Writing across the University

This is the first in a series of Dialogue issues that break with our usual format to focus on the themes of the new Northwestern University strategic plan. For this issue—highlighting written and oral expression—the experts who lead three University writing programs discuss Northwestern’s writing community.

Jack Doppelt is a journalism professor in the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications; the publisher of the online immigrant and refugee storytelling projects Immigrant Connect and RefugeeLives; and a faculty associate at Northwestern’s Institute for Policy Research.

Reginald Gibbons is the Frances Hooper Professor of Arts and Humanities and professor of English, classics, Spanish, and Portuguese in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences; the founding director of the master of arts and master of fine arts programs in creative writing at Northwestern’s School of Continuing Studies; and the director of the University’s Center for the Writing Arts.

David Tolchinsky is a screenwriter, professor in the School of Communication’s Department of Radio/Television/Film, and director of both the school’s undergraduate Creative Writing for the Media Program and its master of fine arts program in Writing for the Screen and Stage.

Why is writing a strength at Northwestern?

Tolchinsky There are amazing teaching writers here, award winners. In our program we have working writers with industry experience teaching our students not just about craft but about how to interface with various writing businesses. Our students learn to pitch ideas, network, and make their way as professional writers.

Gibbons The mission of the Center for the Writing Arts is to create, support, and foster writing across the University and facilitate discussion about how best to sustain and enhance writing as a crucial part of a university education. We offer public campus events that invite attendance from the surrounding community.

Doppelt We have so many different vantage points and different genres. Creative writing, documentary screenwriting, journalism, music writing—almost every genre and form of expression is not only available at Northwestern but has its own niche, its own place, where students can tinker at a beginner’s level and excel.
What is exciting in your program right now?

Gibbons  Over the last several years, the Center for the Writing Arts has brought exciting visiting faculty to campus, including Alex Kotlowitz, whose book Never a City So Real: A Walk in Chicago is this fall’s One Book One Northwestern choice. We’ve also made a point of bringing Anglophone African writers to Northwestern as visiting faculty. In this way we internationalize students’ encounter not only with the craft of fiction but also with literary culture.

Tolchinsky  The quality and vision of our writing faculty are incredible. We have both screenwriters and playwrights, which creates an atmosphere where no one is boxed into one role, where students get excited about storytelling in a way that transcends genre.

Doppelt  Medill is teaching students to write with power and depth. By power, we mean writing that captures things emotionally so that the words have a real visceral impact. By depth, we mean storytelling that digs beneath the surface. In today’s journalism, of course, our students have to be able to dig deep across multiple platforms.

What is the future of writing at Northwestern?

Gibbons  We should enhance the mobility of writing students within the University so that they can take advantage of teaching outside their own programs. The MA/MFA program in creative writing allows students to take graduate courses anywhere in the University, and we want to encourage more students to do so. The Center for the Writing Arts, in partnership with the Center for Civic Engagement, is offering a course to help undergraduates reflect and write well on off-campus immersion experiences. The idea is to set students on a path toward capability as public intellectuals, helping them bring inside information and insider participation to a general public.

Doppelt  Students who are considering studying writing at Northwestern are artistic, dynamic, interactive. What they need at the early stages is a way to test out the creative muse across genres. We at Northwestern need to find a way to let them think through multiple forms of expression, to help them see the interconnection of one form of writing to another.

Tolchinsky  We need to highlight the various types of writing we have across campus so that students can take advantage of all we have to offer. The future of writing at Northwestern is building bridges among our various programs, making our writers and writing more visible and accessible to students, and extending our writing and writers into the local community via partnerships with local production companies and into Los Angeles, New York, and beyond through our amazing network of alumni. Whether you’re a prospective undergraduate, graduate student, or faculty member, because of our depth, breadth, and national profile, Northwestern should be the destination for writing.

What’s your contribution to the writing community at Northwestern?
Start a dialogue at dialogue@northwestern.edu.
The Power of Communication
Last fall Northwestern University set forth a strategic plan. Developed by interdisciplinary groups of students, faculty, alumni, staff, and other Northwestern community members, the framework is far-reaching and ambitious. “The plan takes into account that we are constantly reinventing Northwestern,” wrote University President Morton Schapiro. The plan of course highlights current success in research and creative activity, citing 10 of Northwestern’s greatest strengths as the platform from which the University will rise even higher. In a series of Dialogue articles beginning in this issue, we’ll share the many ways the School of Communication community contributes to Northwestern’s future.

The School of Communication at Northwestern University began with a single class in elocution. Within this one tradition, the study of formal speaking, lay the seeds of performance, textual analysis, language development and hearing science, rhetoric and argumentation, debate, and the creation of media of all sorts. Speaking well and, in preparing to speak well, writing well have always been the keystones of our curriculum. Today these skills are part of the foundation of Northwestern’s success and part of the plan that will take the University even further.

Looking at the School of Communication, it’s not difficult to see why writing and oral expression play such critical roles in Northwestern University’s Strategic Plan. Our alumni (to name just a few) write books (Robert Olen Butler, C67, Pulitzer Prize for literature) and plays (Bruce Norris, C82, Pulitzer for drama; John Logan, C83, Tony Award for best play). They write television comedy (Emmy Award winner Stephen Colbert, C86) and drama (Emmy winner Margaret Nagle, C83). They write and direct films (Greg Berlanti, C94; Richard J. Lewis, C83) and craft reality into compelling documentaries (Stephen Peck, C68). They create hit songs (Rachael Yamagata, C97) and video game cinematics (Joseph Staten, C94). They found improv groups and theatre troupes and devise stunning scenery, lighting, and costumes. They run hospitals, research labs, businesses, and governments. They lead boardrooms and classrooms. They stand on stages and sit on boards that affect lives worldwide.

Why has our community been so inventive, so creative? Through collaborative projects such as the Waa-Mu Show (see page 10) and interaction with faculty members who are leaders in their fields as well as fine teachers (see pages 4–9), the School of Communication provides the building blocks with which truly creative people can produce the future of communication arts and sciences.
Recovering communication abilities

Probably no one values the gift of spoken expression more than a person who’s lost it. For those suffering from aphasia, the work of Cynthia Thompson, the Ralph and Jean Sundin Professor of Communication Sciences, is a great source of hope. Thompson directs the Aphasia and Neurolinguistics Research Laboratory in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, where she and her team use functional magnetic resonance imaging to study the neural mechanisms associated with language processing. Studies with healthy volunteers show how the brain processes language normally; studies of patients with stroke-induced aphasia illuminate brain regions that are enlisted to aid recovery.

Several major studies are under way in Thompson’s lab. In one, aphasia patients are trained to comprehend and produce selected syntactic structures while she and her team, using neural imaging, study resultant changes in brain activity. The team also studies the effects of the site and the extent of brain damage, such as how blood flows in various brain regions. Their hope is to determine whether recovery can be predicted and, if so, to identify the most important predictors.

Though Thompson is primarily concerned with the neuroscientific implications of this research, she and her lab “very serendipitously” discovered that the training they used in research had positive therapeutic effects on the aphasic participants’ ability to communicate. They then made their research available for clinical use. “This wasn’t what we’d set out to do at all,” said Thompson. “But since the training was helpful for people, we decided to make it available to them.” They developed a computer program, Sentactics, that patients can use to help regain language skills. “The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago is using it,” said Thompson. “It’s fantastic that these tasks turned out to be advantageous for people. They’re actually using them to regain the ability to communicate.”

Reintroducing historic movements

For the intellectually curious these days, the world can be captured in a keystroke: there are online courses, Google books, late-night whirls around the blogosphere. If you were hungry for knowledge in the 1800s, though, you were transported not by the laptop but by the lyceum.

From the 1820s to the early 1900s, the lyceum movement—a network of town hall–like forums for lectures, debates, and entertainment—dominated popular culture, attracting such speakers as Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Mark Twain and providing one of the richest hothouses of oral expression in American history.

When Angela Ray, a Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence, decided to study the period, she found there was so little previous research on the subject that she felt she had stumbled into a secret garden. “There hadn’t been any books published
Devising tough conversations

Forget the idea that writing must be solitary. For Michael Rohd, assistant professor of theatre, it takes a village. Rohd is the founding artistic director of the Sojourn Theatre in Portland, Oregon. The company creates devised theatre: a play is generated collaboratively by all members of the ensemble. “All the actors write,” Rohd explained. “Everyone writes. And then someone—in the case of Sojourn, it’s usually me—will stitch all the pieces together to form a script.”

This creative groupthink has led to a series of award-winning productions. Sojourn has staged 24 major works around the country over the last 12 years, all with a civic-minded bent, as their titles attest: The War Project, Witness Our Schools, and How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes, which will be seen next year on the Theatre and Interpretation Center’s mainstage.

In winter 2013 Sojourn will mount a production at the Kansas City Repertory Theatre in tandem with The TEAM, a New York City experimental company. “It’s a dramatic exploration of the way Americans talk to each other—or don’t,” said Rohd. He was also personally commissioned by Michigan’s Flint Youth Theatre to devise a research-based, site-specific piece about the city and its economy involving food, commerce, and civic life. That show will be performed in and around Flint’s farmers market. Environmental settings are a hallmark of Rohd’s work; past shows have been staged in a car dealership, on an elk ranch, and at a continuing-care facility.

“I probably see theatre differently than do a lot of my colleagues,” said Rohd, also the author of Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue. “Rather than staging traditional dramas, I’m a lot more interested in making shows that ask questions and then creating events where the audience can wrestle with those questions.”

Michael Rohd’s Willful at the 2011 Oregon Shakespeare Festival

on the lyceum since the 1950s,” she said. “And even those were very few.” Ray stepped in to fill the void, writing The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States, which has won five national awards and has helped spur a growing interest in the subject among scholars across the country.

Ray has two other books in the works. The first will focus on the antebellum period; the second will explore some of the “fascinating outliers” Ray has come across in her research, among them a female performer who did costumed impersonations of women and men. “Newspapers would compliment her for being more real than the people she was imitating,” said Ray. A 19th-century Meryl Streep, perhaps? Ray resists comparisons between the period she studies and the present day. “There are reasons to study the past other than helping us understand our own moment better,” she said. Yet she delights in how her research often intersects with modern-day themes: celebrity culture, gender dynamics, and what it means to be real.
**Writing what makes us human**

You could say that Amanda Dehnert came to playwriting through the back door. An assistant professor of theatre who began her writing career as a composer and lyricist, Dehnert is perhaps best known as a director. The former Gielgud Fellow has staged more than 50 productions, from *Annie* to *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and somewhere along the way found herself writing more than director’s notes. Comparing plays to houses, Dehnert said, “After crawling around inside so many of them, I suddenly understood where things had to go, how things needed to happen.”

Dehnert has always shaped the material she has directed; the title character in her *Julius Caesar* was played by a woman, and her 2009 Arena Stage production of *The Fantasticks* was set in an abandoned amusement park. But when California Shakespeare Theater invited her to direct *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* last year, Dehnert found herself going off book altogether. The result? A creative reimagining of Shakespeare’s first comedy.

*The Verona Project* may have been inspired by the Bard, but it’s ultimately Dehnert’s own creation, complete with an eight-person rock band and a few brand-new characters. *The Huffington Post* called it “sophisticated, intelligent,” and “a brilliant new twist.” The show will be part of next year’s Theatre and Interpretation Center mainstage season.

Emboldened by having found her voice as a writer, Dehnert says she is still continually drawn to the theme that ignited her love for theatre as a child. “I’m just fascinated by the way people can survive impossible things. War. The loss of a loved one. Puberty. Whether they’re big or small things, we as humans really know how to do that. I think it’s one of the coolest things about us.”

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**Catching communication problems early**

Out of the mouths of babes. This is where James Booth, the JoAnn and Peter Dolle Professor of Learning Disabilities, gathers most of his research data. “The work we do is usually at the word level,” he said. “They’re pretty basic tasks.” But while the questions he asks are simple, the implications of his research—and the ways it can help children with dyslexia, ADHD, or other disabilities—are anything but.

Booth is the director of the Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. He and his fellow researchers run MRI scans on their research subjects—most of whom are children between the ages of 8 and 13—while asking them basic questions about language. A current recipient of three grants from the National Institutes of Health, Booth believes the brain holds answers that can help identify children with learning disabilities more quickly and effectively, thus paving the way for them to better express themselves in speaking and writing.

“Right now, using behavioral measures, we can accurately predict about 80 percent of kids who will have subsequent learning disabilities,” he said. “That may sound good, and it is, in terms of research purposes. But in terms of clinical utility, it’s not that great. If you’re missing 20 percent of the cases, then kids aren’t getting the early interventions they need.” Booth hopes that his and his colleagues’ work can help close this gap and that with the aid of brain scans, children with learning disabilities can be identified earlier—long before they learn to read.
Telling untold stories

Playwright Rebecca Gilman, associate professor of radio/television/film, has definitely earned some bragging rights. Her play Boy Gets Girl was listed by Time magazine as one of the best plays and musicals of its decade. She was a 2002 Pulitzer Prize finalist for her hard-edged drama The Glory of Living. And Spinning into Butter (right, as performed by Northwestern students), perhaps her best-known play, was adapted into a 2009 movie starring Sarah Jessica Parker.

Yet Gilman remains modest and unassuming, recently lamenting her working pace and her troubles coming up with titles. “I’m very slow,” she said. “It takes me forever to finish things.” Her impressive body of work would suggest otherwise. And if she is feeling slowed down at the moment, it could be because she has a lot on her plate. In addition to teaching, Gilman is working on commissions from St. Louis Rep and Chicago’s Steppenwolf and Goodman Theatres. The play she is writing for the Goodman is based on The Emigrants, a tetralogy about a Swedish family that moves to Minnesota in the mid-1800s. “They find success in America, but at a cost,” Gilman said. “They’re never able to go back to Sweden, so it’s very difficult, but they do make a life for themselves. It’s a very compelling story.”

Gilman’s Steppenwolf commission centers around the travails of a social worker for Iowa’s Department of Human Services; her play for St. Louis Rep is set in Wisconsin in 1976. While the three projects differ greatly, they are likely to touch on some of the same themes. “A lot of what I write about involves class and the disparity of wealth in this country,” said Gilman, a past recipient of the Harper Lee Award. “There’s a whole segment of the population that’s disregarded, and I want to write their stories more than anybody else’s.”

Practicing powerful expression

“Speech is power,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson—and the members of Northwestern’s Debate Society and Speech Team would no doubt agree. Both groups have achieved victory on their respective playing fields, helping maintain Northwestern’s long-standing tradition of forensic excellence.

The Debate Society, founded in 1856, is the oldest and most successful continuous program of its kind in the United States. It’s also the winningest, with 14 National Debate Tournament championships (and a second-place finish this year; see page 14). Debaters engage in policy discussions on such subjects as environmental regulation, Supreme Court rulings, and America’s role in the Middle East. They also switch sides to argue opposing viewpoints, bolstering their ability to defend a strong case in any situation.

The Speech Team competes in debate events as well (Lincoln-Douglas and Parliamentary style) along with a full range of public-speaking events, from informative and impromptu speaking to oral interpretation of literature. This year the team won its division at the National Forensic Association Tournament for the fourth year in a row.

Debate and speech events hone students’ abilities to think, research, analyze, perform, and persuade. No wonder that so many of the groups’ participants go on to careers in law and politics—a tradition that delights Daniel Fitzmier (GC02, GC06), director of forensics and coach of the Debate Society. “I’d love to be able to think that I got a chance to work with a lot of students who went out and became great leaders,” he said. “That’s a legacy to be proud of.”
Uncovering buried truths

Call her the ghost whisperer. Director Mary Zimmerman, the Jaharis Family Professor of Performance Studies, is renowned for her masterful ability to channel the past. As with many School of Communication faculty, her work involves both writing and oral expression: she adapts old texts—such sources as The Odyssey, Metamorphoses, and Voltaire’s Candide (right, at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre)—then brings those stories to life on stage. Her productions have wowed audiences and won her a Drama Desk Award, a Tony Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship.

While Zimmerman has also directed Shakespeare plays and staged operas at the Met, she is best known for her theatrical adaptations. Her writing process occurs only after her actors have been chosen, in the nights and mornings surrounding rehearsals. “People sometimes ask me why I work this way, why not just write a script ahead of time?” she has said. “I can only answer that my imagination doesn’t work that way; text is not separate from image for me.”

Zimmerman places a lot of faith in the power of the unconscious and in the openness and sense of play that come so easily to children: “Willa Cather said, ‘I’ll never be the artist I was as a child,’ and I really love that idea.” Perhaps because she so embraces youth and new ideas herself, Zimmerman is well liked by her students. In 2011, based on their nomination, she won the school’s Galbut Outstanding Faculty Award.

While she has more than established herself as a fixture in the theatre world, Zimmerman finds that her ideas are constantly changing. She has compared the process of making a play to constructing a building but now sees it as an act of archeology. “There is something buried in the sand, and it is our job to uncover it. If we panic and work too fast, not paying attention to the true shape of the buried artifact, if we are impatient, then we will damage it. We have to let the emerging shape guide us. But if we are lazy and don’t work hard enough, the show will arrive on opening night still obscured, still covered in part by the sand.”

Analyzing persuasive messages

Echoes of Daniel O’Keefe’s research are everywhere: in the pleas and rallying cries of the Obama and Romney campaigns, on breast cancer awareness websites, in the Doritos Locos ads for Taco Bell. The Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate, O’Keefe studies persuasion and what makes messages more or less convincing. Because unlocking these secrets has such enormous implications for advertisers, advocacy groups, politicians—you name it—countless studies have been done on the subject. And O’Keefe, a practitioner of meta-analysis, takes on the formidable job of tracking down the results of these studies and synthesizing them. He has won awards for his published findings, and his research is a bellwether for many in the field. It has also produced some surprising revelations.

For example, consider the difference between persuasive appeals that are gain framed (if you wear sunscreen, you’ll have attractive skin when you’re older) versus loss framed (if you don’t wear sunscreen, you’ll have unattractive skin when you’re...
Expressing what can’t be written

E. Patrick Johnson’s love for writing began with poetry. “I’ve always loved it and I’ve always written it. Some of it was very bad when I was young,” said Johnson, the Carlos Montezuma Professor of Performance Studies and African American Studies. “But for me, if writing isn’t poetic or beautiful, it’s not interesting.”

Johnson took this affinity in a scholarly direction with Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity. A finalist for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, the 2003 book has received several honors, including the Lilla A. Heston Award and the Errol Hill Book Award. Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South, his collection of oral narratives, came out in 2008, and he’s currently coediting two anthologies with colleague Ramón Rivera-Servera, assistant professor of performance studies.

But while Johnson has continued writing, his love of poetry—and his performing talent—have helped push his work into a whole new realm. Just as poetry is meant to be read aloud, so, it seems to Johnson, is a lot of his work. “When I started to transcribe the narratives for Sweet Tea, a lot of the stories fell flat on the page,” he said. “I knew that the reader wouldn’t really get a sense of how this person sounded, how they put stress on this word or that phrase.” Nor could the page relay averted glances, body language, or dialect. So Johnson toured the country in his one-man show Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Stories, portraying narrators ranging in age from 21 to 93. Based on excerpts from his book, the show garnered him a Black Theatre Alliance Award for best solo performance.

With his students he tries to convey what he’s learned on both the stage and the page. “Good writing takes practice,” he said. “And I often tell them that the best writing is rewriting. Let it sit. Put it away. Then come back to it.”
Singing your heart out

Michael Mahler (C04) found his mode of creative expression writing songs for his first Waa-Mu Show.

Though he’d started attending writers meetings for the show on a whim—“I thought it would be a good way to make friends and meet girls,” he said—the then freshman found a home in musical theatre right away. “The thrill of having my songs orchestrated, played, and performed at such a high caliber was overwhelming,” he said. “I knew I wanted to write for the theatre for the rest of my life.”

Since his Waa-Mu days (he was 2004 cochair), Mahler has worked as an actor, singer, and composer-lyricist, with his work performed at theaters across the country. Last year he and collaborator Alan Schmuckler (C05), a 2005 Waa-Mu cochair, performed their song “At Least We’ll Have Tonight” and others at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, as part of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers series “Songwriters: The Next Generation.” This summer Mahler’s original musical Hero receives its world premiere at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire after an on-campus workshop by the American Music Theatre Project (AMTP), the School of Communication’s incubator program for developing new stage musicals.

“None of it would have happened,” said Mahler, “if not for Waa-Mu.”

Northwestern students interested in music theatre can help develop works-in-progress through AMTP workshops and lend vocal talents to the annual Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriters Project, also hosted by AMTP. They can join the largest annual campus production, the Arts Alliance at Northwestern University’s Dolphin Show.

But there’s something special about Waa-Mu. Not every Waa-Mu veteran goes on to a career in musical theatre—but so many have that Waa-Mu, called “the greatest college show in America” by Variety, could also be called America’s greatest proving ground for the musical stage.

“The Waa-Mu Show more than added to my college education; it defined it,” said Schmuckler. “It’s not a stretch to say that everything I’m doing now professionally traces its roots back to Waa-Mu.”

“The thing about Waa-Mu is that it’s all untried material,” said Dale Rieling (C83, GBSM84), 1983 Waa-Mu cochair and now associate conductor for Mary Poppins on Broadway. “You learn what works, how to make it work. You learn to recognize the theatrical nature of what you’re doing, something you find out in rehearsal. Rehearsal is your lab.”

“Waa-Mu trained me to be quick and flexible with ideas,” said Tom Mizer (C93), who—with the writing partner he met at Northwestern, Curtis Moore (BSM95)—created Triangle, a musical workshoped by AMTP last year. As alumni, Moore and Mizer were asked to write an opening number to help pull a Waa-Mu Show together. As Mizer recalled, “You realize you can write about anything.”

Eugenio Vargas (C09), a 2009 cochair, learned how to express himself through other people’s songs. As his time on campus wound to a close, Vargas was at a loss how to say goodbye to his Northwestern family. “When opening night for Waa-Mu rolled around,” he said, “it
hit me”—his songs in the show said what he wanted to say. “So for two weeks, each night I poured my heart and soul into every note, every lyric, and used those songs to communicate what I never would have been able to say with words alone. Even now, years later, as I try to describe the whole experience, I find my words falling short.”

Waa-Mu has always been a transformative learning experience. Today it’s even part of the curriculum. The 2012 show, Off the Map, was created in part by the students in Waa-Mu director David H. Bell’s course Creating the Musical. “There were 40 students in the class, and we had a song assignment due each week of the quarter,” said Rachel Shapiro (C12), 2012 cochair with Jon Harrison (C12) and Patrick Sulken (BSM12). “So we had a wealth of music being written and were able to select from many great songs.” The numbers were then orchestrated by students in music director Ryan T. Nelson’s orchestration course.

“The biggest lesson I learned from Waa-Mu is, without question, to jump into new projects with arms and heart open,” said Schmuckler. “We undoubtedly made mistakes along the way, but Waa-Mu was, looking back at it, the safest place to make those mistakes, surrounded as we were by caring faculty and friends. I wouldn’t trade a minute of my time huddled at a piano, entrenched in meetings, sitting in that audience, or standing on that stage.”

Above: a scene from the 2011 Waa-Mu Show
Below: Alan Schmuckler (left) and Michael Mahler

It’s only been a 30-year wait: seize the chance.”

“ These are independent filmmakers, so they spend most of their time thinking about how to make the next thing. They don’t necessarily have the time or the resources to go back and preserve the legacy of what they’ve done.”

That became the job of Stewart and her fellow curators, and their efforts won widespread acclaim. LA Weekly called the retrospective “a priceless work of excavation and restoration. . . . It is as if some giant gap in our history has suddenly been filled in for us. It’s only been a 30-year wait: seize the chance.”

Luckily for filmgoers outside Los Angeles, a shorter version of the original program will tour parts of the country later this year. For information see www.cinema.ucla.edu/larebellion.

Faculty focus

Pablo Boczkowski (PhD, Cornell University) won the 2011 Best Book Award in the Communication and Information Technologies Section of the American Sociological Association for News at Work: Imitation in an Age of Information Abundance (University of Chicago Press, 2010). He also received a paper award from Journalism: Theory Practice & Criticism and had papers published or accepted by a number of journals.

Thomas Bradshaw (MFA, Brooklyn College) won the 2012 Foundation for the Contemporary Arts Award, which honors work of an imaginative, contemporary nature. Bradshaw’s play Burning opened the 2011-12 season of The New Group at New York’s Acorn Theater.

David Catlin (BS, Northwestern University) starred in The Nutcracker at the House Theatre of Chicago.

Two plays by Zayd Dohrn (MFA, New York University) premiered recently. Want ran at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre in November, and Outside People opened in January in New York as a coproduction of the Vineyard Theatre and Naked Angels. His short play The Legerdemain was produced as part of “Theater for One” in New York’s Times Square last June.

Rebecca Gilman (MFA, University of Iowa) and Swedish writer Sven Benediktsson received a Theatre Communications Group Global Connections grant to research their forthcoming documentary play The Emigrant Project, inspired by Wilhelm Moberg’s novel The Emigrants. Gilman will travel to Sweden with additional funding from the American Scandinavian Foundation.

Cindy Gold (MFA, Alabama Shakespeare Festival) performed in Love, Loss, and What I Wore at Chicago’s Broadway Playhouse. Appearing with Gold were alumni Roni Geva (C02) and Whitney White (C94). Gold also appeared with Bernie Yvon (C86) at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Show Boat (above) and with James Rank (GBSM01) and Andrew Keltz (Co8) at Highland Park’s Music Theatre Company in Pippin, directed by Jessica Redish (Co2).

Robert Hariman (PhD, University of Minnesota) was honored by the British Journal of Photography for his nasectionneeded.com, which was named one of the 10 best photography blogs.

Kyle Henry (MFA, University of Texas at Austin) edited the documentary film Where Soldiers Come From, widely released in September and now available on iTunes and Netflix.

Paul Leonard (PhD, Stanford University) won the 2010 Best Published Paper Award and the Best Conference Paper Award from the Academy of Management’s Organizational Communication and Information Systems Division. With Noshir Contractor (PhD, University of Southern California) and P. R. Monge, he wrote an article published in 2011 in the International Journal of Communication.

Jennifer Light (PhD, Harvard University) received a $50,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s New Directions Fellowship program. This grant will enable Light to create a new Geographic Information Systems database and develop studies focusing on using GIS for historical analysis. Light also received the Society for American City and Regional Planning History’s Catherine Bauer Wurster Prize for her previous GIS work.

Dominic Missimi (MA, Wayne State University) was appointed executive director of the Sarah Siddons Society, one of Chicago’s most prestigious theatre organizations, after arranging entertainment for the society’s annual gala celebrations for the past 20 years. Missimi directed The Pirates of Penzance for the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire this spring.

Daniel O’Keefe (PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) has written articles published in such journals as Communication Methods and Measures as well as chapters and essays for four books, including Bending Opinion: Essays on Persuasion in the Public Domain (Leiden University Press) and Leveraging Consumer

Stewart helps curate epochal film series

Jacqueline Stewart, associate professor of radio/television/film and African American studies, was part of the curatorial team that assembled L.A. Rebellion: Creating a New Black Cinema, a film series presented in Los Angeles in late 2011. The program showcased the work of black filmmakers who studied at UCLA from the late 1960s to early 1980s. “These are filmmakers I’ve admired and taught for years,” said Stewart—whose MA thesis focused on one such figure, Julie Dash.

“I got to work really closely with them to help pull their materials together,” added Stewart.

“These are independent filmmakers, so they spend most of their time thinking about how to make the next thing. They don’t necessarily have the time or the resources to go back and preserve the legacy of what they’ve done.”

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Luckily for filmgoers outside Los Angeles, a shorter version of the original program will tour parts of the country later this year. For information see www.cinema.ucla.edu/larebellion.
Two new endowed professors celebrated

A December ceremony honored the School of Communication’s two new endowed professors. **Hamid Naficy** (left), professor of radio/television/film, was honored as the Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor in Communication. Naficy was named to the position two years ago but only recently returned to Evanston from the University’s Qatar campus, where he had taught since 2009. Performance studies professor **E. Patrick Johnson** (right), named to a newly created chair, is now the Carlos Montezuma Professor of Performance Studies.

Naficy is a leading authority on cinema and television in the Middle East. He writes about theories of exile and displacement, exilic and diaspora cinema and media, and Iranian and Third World cinemas. His many publications include *An Accented Cinema*, *The Making of Exile Cultures, Otherness and the Media: The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imagined*, the Iran Media Index, and the AFI Anthology *Home, Exile, Homeland*. His recently published four-book series on Iranian cinema is considered definitive. Naficy has also produced many educational and experimental films.

Johnson has spent much of his career giving a voice to those who have traditionally been voiceless, addressing issues of race, class, gender, and performance. His first book, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*, won the Lilla A. Heston Award and the Errol Hill Book Award and was a finalist for the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. In recognition of his contributions to the LGBT community, he was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2010.

Siegenfeld named choreographer of the year

Dance Chicago and the Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation named dance professor **Billy Siegenfeld** the 2011 Dance Chicago Choreographer of the Year. He won the award for premiering three distinctive works with the Jump Rhythm Jazz Project: “You Do Not Have to Be Good,” “There Never Was a War That Was Not Inward,” and “The Sumptuous Screech of Simplicity.”

Founder and artistic director of the company, Siegenfeld gratefully shared the honor with his colleagues, praising “their generosity and openness to new exploration.” Said Siegenfeld, “I feel honored for many reasons—but I feel most touched because the award affirms the work of the members of Jump Rhythm who work with me.”

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Dance professor Susan Lee helped celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Marjorie Ward Marshall Dance Center by curating “Step by Step: The History of Dance at Northwestern.” The engaging exhibit traced the art of movement at the University from its earliest on-campus incarnation (calisthenics for ladies, in 1866) through Martha Graham’s 1984 visit and on to today. Artifacts included a rich selection of materials from University Archives as well as pieces from Lee’s private collection.
Debaters reach NDT finals

The Northwestern Debate Society sent three teams to the 2012 National Debate Tournament in Atlanta this spring. The team of Weinberg senior Ryan Beiermeister and Weinberg sophomore Layne Kirshon placed second overall, losing a close final round to a Georgetown University team coached by former Northwestern NDT champion Jonathan Paul (Co1). Beiermeister and Kirshon placed first and second for the Top Speaker Award; Beiermeister is the second Northwestern woman to win Top Speaker in two years.

Award-winning screenwriter shares insights for writing and life

In a visit with School of Communication writing students, screenwriter and television writer-producer Margaret Nagle (C83) urged students to “find your voice and stand behind it.”

Nagle’s first script was for HBO’s Warm Springs, a drama depicting Franklin Roosevelt’s search for cures for his paralysis. The 2005 show won five Emmys, including the award for best television movie. She is currently at work on a sequel as well as an HBO pilot and a movie for Brad Pitt. Her writing credits also include two episodes of HBO’s Boardwalk Empire, for which she shared the 2011 Emmy for best drama series. Nagle was recently invited by Ron Howard and Brian Grazer to join the Imagine/Reliance Writers Lab, a trailblazing experimental screenwriters workshop.

Nagle encouraged students to “apply all of your education to your work and develop the stamina of a long-distance athlete, because you’re going to lose more than you win.” Noting that she stays in close contact with many of her Northwestern classmates, Nagle told students that, along with the University’s classes and artistic opportunities, “one of the greatest resources you have is each other.”
The doctor is in film

Is filmmaking a training ground for other careers? Just ask Ethan Molitch-Hou (C02, FSM08), who studied film and then took up the family business—medicine.

Dedicated to film while at Northwestern, Molitch-Hou also dabbled in the sciences. He’d completed all but one class for premed requirements when he decided to spend the summer in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where his parents run Centro Medico, a free health clinic.

“It was the first time that I saw what they really did, interacting with patients and using their skills to help in an area where it was truly needed,” he said. Ethan’s father, Mark Molitch, is professor of medicine in the division of endocrinology, metabolism, and molecular medicine at Northwestern’s Feinberg School of Medicine. His mother, Susan Hou, is professor of medicine in nephrology and hypertension at Loyola University Chicago. “I saw firsthand the service side of medicine. When I came back for senior year, I completed my biology requirement.”

After graduation Molitch-Hou worked on an animation project but contemplated joining the Peace Corps. “I felt that if I was going to volunteer abroad, I should help out where my family was already involved. I loved being down there. The altruism I saw every day was inspiring, which is what changed my career goals.”

He spent a term with AmeriCorps, helping teach computer literacy to migrant farmworkers, and then went to medical school. Now an internist at the US Naval Hospital in Okinawa, Japan, Molitch-Hou visits his family’s clinic as often as possible.

And he’s using his filmmaking skills every day. His film crew experience taught him how to work on a team. His storytelling background helps him communicate complicated medical terms. Documentary filmmaking taught him how to listen.

“If with those films, you are getting people to tell their story to you, asking simple, open-ended questions and allowing the interviewees to just tell their story,” he said. “Patient interviewing is very similar. We ask open-ended questions and allow patients to tell their story. We piece together the information to help us toward a diagnosis.”

Ethan Molitch-Hou (second from left) with (from left) his father, Mark Molitch; his brother, Michael Holitch-Hou; his mother, Susan Hou; his sister and brother-in-law, Tamara and Brian Wohlwend; and clinic director Douglas Villarroel.
Forgotten lunch leads to undercover blog and book

The day Chicago Public Schools teacher Sarah Wu (GC07) forgot to pack her lunch changed the course of her life forever.

On that fateful day, the school-based speech pathologist and alumna of Northwestern’s master’s program in speech pathology was too busy getting her young son to day care and herself to work to remember her lunch. So, like most of her school’s 1,300 students, she headed to the cafeteria.

The menu consisted of a hot dog wrapped in bagel dough (a “bagel dog”), six limp tater tots, and a cup of fruit-filled gelatin dessert. “I found that the food was totally overprocessed,” she said. “It was nothing I even recognized as real food.”

Wu launched a yearlong blog about school lunches, going undercover as Mrs. Q (www.fedupwithlunch.com) to protect her job. Mrs. Q went viral: the Chicago Tribune called, then Good Morning America, then literary agents. Last year Chronicle Books released Wu’s Fed Up with Lunch. Outed by her success, Wu didn’t lose her job; on the contrary, she was invited to a meeting with the Chicago Public Schools’ director of nutrition services to discuss reform.

What does Wu’s future hold? More exploration of nutrition and school lunch reform, and maybe another book. But, please, no more bagel dogs. –Emily Hiser Lobdell (WCAS97, GJ01)

Robert C. Rowland (GC78), communications professor at the University of Kansas, won the National Communication Association’s 2011 Douglas W. Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award.

Carl Menninger (C82), director of theatre, musical theatre, and dance at American University, has written Minding the Edge: Strategies for a Fulfilling, Successful Career as an Actor (Waveland Press, 2011).


Denis O’Hare (C84) stars in Fox’s series American Horror Story.

Pat Corey (C86) joined the insurance practice of the executive search firm Odgers Berndtson.

Robert C. Rowland (GC78), communications professor at the University of Kansas, won the National Communication Association’s 2011 Douglas W. Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award.

Craig Foucht (C90) is director of financial planning and analysis for National Geographic Television in Washington, DC.

Debbie Bisno (C92) is a theatre producer and head of Bisno Productions. Her current Broadway shows are the Tony Award-winning War Horse and Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Jeff Cohen (C92) was hired as lead instructor at Chicago’s Code Academy, a computer-programming school founded by fellow alumni Mike McGee (C10) and Neal Sales-Griffin (SESP09).

Mike Knobloch (C92), president of film music and publishing at Universal Pictures, received the T. J. Martell Foundation’s Humanitarian Award.

Avery Baker (C93) is chief marketing officer for the Tommy Hilfiger Group.

Patrick Kinias (GC93), president of Play-by-Play Sports Properties, was named 2011 Radio Broadcaster of the Year for the Southern League by his industry colleagues.

Jeb Brody (C95) is president of production at Focus, NBC Universal’s art-house division.

David Chalian (C95) is the Washington bureau chief for Yahoo! News.

David Gioiella (C95) was executive producer of the film Hello Lonesome, nominated for the 2012 John Cassavetes Film Independent Spirit Awards.

Jason Hill (C96) was hired as a partner in the corporate and transactional services group of SmithAmundsen in St. Louis.

Susan Booth (GC87) celebrated her 10th anniversary as artistic director of Atlanta’s Alliance Theatre.

Prospect Park, a production-management company founded by Jeff Kwatinetz (C87, GC87), announced plans for the Online Network, a channel to be broadcast via the Internet.

Mike Sands (C89) founded the digital-advertising software company BrightTag.

Christa Dahlstrom (C90) is the creator and executive producer of Flummox and Friends (www.flummoxandfriends.com).

Gregg Edelman (C80) visited campus to meet with students while in the Chicago area to play the title role in Sweeney Todd during its fall run at the Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook Terrace. Other Northwestern alumni in the production included Heidi Kettenring (C95), Patrick Gagnon (C99), Matthew Jones (BSM88), and James Rank (GBSM01).
The film Act Naturally, which premiered at the Chicago United Film Festival last September, was created almost entirely by School of Communication alumni. Directed by J. P. Riley (C03), the film was written by Riley, Katie L. Hall (C04), Brock Wilbur (C07), and Annie Levine (C08) and was produced by Hall and Dustin Pearman (C04), who also directed the cinematography. The crew included Shannon Scrofano (C01), Pat Bishop (C10), Chris Poole (C10), Reade Harris (C09), Maya Kuper (C04), Nathan Matsuda (C08), David Lassiter (C08), and Cameron Shaw (C05). The cast features Hall, Wilbur, Liz Lytle (C04), Courtney Abbott (C04), Gloria Coco (SCS04), and Blake Silver (C05).

Heather Headley (C97), Tony- and Grammy–winning actress and singer, will star in the stage musical adaptation of the Whitney Houston film The Bodyguard.

Doctoral research by Nancy G. Moore (GC97) on early 20th-century writer and dancer Valentine de St. Point appears in the book Feminine Futures (Les presses de reel, 2011), distributed as part of an exhibit at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Sandy (Kraut) Rustin (C98) and Dan Lipton (BSM07) developed the off-Broadway sketch comedy musical Rated P... for Parenthood for New York’s Westside Theatre. The show was choreographed by Rachel Bress (C98) and coproduced by Evan Fleischer (C98).

José Bernard Capino (GC99, GC02) has been granted tenure and promotion to associate professor of English and media and cinema studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His book Dream Factories of a Former Colony: American Fantasies, Philippine Cinema was published last year by the University of Minnesota Press.

Suzanne Malec-McKenna (GC99) joined the strategic communications firm Jasculca Terman and Associates as senior counsel.

2000s

Tracy Otwell (C00) won a Joseph Jefferson Award for artistic specialization in toy theatre design for Lookingsglass Theatre’s The Last Act of Lilka Kadison.

Julia Huycz (C02, GC06, GC11) was awarded the Acoustical Society of America’s F. V. Hunt Fellowship.

Jonathan Katz (C02, GJ04), the Associated Press correspondent who broke the Haiti earthquake news, lectured at Northwestern last September.

Elaine A. Peña (GC02, GC06) is assistant professor of American studies at George Washington University. She wrote Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe (University of California Press, 2011).

David Weintraub (C02) leads global external communications for agribusiness as a director at Archer Daniels Midland.

Northwestern University Entertainment Alliance

NUEA-West

In the fall NUEA-West hosted a panel on publishing e-books, held workshops for its peer mentor program, and screened the award-winning film Circumstance, written and directed by Maryam Keshavarz (WCAS97).

The group’s annual “Surviving LA Panel” featured Disney executive Louie Provost (WCAS03), Olive Bridge vice president Jodi Hildebrand (C02), director-writer-actor Richie Keen (C96), film and television writer Mike Gagerman (C97), writer Alex Douglas (C97), and Sundance programmer and indie film producer April Wright (KSM92). The panel was produced and moderated by Josh Goldenberg (C04), literary manager at Kaplan/Perrone Entertainment.

NUEA-West’s Short Film Night showcased short films, commercials, music videos, and other works by John Ruby (WCAS00), Gayla Kraetsch-Hartsough (C70), Andy Wolf (C94), Julie Lockhart (C96), Kristen Osman (C00), Joe Allen Price (C57), Mike Kopera (C05), Keith Harrison (BSM08), Mitch Lerner (C09), Robby Karol (C07), Matt Shore (WCAS08), Rebecca Warm (C09), Matt Wool (C07), Tamar Feinkind (C05), and Naomi Grossman (C97). Panelists for “Speaking of Voiceover: How to Succeed in the Unseen Medium” included Tish Hicks (C88), Audu Paden (C85), Clancy Brown (C81), Andy Hirsch (C87), Thompson Howell (C85), Stephanie Riggio (C89), and David Millbern (C80). A TV drama panel celebrating the Northwestern-friendly series Ringer featured cocreator Eric Charmelo (WCAS95) and Nicole Snyder (C97), coproducer Cathryn Humphris (C98), supervising producer Hank Chilton (WCAS91), and casting director Michael Testa (C86). The group also held a holiday party with alumni of other Midwestern universities.

NUEA-East

In the fall NUEA-East hosted “Everything Is Rent,” featuring members of the off-Broadway revival’s creative team. The group has also continued its successful Member Monday alumni panel discussions with monthly presentations on various topics. “Beyond the 10 Percent: Agents Talk Back,” featured Michael Kirsten (C92) from Harden-Curtis Associates, Diana Glazer (C06) from International Creative Management, and Alexis Williams (C02) from Bret Adams Artists’ Agency. A February session explored the New York City comedy scene with panelists Russ Armstrong (WCAS06) of Magnet Theater, Timothy Dunn (C03) of Upright Citizens Brigade, Jake Szymanski (C04) of Saturday Night Live, Joanna Simmons (C05) of Story Pirates, and Sarah Grace Welbourn (C09) of Funkie Todd.

The group welcomed the acting and musical theatre class of 2012 for the School of Communication’s annual New York Showcase and presented the third annual “Ways of the Broadway” seminar. The program provides current undergraduates with an insider’s look into the theatre business, with contributing perspectives from industry leaders in management, marketing, and production.
Phineas Lambert (C04) is director of business development at the book marketing company Booklr.

Michael Mahler (C04) and Alan Schmuckler (C04) performed in a concert at the Kennedy Center (www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M4787).

Jordan Cerf (C05) was promoted to agent in the TV literary department at WME, a leading talent agency.


Maria Finitza (GC08) directed the films Life Lessons and My Mother’s Idea, which both premiered at Chicago’s Gene Siskel Film Center in January.

Sarah Gubbins (GC08) received an Edgerton Foundation Award.

Collette Pollard (GC08) won a Joseph Jefferson Award for best scenic design (midsize) for The Front Page at Chicago’s TimeLine Theatre.

Tyler Roth (C08) is a colorist at the production company Optimus.

Lori Barcliff Baptista (GC09) is director of the African American Cultural Center of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Sarah Hughey (GC09) won a Joseph Jefferson Award for best lighting design (midsize) for Silk Road Theatre Project’s Scorched.

Caitlin Kunkel (GC09) teaches comedy writing and film and TV courses as a faculty instructor in Second City’s Writing Program.

Residue, a play by Joel Sinensky (C09), was seen at Chicago’s Royal George Theatre this winter.

2010s

Zachary Johnson (C10) is cofounder of Syndio Social, one of four startups recognized by the White House as top companies run by young entrepreneurs.

Alex Weisman (C10) joined Chicago’s TimeLine Theatre Company as an associate artist.


Lynne Havertine (GC11) manages internal communications for Discover’s marketing division as well as the division’s recruiting program for interns and new college graduates.

Andy Miara (GC11) sold a pitch to Comedy Central and was hired to write the pilot, which Comedy Central is scheduled to shoot.

Devil May Care, a play by Kendall Sherwood (GC11), was seen at Chicago’s Collaboration Theater this spring.

Brad West (C11) won the Best Animated Short Award for his film The Winged Little Bunny at the Illinois International Film Festival.

Agnes G. Hohmann (C30) on October 20 at age 100 in York, Maine.

Doris Terrell Johnson (GC36) on December 9 at age 99 in Palmyra, Missouri.

Albert (“Ollie”) Adelman (C37) on January 13 at age 96 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

B. Isabel Lockard (C38) on November 5 at age 96 in Charleston, South Carolina.

Walker A. Jensen (C39, L42) of Encinitas, California, on January 15 at age 94.

Glad Applegate (C40) on October 29 in Richmond, Virginia.

Donald Brieland (GC45) on September 30 at age 87 in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.

Revelle (Swordesh) Magidovitch (C49) of Sumter, South Carolina, on September 9 at age 87.

Lyle W. Allen (C47) on March 3 at age 87 in Peoria, Illinois.

Marilyn Simpson Ford (C47) on January 27 at age 88 in Sandy Springs, Florida.

Marilyn Ruth (Duemeland) Larson (C47) on January 29 at age 86 in Arizona.

Nancy H. Hart (C48) on March 6 at age 85 in Chicago, Illinois.

Donald C. Davis (GC49) on January 28 at age 89 in Rock Island, Illinois.

Elberta (“Bobbé”) Louise Von Riper (C49) on January 12 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Elizabeth (“Sherry”) Raker (C50) on October 2 at age 82 in Flat Rock, North Carolina.

William F. Sticklen (C50) on October 15 at age 87 in Chicago, Illinois.
Gordon L. Gray (GC51, GC57) on October 26 at age 87 in Brunswick, Maine.

Florence Spalding Sharp (GC51) on December 31 at age 83 in Green Valley, Arizona.

Barbara Jacobson (C52) on September 11 at age 79 in Evanston, Illinois.

Adelbert J. Nowatzki (GC52) of Brainerd, Minnesota, on September 12 at age 89.

Lewis F. Draper Jr. (C53) on August 27 at age 81.

Marion (Bork) Markham (C53) on November 12 at age 82 in Northbrook, Illinois.

R. Bailey Markham (C53, GC56) on December 17 in Northbrook, Illinois.

William C. Morris (GC53) of Pitman, New Jersey, on February 6 at age 81.

Paul G. Grotelueschen (GC54) on December 20 at age 84 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Rolland (“Rol”) E. Hoffman (C54) on December 4 at age 80 in California.

Jacqueline Allen McClure (GC54) on February 10 at age 83 in Oregon.

Marlene Darling Fredrickson (C55) on November 10 at age 78 in Portland, Oregon.

George Metcalf Kingman (C55) on October 17 at age 81 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Adrienne E. Warshawsky (C55) on January 11 at age 77 in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Susan (Miles) Wolfe (GC55) of West Hartford, Connecticut, on November 21 at age 79.

Nancy B. Townsley (C56) on August 14 at age 77 in California.

Barbara Jean (Kott) Cobb (GC57) on February 21 at age 79 in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas.

L. Harry Ray (GC57) on October 9 at age 81 in Tonawanda, New York.

Roger R. Anderson (C59) of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, on October 28 at age 76.

Marianne Barnes (C60) on November 25 at age 87 in Loves Park, Illinois.

Nancy (Stephenson) Plunkett (C60) on September 29 in Camden, Arkansas.

Margot Timke (C61) on December 16 at age 72 in Springfield, Virginia.

Victor F. Bittner Jr. (C62, KSM56) on February 9 at age 80 in Chicago, Illinois.

Joyce (Berman) Millman (C62, GC63) on February 7 in Chicago, Illinois.

Barbara (Kurucz) Seminaro (C63) on August 13 at age 70 in Onalaska, Wisconsin.

Richard William Stream (GC64) on March 2 at age 78 in Denton, Texas.

Nadine Hamilton (C65) on December 14 in Washington, DC.

Mary Frances Edwards (GC70) on September 13 at age 64 in McAlester, Oklahoma.

Albert P. Klose (GC70) on January 26 at age 89 in Denville, New Jersey.

Salvador F. Bernal (GC72) on October 26 at age 66 in the Philippines.

Joyce Gab Kneeland (C79, GC93, GC08) on January 7 at age 54 in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Richard (Dick) Tufeld (C48) died on January 22 at age 85 in Studio City, California. A television and radio announcer, Tufeld was best known for voicing the B9 Robot in the TV series Lost in Space and for smoothly intoning commercials for Mr. Bubble bubble bath, Gallo wine, and other products. The voice of ABC daytime programming for 30 years, he served as an announcer on such shows as Bugs Bunny and Bewitched, announced 16 Grammy Awards shows as well as the Emmys, and did voice work on Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color, It’s Gary Shandling’s Show, The Simpsons, and other series. Tufeld got his start in radio at age 16 making staff announcements for his local station, KPAS in Pasadena. While at Northwestern he worked at WNUR and met Adrienne Blumberg (C48), to whom he proposed after knowing her only three days. They were married for 55 years, until her death in 2004. Tufeld was an ardent supporter of Northwestern football and a generous donor to the University and its athletics programs. As he had requested, he was buried in his Northwestern sweatshirt. Tufeld is survived by his daughters Lynn and Melissa, his sons Bruce and Craig, and six grandchildren.

Dana Lynn Upshaw (C79) on October 8 at age 54 in Portland, Oregon.

Teresa (“Tish”) Dunbar (C80, GC84) on January 2 at age 53 in Chicago, Illinois.

Scott L. DeNier (GC85) on December 15 at age 54 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Lisa (Claypool) Allen (GC91) on December 30 at age 47 in Evanston, Illinois.

Patricia (Maddi) Doane (GC91) on October 23 at age 51 in Bolingbrook, Illinois.
Wirtz Visiting Artist program: a fitting alumna legacy

Award-winning playwright Lydia Diamond (C’92) returned to campus in February as the 2012 Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Visiting Artist. Before attending the Theatre and Interpretation Center’s production of her stage adaptation of Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, Diamond spoke with students in her old haunt, the Wallis Theater—an experience she described as “very surreal and very special.” Diamond also stopped by two performance studies classrooms and a radio/television/film writing class and answered questions at a talkback following the performance of her play. In fact, she stayed long after the show, encouraging the student cast and autographing their marked-up scripts.

That level of one-on-one quality time between School of Communication students and leading artists was exactly what W. Rockwell “Rocky” Wirtz (C’75) had in mind when he created the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Visiting Artist program through gifts to the school.

President of the Wirtz Corporation and chair of the Chicago Blackhawks National Hockey League franchise, Wirtz (above left) is also a member of the Northwestern University Board of Trustees and the School of Communication’s National Advisory Board. But his relationship with Northwestern began with his grandmother, Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz (EB’24) (left), who graduated with a business degree back when few women went into business.

“Granny Ginny” enjoyed her time on campus, said Wirtz, and “was always trying to get one of her grandchildren to go to Northwestern like she did.” (This created an in-family rivalry with her husband, Arthur Wirtz, an alumnus of the University of Michigan.)

Rocky recalls his grandmother as a refined lady who wore white gloves and a hat to drive and, while enjoying summers on
Alumna provides program with technology

Allison Murray (GC86), a graduate of the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, recently donated five new Apple iPads—plus funds for appropriate applications—to the master’s program in speech, language, and learning. A speech pathologist who works with young children, Murray uses iPads in her own work and knew that graduate students could learn a lot about real-world patient interaction by using the latest technology in their clinical education. “This technology is an incredible tool for everyone,” said Murray. “They are portable, simple, yet advanced and are opening a million doors to people with communication challenges.” In her work with children with autism, Down syndrome, and other disorders, Murray finds that a tablet gets the whole family involved. She expects that student clinicians who know how to use the technology will have a leg up in the industry. “Northwestern gave me the education of a lifetime, and this opportunity inspired me to give back in a way that is win-win: the students win and the patients win!”

Pepper Lecture: thoughts on culture, biology

A large and attentive crowd assembled on April 11 for the seventh annual Pepper Lecture, hosted by the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The featured speaker was Patrick C. M. Wong, an associate professor of communication sciences and disorders and the director of the Communication Neural Systems Research Group. In attendance were Roxelyn (C53) and Richard (McC53) Pepper, whose generous support has made the lecture series possible, in addition to funding countless other School of Communication projects. Wong called the opportunity to lecture a “tremendous honor.” His talk, “Cultural and Biological Constraints in Human Communication,” explored how cultural and biological differences between people can affect how they see—and sometimes hear—the world. “Why is knowing about these cultural and biological differences useful? So we can use them as predictors of performance,” he said. “We hope they will help us guide training and make training more optimal for individual learners.”

Wong earned his doctorate in psychology at the University of Texas at Austin and was a postdoctoral fellow in neuroscience at the University of Chicago. His work has been published in the Journal of Neuroscience, Nature Neuroscience, Cerebral Cortex, and PLoS ONE, among other publications, and his research has received public attention from the New York Times, National Public Radio, and the Wall Street Journal. His research is supported by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.
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