center further strengthened the African Language Program with a new institutional partnership with the Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis in Senegal and the introduction of Arabic script in Wolof, Pulaar, and Hausa classes.

The BU Marine Program continued to expand academic partnerships with three leading New England marine research institutions: the New England Aquarium, the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA), and the Sea Education Association.

The BU Mock Trial Association had the top overall score out of 32 teams at the American Mock Trial Association’s annual National Mediation Tournament in November. Mentored by CAS Assistant Dean for Pre-Law Advising Edward Stern, BU team members also placed second and fourth in Final Round Advocacy and third in Final Round Mediation.

The Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies & Civilizations initiated an intensive Arabic study abroad program in Morocco for undergraduate students. Launched in the spring 2009 semester, the program was an immediate success. Fifteen students (the target number) were sent to Rabat, where students experienced home stays with local Moroccan families and had the opportunity to go on guided cultural excursions, as well as take courses.

The Women’s Studies Program created the Boston University Faculty Network for Women’s Studies, Gender & Sexuality by reaching out to all faculty on the Charles River and Medical campuses who have research and teaching interests in women’s studies, including work on gender and/or sexuality. More than 150 BU faculty members joined the network, and more than 50 attended the network’s inaugural “meet and greet” in December.

THE FIRST TIME bluesman James Montgomery split a bill with Aerosmith, the rockers opened for him in Boston University’s Sargent Gymnasium in the early 1970s.

“The opening band (Aerosmith) came on and had a big, huge banner, and a wall of Marshall stacks and smoke machines and a couple pyrotechnics,” recalls Montgomery (71), laughing. “Then, peel away all this equipment, and there’s the headline [The James Montgomery Band] using a couple amps and a drum kit.”

That up-and-coming hard-rock band’s career “took off fast,” Montgomery says of the now-legendary Aerosmith. Not only because of their raucous live show, he notes, but because “everyone in that band is an accomplished blues musician—they understand the roots of the music.”

Montgomery would know: The blues harmonica great has jammed with and learned from the best—such names as John Lee Hooker, James Cotton, and Junior Wells. And as for succeeding in the music business—not to mention rocking it on stage—Montgomery’s been no slouch himself these four decades. (In fact, slouch is the last word you’d associate with a man known for his vigorous high kicks on stage.) He’s toured with Bruce Springsteen and Bonnie Raitt. He’s released several albums, one of which cracked the Billboard Top 10. And the Detroit native has stayed true to his own roots, earning his title as president of the New England Blues Society.

What’s he been up to lately? Montgomery wrote and recorded music for the new blues film, Delta Rising (www.deltarising.com), narrated by Morgan Freeman. Filmed largely in Clarksdale, Mississippi, “It’s a documentary about the Delta blues—which is arguably America’s biggest cultural export,” Montgomery says. “The film is really well done and thorough—and it features me, so it has some of the greatest entertainers in the world,” he jokes.

Last year, Montgomery recorded andogged with Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer in the Kramer-Montgomery Band. “It was a fun project,” Montgomery says. “And I really discovered, he’s one of the best drummers on the planet. He can play any groove.”

On his career as a working—and entertaining—musician, Montgomery reflects, “Running your own business is always a challenge. You have to be inventive. You have to make sure you market your product correctly. Of course, the product I sell is myself,” he adds. “It’s almost like there’s two me’s: There’s the fearless guy you see on stage, and then there’s me who sits at home on the patio, does some gardening, and enjoys a glass of wine with dinner.” (He lives in Newport, Rhode Island, in a restored church that was once the spot for the wonderland Underground Railroad.)

The quondam English major hasn’t forgotten his liberal arts education—he tells interviewers how the blues exemplifies Aristotle’s principle of catharsis. And he frequently runs into old friends from his BU days: “That’s the great thing about my job,” he says. Classmates he hasn’t heard from in years will find out his band’s coming to town, and drop him a line. “It’s not like normally when someone visits—Did you see so-and-so when he was in town?” “No! I missed him!” Because most people when they visit don’t run an ad in the paper announcing that they’re gonna be there. So, I’ve been really fortunate.”

To learn more about what James Montgomery is up to, visit www.jamesmontgomery.com.
Distinguished Company

As the fall foliage brightened the New England landscape, Arts & Sciences alumni from around the globe convened on Boston for Alumni Weekend, October 23-25. The festivities included classes and symposia, campus tours, host and college social gatherings, a community service project, and a men’s ice hockey game vs. University of Michigan.

As an Arts & Sciences alumna, I was excited to hear that our alumna, Sarah Petkovic, was an active member of the BU Army ROTC Alumni Association, BU Hockey Alumni, and Friends of BU Hockey. She comes from a long line of BU alumni—with aunts, uncles, cousins, a sister, and mother who are also alumni.

Florence E. (Flo) Perry (CAS’49) of Southampton, Calif., writes, “As a graduate of the 60th anniversary of the graduation from Boston University—approaches, I am reminded of the wonderful difference this graduation made in my life. In order to fulfill college, I worked long hours at St. Clare’s restaurant in Harvard Square and lived in the North End Union, a settlement house, as a group worker, earning my tuition and housing. I attended classes full time, sang in the Chapel Choir, took part in many college activities, and considered myself twice blessed.”

I married Bob Perry in June 1949; he had graduated from CLA and was attending the BU School of Theology. We served churches in the New England Conference for 10 years and had four children, ages 11 to just one year when Bob decided that California was his spiritual home. So, we packed up a trailer with sleeping bags, food, diapers, and all our belongings, and set off in our family station wagon for a monthlong trip down to the Wild West, where our assignment was to build a new church. What a culture shock! But we did it.

Our second assignment was at University Methodist Church in Redlands, where I learned my teaching credentials. Then for 30 years I taught and later became a principal, as well as continued to be a mother to our brood and a stepmother to our shepherd’s pastor’s wife.

We moved to Sacramento in 1996 to be closer to our daughters and our six grandchildren. Now we have two great-grandsons as well; Bob passed away in 1996. He was a warm, caring pastor, a brilliant music teacher and composer, and a talented artist.

I look in the circle of family and friends. Poetry my passion. If you walk with me, I will help others see and feel the beauty in our hearts. I have children who have been robbed of their unique rhythms. I have learned to view life as part of an overall design. I love the way of my money, its newness, its extraordinary experiences of love, creativity, and family, which prove that there is a spirit that blesses my life.

To read a poem of Flo’s, go to www.bu.edu/cas/magazine/Fall09/perry.

*(To read a poem of Flo's, go to www.bu.edu/cas/magazine/Fall09/perry.)*
Poetically Yojic

Greater Boston, and Boston University in particular, inhabit the poems of Sasenarine Persaud’s latest book, In a Blackout (TSAR Publications, 2008). Riding the Green Line to campus, listening to Nobel Laureate and fellow West Indian Derek Walcott read his poetry in a BU auditorium, and perusing the books of the banks of the Charles, Persaud (GRS’06) evokes scenes from his student days in the GRS Creative Writing program as the backdrop for his international relations major is coming in handy for work on U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes issues. In his personal life, he served as a senior advisor to the Obama presidential campaign. Son Sage keeps him even busier.


Daniel Charles Morris (GRS’96) of West Lafayette, Ind., is co-editor of The New York Yale Poetics Initiative and Beyond Exploring Latin American, Jewish Identity, and the American Period Tradition (Yale University Press, 2008). In spring 2009, he held the Walt Whitman Chair in American Culture Studies at Bard College, New York, through the Fulbright Program.

Wilfred Labiosa (CAS’93) of Boston, Mass., is working at Casa Esperanza, in Roskilde, as the director, Relapse Prevention & Outpatient Services, and director, Women’s Residential Program. He had the honor of presenting his research on clients with substance abuse disorders at an international medical conference in Habana, Cuba.

David Schwab (CAS’95) and his wife, Showna, of Chicago, Ill., announce the birth of their second child, Gavin Isaac Schwab, on March 8, 2009. Schwab is president of Schwab Realty Group, Inc., which specializes in the private brokerage of commercial real estate. The Schwabs live on the north side of Chicago. E-mail David at david@schwabch.com.

Jo Anne (Domingo-Lopez) Casas (CAS’94) and her husband, Abel, of Pearl City, Hawaii, announce the birth of their second child, Alyssa Ashley Sosa Casas, on July 2, 2008. Both Jo Anne and Abel are airline transportation system specialists with the FAA. Jo Anne is part of the Radar Automation Group and Abel is in the Data/Communication Group. E-mail Jo Anne at jodomingo@hotmail.com.

Sara Walz (CAS’94) and her partner, Cheryl Lamond, of Chicago, Ill., welcomed the birth of their daughter, Augusta Rose, on December 16, 2008. Sara is a counselor at the Women’s Center at Northeastern University. She would love to hear from her classmates at sawalz4@gmail.com.

Jennifer (Evans) Frank (CAS’95, MED/BUS’99) and husband, Ben (MED’02), of Nashville, Tenn., welcomed the first child of their daughter, Rose Anna, on June 1, 2009. Ben is an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Wisconsin. Ben continues the hardest job of all as a stay-at-home dad. Contact Jennifer at jen@brookof.com.

James Lavin (CAS’93, CAS’95) of London, England, composed the score for the HBO documentary film Which Way Home, which premiered on HBO in August. James was also commissioned to write a piece for the choir of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. The new pieces, “They Have Become Bright Stars,” received its premiere in May at St. Paul’s Cathedral in the presence of Charles, Prince of Wales; Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall; and Prince Andrew, Duke of York. Learn more about James’s music at www.jameslavin.com. Contact James at music@jameslavin.com.

Henry Hampton (CAS’96) of Fort M. S.C., S.C., is the regional chief pilot for Mesa Airlines (doing business as US Airways Express). Hampton is a pilot with Mesa since August 2003. E-mail him at henryhampton@hotmail.com.

David Pai (CAS’96) of San Francisco, Calif., is a deputy attorney general at the State of California’s Department of Justice. When not daydreaming, he represents state agencies in employment and constitutional law matters. Reach David at dpaigov@gmail.com.

Jeff Rush (CAS’94, CAS’96) of New York, N.Y., was married to Stephanie Elam of San Antonio, Calif., at the Cordoba Club in San Martin, Calif., on Aug. 2, 2008. The couple resides in New York City, where Jeff is in the Investments & Wealth Management Group at Merrill Lynch. He represents state agencies in employment and constitutional law matters. Reach David at dpaigov@gmail.com.

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Elyse Grant (CAS’94, CAS’96) of Baltimore, Md., is president of the Life of Discovery Program fellowship from the Life of Discovery Program sponsoring the International Writers Program at the University of Iowa.

Nicole (Williams) Ademowicz (CAS’95, MED’99, GR’99) and her husband, Matthew, of Walla Walla, Wash., happily welcomed their first child, James Wyatt Ademowicz, on February 7, 2009.

Susan-Bayern Siler (CAS’90, MED’93) of Jensen Beach, Fla., announces her engagement to Juan Pablo Camargo of Bogota, Colombia, and of Fort Myers, Fla. The couple plans to marry in early 2010. Susan-Bayern is a nurse and would love to hear from old friends at sulyamaya.siler@gmail.com.

Jennifer Sullivan (CAS’10, MED’07) of Cambridge, Mass., and business partner James Gilbert launched PlastTV, an independent video network that delivers original online content across four failed channels (music, film, food, and humor) in December 2008. Jennifer, who works full-time in BU’s Distance Education Office as manager of online student services, notes that she worked nights and weekends to start her online business ventures. Reach her at jsullivan@plus1tv.com.

Maeve Kiss, (CAS’11) of Springfield, Mass., has opened a law practice dedicated to furthering economic development through the cultivation of small businesses and social enterprises. Visit her website at www.mboreslawoffice.com. Contact her at mkiss@mboreslawoffice.com.


Rebecca Ferguson-Lutz (CAS’01) of Washington, D.C., completed a dual major’s program at American University in Washington, D.C. She now has a Master of Arts in teaching secondary English and a Master of Arts in international peace and conflict resolution. This fall, she’s teaching high school English at the American School of Doha in Qatar.

Ashley Barrington (CAS’00) and Christopher Ludlow (ENS’92) welcomed John Atticus (“Jack”) Ludlow into the world on September 28, 2008. Contact Ashley at alb4duck@hotmail.com.

Tara (Parsons) Deyoer (CAS’98) of Riverside, N.Y., married Charles Deyer on December 1, 2007, in Pequannock, N.J. Cristina DeCraen (SM’02) attended the wedding. The Dyers welcomed their first child, Wilhelmina Catherine, on September 12, 2008. Contact Tara at tparsonsd@yahoo.com.

Susanne Matusic (CAS’91, MED’94) of Glenola, Ariz., graduated from Midwestern University—Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in June 2009. She will complete a one-year internship at St. Petersburg, Fla., before pursuing a residency in obstetrics and gynecology. Contact Susanne at susanne@bghcty.com.

Kristen (Mark) Russo (CAS’02) of Buffalo, N.Y., married Michael Russo on October 4, 2008, in Buffalo. Contact Kristen at kristenrusso@yahoo.com.

Rebecca Bartels (CAS’03) of Miami Beach, Fla., married Jeremy Fith in the Ritz Castle on May 23, 2008. Rebecca is a marketing manager for the Burger King Corporation, and Jeremy is an attorney at Markowitz, Davis, Angel & Trusty, PA. The couple resides in Miami Beach, Fla.
Minding Your Manners

By JEAN HENNELLY KEITH

Her stage background shows. With regal posture and a sleek, studied look all her own, Robin Abrahams (GRS’02) is a poised presence in any setting. But in conversa-
tion, the way she works her expressive eyebrows—“Vulcan,” she calls them—makes clear that despite her sophistication, she sees life’s funny side.

In describing her unlikely career path from theater gigs in Kansas City to writing a popular mannerscolumn in Boston and teaching psychology at Harvard, she quips, “I’m not a one-job woman.”

Abrahams earned a BA in theater at the University of Kansas, in her home state, then worked in the Midwest for the next six years as a theater publicist, stand-up comedian, and volunteer at a battered women’s shelter. Focusing on the common thread of her interest was human behavior—what makes people tick—she packed up and headed to Beantown to earn a doctorate in research psychology at Boston University. Despite a Presidential Scholarship at GRS, she needed to manage Boston’s steep living costs, so she juggled posts as a communications manager at Harvard and a psych adjunct at BU and other local colleges, while moonlighting as a writing teacher.

Today she’s still juggling, as a part-time research associate in organizational behavior at the Harvard Business School, a trustee and volunteer at the Underground Railway Theater in Cambridge, and an acclaimed author and speaker. She is most well-known, though, as “Miss Conduct,” The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine columnist who advises inquiring readers on how to manage the complexities of 21st-century social situations: how to fend off creepy come-ons; what to say to a sneezing atheist; how to host a dinner party for fruitarian, Kosher-keeping, allergic, and carnivorous guests. She’s pleased to note that her readership spans a wide age range from teens to seniors—and even includes a fourth-grader.

Her new book, Miss Conduct’s Mind Over Manners: Master the Slippery Rules of Modern Ethics and Etiquette (Henry Holt/Times Books), published in May, delves into the evolution of behavior, including the tribal “fear of differences” that underlies our customs and quirks. Although Abrahams stresses that she has no disagreement with Emily and Peggy Post or other etiquette experts, she is more interested in the rationale behind the rules of conduct than strict adherence to them, preferring to offer “options and interpretations.” In Modern Ethics and Etiquette, the way she works her expressive eyebrows—“Vulcan,” she calls them—makes clear that despite her sophistication, she sees life’s funny side.

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