Fall 2009

Alumni Connections, Fall 2009

Alumni Association

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Alumni Connections

Governors State University Alumni Association

Fall 2009

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Events/Exhibits

A Family of Alumni
Alumni Clubs
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Governors State University Alumni Connections is published for graduates, staff, and friends of the university by the Office of Alumni Relations, Governors State University, University Park, IL 60484, 708.534.4128.

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New this year, The Center for Performing Arts Box Office has a new, dedicated customer service line for alumni. Call 708.235.2244 today.

Box office hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For a full schedule of theatre events, visit www.centertickets.net.

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**SEND US YOUR NEWS**

Please send us your news to include in our next newsletter. Have you changed jobs, received an award or recognition, received a promotion, written a novel, etc? We want to know. Feel free to include a photo (head shot preferred).

Full name_____________________________________________ Home phone (___) __________________________

Mailing address ______________________________________ City, ZIP ________________________________

Email address:________________________________________ Cell Phone: (___) ____________________________

Employer:_________________________________________ Title: _________________________________

Employer address: __________________________________________________

Is this a new job? ☐ Yes ☐ No Is this a promotion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

News: _____________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
40th Anniversary Celebration Weekend Events

Saturday, November 7, 2009
40th Anniversary Celebration Event

Join the celebration as we recognize GSU’s 40th Anniversary in grand fashion.

The 40th Anniversary Celebration promises to bring the music, style, and fun of the ’60s back to GSU with A Tribute to the Motown Greats and a look back at GSU milestones. Renew acquaintances and make new friends. Let your hair down and dance the night away. And be sure to don your finest 1960s attire.

- Pre-Show Reception—6 p.m.
- A Tribute to the Motown Greats—7:30 p.m.
- DJ/Dancing—Following Show

GSU – Past, Present, and Future

The 40th Anniversary Celebration embraces the theme of Celebrating the Past and Charting the Future.

Join us on Friday, November 6, at 3 p.m., in Sherman Music Hall, where panelists will discuss the birth, growth, and future of the university. Panelists include Dr. Elaine P. Maimon, current president, GSU; Dr. Leo Goodman-Malamuth, former president, GSU; Dr. Blondean Davis, Superintendent, Matteson School District 162; Dr. Paul Green, Director, Institute for Politics and Arthur Rubloff Professor of Policy Studies at Roosevelt; and Adenuga Atewologun, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Prairie State College. Following the discussion, the new history wall, commemorating 40 years of educational excellence, will be unveiled in the D Main Entrance Atrium. A reception will follow.

Seating for this once in a lifetime event is limited. Reserve your tickets today!

Celebration Event Ticket Package — $50
Includes reception, A Tribute to the Motown Greats show, post-show DJ/dancing, cash bar before and after show.

Purchase Tickets
Mail the reservation form on the following page to Governors State University Alumni Association, 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484, or call 708.534.4128 for more information.
Governors State University

40th Anniversary Celebration

A Tribute to the Motown Greats
November 7, 2009

The Celebration Event $50 ticket price includes admission to the pre-concert reception, the Tribute to the Motown Greats concert, and the after party with meet and greet. All tickets are sold on a first come-first served basis.

Tickets are not refundable.

A confirmation letter will be mailed.

Tickets will be held at the reception table for pick-up on the night of the event.

Please Print

Name ___________________________________________ Date: _____________

I’m a □ GSU Alum (college and year _______________ ) □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend

Address ___________________________________________________________________________

City/State/ZIP:________________________________________ Day phone (____)___________

Email address:________________________________________ Home phone (____)___________

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) @ $50 each □ Wheelchair accommodations required

Guest Name(s):
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend
_______________________________________ □ GSU Alum □ Student □ GSU employee □ Friend

□ Enclosed is a check for $ ___________ made payable to: GSU Alumni Association

□ Please charge $ _____________ to: □ VISA □ MasterCard □ Discover

Exp. Date □ □/□ □ □ V-Code □ □ □ □ (*Last 3 digits by signature on back of card)

Print name as it appears on charge card: ____________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________________________________

Mail to:
Governors State University, Alumni Relations, 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois 60484
GSU alumni, friends gather in Arizona

GSU’s alumni outreach extended west earlier this year, to a spring training baseball contest between the Chicago Cubs and White Sox at Camelback Ranch ballpark in Glendale, Arizona.

Nearly two dozen GSU alumni and friends watched the two Chicago teams at Camelback Ranch, the new Sox training facility. GSU President Elaine Maimon, Dr. Mort Maimon, and Vice President for Institutional Advancement Joan Vaughan attended the event. The outing began with a brunch hosted by the Maimons then moved to the ballpark, where the Cubs won the first meeting in Glendale between the cross-town rivals by a lopsided score of 13-2.

Despite the outcome – at least for Sox fans – the day was considered a sunny success and plans are already in the works for future GSU get-togethers in the Southwest. More than 350 GSU alumni live in the Phoenix area and GSU is likely to sponsor another spring training event in 2010. Future outings will bring more GSU goodwill and fellowship to the Valley of the Sun, and provide an opportunity to reconnect with old friends and make new acquaintances.

CLASS NOTES

College of Arts and Sciences

Victoria Hosey (MA, ’03) is the president of VJS Enterprises (Olympia Fields, IL), a business development and conference programming consultancy, and recently hosted the Recession-Proof Your Business expo.

Dr. Valentine James (MA, ’81) has been named Clarion University’s Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Previously Dr. James was a dean of College and Humanities and Social Sciences at Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC.

John Szostek (MA, ’81) is founder and Artistic Director of the Piccolo Theatre. He is the Executive Director of Evanston Festival Theater (Evanston, IL) and, for the past 29 years, has spearheaded the Custer’s Last Stand Festival for the Arts.

Dan Yovich (MA, ’75 and ’76) is a Purdue University professor emeritus. Previously, he was a product research chemist inventing numerous products that were sold to industrial and consumer markets. He served as a code intercept officer during the Korean War and is the co-creator of a new game MathSuey, which will be released shortly.

Debra Boyd (BA, ’90; MA, ’95) made history recently as the first woman named Chief of Police and Director of Public Safety on the Governors State University Police Department. Chief Boyd was honored for “breaking the glass ceiling” at the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives’ annual meeting.

Dr. Barbara Dunn (BA, ’76) received the ADR Volunteer Neutral Recognition from the judges of the Los Angeles Superior Court to express their appreciation for volunteer services rendered.

Pedus Eweama (BA ’02) recently published his second book, Nursing Stones: Ordinary People, Extra-Ordinary Journey, which documents the challenges nurses face, the camaraderie they share, the experiences they have, and their unflawing desire to make a difference.

Diana Muhammad (BA, ’02) is a two time Olympic team member in track and field star. Diana’s book, True to Me: An Olympian’s Victory Over Steroids, tells a painfully candid account of the inner workings of the track and field establishment and her struggle to regain her dignity and form after her bout with steroids.

College of Arts and Sciences

School of Interdisciplinary Learning

Kevin B. Brookins (MBA ’87) was promoted to Vice President of Distribution System Operations for ComEd and is now responsible for operating one of the largest electrical distribution systems in the nation. Kevin was selected by U.S. Black Engineer & Information Technology magazine to its “100 Most Important Blacks in Technology” list.

Dr. Curtis Crawford (BA ’72; MA ’74) recently wrote a new book, Manager’s Guide to Mentoring, which is being published by McGraw-Hill and will be available this month.

Gloria Georger (MBA, ’92) was promoted to plant manager for Ford Motor Company’s stamping plant (Chicago Heights, IL).

Ed Piatt (MBA, ’87) is the northeast senior account manager for the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. Prior to joining the DCEO Opportunity Returns team, Piatt worked as a marketing specialist with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

College of Business & Public Administration

Susan Riordan (B.S., ’03) was recently elected the president of the Illinois CPA Society South Chapter.
Connie Walsh (MPA, ’96) recently completed her Doctor of Public Administration degree at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

Velma Webb (MA, ’76) was honored by the Village of Hazel Crest during the 1st Annual Women’s History Month as one of 12 local women recognized for their leadership and service to the community.

Greg Clark (MA, ’89), a retired social studies teacher, traveled to Iwo Jima in 2005 for the 60th Anniversary of the battle. This trip has been featured on the History Channel program Mail Call. Mr. Clark served in the United States Marine Corps Reserves, VMF 611, 4th Marine Division Air Wing, from 1967 to 1973.

Steve Provis (MA, ’05) is Lincoln-Way Central High School’s (New Lenox, IL) new principal. Steve has been with Lincoln Way for the past eight years, serving in different capacities.

College of Education

Jane Brown (BA ’75, BOG and MA ’76, COE) was honored by the Village of Hazel Crest (IL) during the 1st Annual Women’s History Month as one of 12 local women recognized for their leadership and service to the community.

Jennifer Buteyn (MA ’98) has been named the new principal for the Ridgewood High School District 234 (Ridgewood, IL)

Carrie Clodi (MA ’03) is the new Special Education Coordinator at the Frankfort (IL) School District 157-C. Previously Carrie was the Director of Special Services at Bradley Elementary District 6.

Alejandra De La Pena (MA, ’06) was one of 19 finalists honored for the 2009 Kohl McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Awards. Finalists exemplify the best practices for quality early childhood teaching.

Barbara Donaldson (MA ’73, COE) was honored by the Village of Hazel Crest during the 1st Annual Women’s History Month as one of 12 local women recognized for their leadership and service to the community.

Thomas A. Hurlburt (MA, ’01) is the new Superintendent of Schools for the Frankfort (IL) School District 157-C. Dr. Hurlburt served as superintendent for the last three years at Brookfield LaGrange Park (IL) School District 95.

Patrick Keeley (CE, ’04) was named the Athletic Director of the Oak Lawn Comm. High School, Oak Lawn, IL.

Stephanie Lloyd (MA ’05) is the new principal of Algonquin (IL) Primary Center. Ms. Lloyd formerly was the assistant principal of Nathan Hale Elementary School (Lansing, IL).

Carin Novak (BA ’89) is the new principal of Lester School (Downers Grove, IL). Ms. Novak has nearly two decades of experience in education, most recently as principal at a school in Alsip.

Joann Rayburn (MA, ’04) recently traveled to Kenya, Africa, helping schools and students by donating supplies, food and clothing.

Ron Ryan (MA, ’96) is currently the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Evansville, (IN).

Dr. Monica Schmitt (MA, ’93), is the principal for the new Lincoln-Way West (New Lenox, IL), high school. Dr. Schmitt was principal of Lincoln-Way Central (New Lenox, IL) for the past eight years.

Dr. Lanee Walls (MA, ’02) was named the new superintendent for schools for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.

Deirdre M. Williams (BA ’87; MA ’96) has been named the new Assistant Executive Director for Student services for the Valley View School District (IL).

CLASS NOTES

Richard Antoño Alonzo, Ph.D. (MHS ’93) recently published a book, Dias Patrias, telling the story of a man with promise whose struggle with alcohol haunts him until his dying day.

Lisa Aponte-Soto (MHS ’04) was one of the “Prominent Alumni Speakers” recently at the 30th anniversary dinner for UIC’s Urban Health Program. Lisa is now a Ph.D. candidate in UIC’s Behavioral Science and Health Promotion program in the Community Health Sciences Division (School of Public Health).

Bill Emerson Sr. (MHS, ’86) was recently appointed to the Hammond (IN) Planning Commission and is completing his first term.

Dr. Janice M. Green (BA, ’79) recently authored her second book, How to Make a Graceful Exit: Letting Go of the Past, which is available at BarnesandNoble.com.

Thelma T. Miller (BHS, ’75; MHS, ’77), was recognized by the Illinois Nurses Association District 20 for Fifty Plus Years in Nursing, and currently holds a position on the Board of Directors. She also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chicago Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association.

Dr. Gwen Shah-Ingram (BA, ’75; MHS, 77) recently served as a Delegate Diplomat to many organizations around the world as a founding member of the World Association of Former United National Interns and Fellows.

In Memoriam

James Anderson, CAS ’80
Elizabeth Barbeau, COE, ’90
Sherry Bielfeldt, CAS ’88
John Borgman, CAS ’98
Nick Erhabor, SIDL (CAS) ’97
Benjamin Giles, SIDL (CAS) ’88
Dorothy Hnyak, COE ’74
Larry Pukelis, CAS ’75
Ruth Roeder, CAS ’88
Carl Thrun, CHHS ’85
Helene Marshall, CAS ’82
Richard Etzel, SIDL ’83
Marcos Mondragon, COE ’79
Terry Tanner, CBPA ’76, ’79
Lela L. Howard, SIDL ’81

7
State of the University
According to President Maimon’s recent State of the University Address, GSU continues to grow. Enrollment in community colleges across the county has increased this past year and GSU expects to see an associated increase in transfer students. This fall, GSU’s full time undergraduate enrollment has increased more than 12 percent over last year. Dr. Maimon also noted that in June 2010, GSU will proudly hold its first hooding ceremony for doctoral graduates in the physical therapy program.

GSU Announces Baysore Winner
The Gerald C. Baysore Award is presented each year in memory of Dr. Baysore, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs for 18 years at GSU. The Baysore Award is the highest honor GSU bestows on its employees. We are proud to announce that this year’s winner is Karen D’Arcy, Chair of the Division of Science and Professor of Analytic Chemistry.

CenterPoint Lauded
The CenterPoint for Entrepreneurs at GSU recently received The Business Ledger’s 2009 Annual Award for Business Excellence. As an economic development agency, the organization was recognized for its significant contribution to the growth of the region’s business community.

CenterPoint Director Hilary Burkinshaw and GSU College of Business and Public Administration Dean Ellen Foster Curtis received the award at a special reception earlier this year. “Our active involvement with local businesses and communities has enabled us to provide pertinent business consulting and innovative programs,” said Foster Curtis.

Presidential Historian Beschloss Honored
As part of June’s Commencement activities, presidential historian and best-selling author Michael Beschloss was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters and addressed the graduates at the graduation ceremony.

Michael Beschloss, formerly of Flossmoor, Illinois, is the nation’s premier presidential historian and the author of eight books including Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America. The historian also spoke with students and community members as part of the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Lecture Series. During the talk, Beschloss shared insightful and humorous stories of former presidents, drawing specific connections to Chicago’s south suburbs.

The Center Ventures Into the Woods
Departing from its traditional role of booking and marketing outside shows, The Center for Performing Arts recently helped found the Southland Area Theatre Ensemble (SLATE). The community-based theatre organization was formed with the goal of educating, enriching, and entertaining the communities surrounding GSU.

More than 150 members of the community volunteered for roles in SLATE’s inaugural production of Stephen Sondheim’s classic Into the Woods. Three performances in mid-August received rave reviews and are paving the way for future productions.

“This is the start of something special,” said Burt Dikelsky, Executive Director of The Center for Performing Arts. “We have big hopes and dreams for SLATE.”

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The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park's summer activities were many, varied, and well attended. Summer began with the annual informal Road Trip to ArtChicago's international art fair. In early July, members, docents, and board members of the park enjoyed a twilight reception al fresco, mingling with the cast-iron figures of Icelandic artist Steinunn Thorarinsdotir's Horizons. The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is currently hosting Horizons until September of 2010. Horizons has been seen in New York and Texas and will continue to travel after its stay in University Park.

Another road trip in early August explored sculpture from opposite ends of a timeline, juxtaposing Olafur Eliasson's Take Your Time at the M.C.A. and Auguste Rodin: In his own words at L.U.M.A.

Horizons was the focus of the park’s first collaborative event with TallGrass Arts Association on August 7. Interpretive variations on Bruce Nauman’s House Divided brought Red Riding Hood, an all-woman string quartet, Magda Brown, a Holocaust survivor, and Marshall Titus, vocalist, together on campus for an original presentation which was termed “Brilliant!”

The Autumn Art Odyssey traveled to South Bend, IN to see a bronze sculpture pour, Grand Rapids, MI (where the director of the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park opened early for a one-on-one guided tour of the grounds), and the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, MI.

Does this sound like fun? It is! Visit the Sculpture Park’s website at www.govst.edu/sculpture for information on current, upcoming, and even past events, as well as how to become a member and receive LandMarks, the park’s colorful newsletter!

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You’re Invited to the 3rd Annual ArtsFest at GSU

The 3rd Annual GSU ArtsFest will take place on October 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., offering interactive open studios where visitors will create prints, paintings, sculptures, and digital images. They will also get to use some of the materials and equipment to create their own works of art.

Art professors will be available to answer questions about the graduate and undergraduate degree programs in art and fine art. Portfolio reviews will also be offered. The Visual Art Gallery will be open with exhibits from a visiting artist and ArtsFest concludes with a reception in E-Lounge. ArtsFest is free and open to the public. For more information, call 708.235.3956. Visit www.gsuvisualartsgallery.blogspot <http://gsu-lyris.govst.edu/t/295/63659/34/0/> .

Rattle and Drum Art Workshop

A special Rattle and Drum Art Workshop will be held on Saturday, November 14, at 4 p.m., in GSU’s E Lounge. Participants will survey rattles and drums as art expressions worldwide, then make and decorate their own objects. A firelight drum circle, chat, and dance performance will follow in the evening. This event is free and open to the public. Adults only. Reservations required: 708.534.4128.

Alumni Invited to Global Entrepreneurship Week at GSU

Join CenterPoint for Global Entrepreneurship Week, November 16 through 22, 2009. Connect with students, alumni, educators, entrepreneurs, business leaders, employees, non-profit leaders, government officials and many others through local, national and global activities. Explore your potential as a self-starter and innovator. Information about competitions, prizes and networking events will be available after October 1, 2009 at www.centerpointgsu.com.

Veteran’s Entrepreneurial Boot Camp

On Wednesday November 18, 2009, CenterPoint at Governors State University will be hosting its 4th Veterans Entrepreneurial Boot Camp, a one day event of intensive entrepreneurial training and programming offered at no cost to Veterans and their families. It’s one way GSU says thank you for your service. Spread the word! For information, visit www.centerpointgsu.com or call 708.534.4929.
College of Arts and Sciences

New Educational Initiatives:

Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) This undergraduate degree enables students to become practicing artists and gives them the broad intellectual background sought by professional schools, cultural institutions, and the business community. It offers a wide range of courses, ranging from contemporary, international, and regional artistic expressions to those of ancient America, Africa, and Asia.

With the expanding use of the arts in contemporary life and the heightened visual awareness of our society, the employment outlook for Art majors continues to be promising.

Mathematics Education Students interested in obtaining secondary certification in mathematics now have a new option at GSU. In December 2008, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) approved a post-baccalaureate certificate. The Certificate in Mathematics Secondary Education is designed for individuals who have already earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from an accredited institution and are now seeking teacher certification at the secondary level. This certificate does not lead to a university degree.

Completion of this certificate program and passing scores on all of the required exams qualify an individual for an endorsement in mathematics at the secondary level. This certificate is modeled after the already approved certificates in Biology, Chemistry, and English secondary teacher education.

Minor in Gender Studies The minor in Gender Studies provides students with an understanding of gender’s centrality to culture using interdisciplinary approaches. Gender studies examines gender across cultures and historical periods while inquiring into the ways these concepts are represented in various forms, including popular culture, the media, literature, and the arts.

Minor in Latino Studies The minor in Latino Studies provides students with an understanding of the history, cultures, and contemporary issues of Latin Americans and Latinos in the U.S. using interdisciplinary approaches. Comparative and diverse developmental perspectives illuminate linkages among the countries and peoples of the Americas.

Masters in Fine Arts Program (MFA) The Independent Film and Digital Imaging faculty have submitted a 15 minute version of their current project, Chicago Heights, to the Cannes Film Festival for consideration for its 2009 Short Film Corner. The Cannes festival is the most influential event in the film world and runs annually in May in the south of France. The film’s production involved the collaboration of numerous GSU MFA and Communications students, alumni, and faculty.

College of Business and Public Administration

The first eight MBA students from an exchange program with Guangdong University of Technology in Guangzhou China graduated in June.

A new undergraduate concentration in entrepreneurship and innovation was added to the Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration degree.

In July, the college hosted a visioning summit entitled Moving to the Next Level, which brought together 90 faculty, staff and students of the college with alumni and members of the business and government communities.

The college welcomes Dr. Feng Tian to its faculty as Assistant Professor of Management. Dr. Tian holds a DBA from Boston University and specializes in operations management, statistics, and supply chain management.

Dr. Jun Zhao’s article Individualism/Collectivism, Selected Personality Traits and Psychological Contract in Employment: A Comparative Study, co-authored with Lijun Chen, of Zhejiang University; P.R.C (Management Research News, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2008), was selected as one of the journal’s three “Highly Commended Papers” for 2008. The award winning papers are chosen following consultation amongst the journal’s editorial team, many of whom are eminent academics. The paper was selected as “it was one of the most impressive pieces of work the team has seen throughout 2008.”

College of Education

The College of Education welcomed Kathleen Hickey as the new Assessment Coordinator for the College. Ms. Hickey most recently served as Superintendent of St. Anne High School, in St. Anne, Illinois. She joined COE in July. In the Division of Psychology and Counseling, Jennifer Beebe joined the School Counseling program as an Instructor in August 2009. She is finishing her dissertation at the University of Northern Colorado. Once completed, she will move into the rank of Assistant Professor. Dr. Patricia Robey completed her doctoral program this summer and will be moving from a Lecturer to Assistant Professor in the Psychology program.

Dr. Shannon Dermer has been named permanent division chair of the Division of Psychology and Counseling. She has served as the interim chair for the past two years.

The College of Education will be going through a continuing NCATE accreditation review in March 2011. The process is well underway and will involve collaboration across the GSU community.

The Division of Education hosted three diversity seminars for faculty and staff during the winter and spring trimesters. The focus of these seminars was on working with English Language Learners, and in hearing directly from a student panel the challenges students from diverse background face while attending college. Future seminars will focus on special education issues and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The Family Development Center has had a productive year. The preschool children in the Buckeye room produced and
starred in a wildly popular spring performance of the Three Little Pigs at the Center for Performing Arts. The children learned about all aspects of “show biz,” including lighting, scenery, acting and marketing. The Family Development Center has begun work on the process to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The Metropolitan Institute for Leadership in Education (MILE), continuing its partnership with the Illinois Association of School Administrators, South Cook, and the Midwest Principals Center, hosted a series of timely workshops and seminars. Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings led a dynamic workshop on effective teaching strategies for African American children. Dr. Alex Kotlowicz engaged in a dialogue on addressing violence in the schools and community with parents, students, educational administrators, and community members at Thornridge High School. A professional development seminar was held for newly elected school board members and an academy was held for potential substitute teachers.

College of Health & Human Services

CHHS to Offer New Community Health Education Degree Program

In a continuing effort to respond to the educational needs of the Chicago Southland region, the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) has submitted a proposal for a Community Health Education Degree program to the Illinois Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

CHHS Grads Flying High

Three CHHS graduates reflect on the value of their GSU education and how far it has taken them.

Maria A. Connolly, Ph.D., APN/CNS, CNE, FCCM, ANEF

In the 25 years since she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Nursing from the CHHS, Maria A. Connolly has excelled in every aspect of her career.

“GSU has served me well,” Dr. Connolly, a recognized nursing education leader in Illinois, said.

Since 2002, Dr. Connolly has served as Dean and Chief Nursing Officer for the College of Nursing and Allied Health at the University of St. Francis (USF), Joliet, where she provides administrative oversight for eight programs.

Dr. Connolly is also the Chief Operating Officer for the $2.1 million University of St. Francis Health and Wellness Center for medically underserved residents of Will County. The Health and Wellness Center has been recognized by the Illinois Nurses Association (INA) for its innovative delivery of high quality, cost-effective, and accessible healthcare services.

Augustine (Austin) O. Agho, PhD

believes the Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree he received at GSU in 1985 prepared him well for his chosen career of academics, research, and healthcare administration. Dr. Agho most appre-

iated “the caring attitude of the faculty and staff” at GSU. Today Dr. Agho is Dean of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), an urban research and academic health sciences campus with 22 schools and academic units granting degrees in more than 200 programs from both Indiana University and Purdue University.

Prior to his Indiana appointment, Dr. Agho, a native of Nigeria, served as the founding Dean of the School of Health Professions and Studies at the University of Michigan – Flint, where he played a critical role in developing and implementing the Urban Health and Wellness Center for underinsured and uninsured residents of Michigan’s Genesee County.

Patsy L. Ruchala, DNSc, RN

“absolutely loved” being a student at GSU; she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Nursing at GSU in 1983 and 1984, respectively. In 1986, she earned the Outstanding Nursing Alumnus award from the college. “It was a truly humbling experience for me,” Dr. Ruchala recalled.

Today Dr. Ruchala is professor and the Director of the Orvis School of Nursing, Based at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Orvis is the oldest school of nursing in the state of Nevada. Dr. Ruchala is also responsible for the Orvis School of Nursing Clinic, the state's only nurse-managed primary care clinic located in downtown Reno.

Looking back, Dr. Ruchala believes she was well-prepared by the GSU nursing curriculum. “I wouldn't be here today without my GSU education. I really do believe that,” she said.

Let’s Stay Connected

You may have graduated from the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) — but you’re still very important to the college.

If you haven’t already paid a visit to the CHHS Let’s Stay Connected website, please do! www.govst.edu/chhs/alumni/stayconnected
This fall, Dr. Walt Henne returned to the GSU science labs where he first learned—and helped teach—college level chemistry and started his career in biomedical research. As a Professor of Biochemistry, he will guide a new generation of students toward an understanding and appreciation of how to conduct responsible, effective scientific research that helps change our world.

Dr. Henne is a proud GSU alumnus who received a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 1996 and a Master of Analytical Chemistry in 1999. He has a remarkable story but much of it is familiar to thousands of other non-traditional GSU alumni who work long hours at multiple jobs to finish their education. It’s also remarkable that four members of his family are GSU graduates, and all attended the university at the same time.

“At one point, all five of us lived in the same house in Kankakee,” Henne said. “It was the only way we could make ends meet. We all had jobs and we were all going to GSU. Everyone was very busy.”

Henne’s wife Kristene and his brother Jeff both received B.S. degrees in Biology in 2000. His sister Christina received a B.A. degree in Elementary Education in 2001 and his brother-in-law Jerry Kovach graduated that same year with a B.A. in Social Sciences.

“Yes, I believe GSU made this all happen,” Henne said. “I like to say that going to GSU is like going to a small private college. The classes are small and you develop relationships with your professors that would never be possible at a big university.” He also points to GSU’s affordability and flexibility of classes as important factors in achieving an exceptional, accessible education.

A native of a small farming community near Streator, IL, Henne briefly attended Illinois State University but was not satisfied with “the big university experience.” So he went back home, and to Illinois Valley Community College, where he earned an Associate of Applied Sciences degree, then began working as a registered nurse. He moved to Kankakee, where his wife-to-be was studying X-Ray technology at Kankakee Community College. He took additional classes in chemistry and biology at KCC. In the summer of 1994, he began classes at GSU.

GSU’s flexible scheduling made it possible for Henne to go to school while working as an RN at a Kankakee rehabilitation facility. While an undergraduate, he started a second job as a teaching assistant, first in Organic Chemistry and later in Physiology, Analytical Chemistry and Biochemistry. After receiving his B.S., he continued his job as a teaching assistant while pursuing his master’s degree. Henne’s wife and brother also worked as teaching assistants in the science labs.

After receiving his master’s degree, he started working on his doctorate in Chemistry at Purdue University, which he completed in 2007. Kristene Henne also continued her education at Purdue, receiving a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics; she now works at Argonne National Laboratory. Dr. Henne’s brother Jeff ultimately received a degree in Dentistry from Southern Illinois University.