Targeted Donations Support Graduate Students

Over the last four years, the graduate program in English at the University of Kansas has undergone a number of significant changes. The M.A. program has been divided into four tracks: Literature; Literature and Literary Theory; Rhetoric and Composition; and English Language Studies. The number of hours of required courses has been slightly reduced, which shortens time-to-degree by about a semester. A streamlined five-year PhD in Rhetoric and Composition is now an option. The MFA program was named one of the “25 most underrated” such degree plans in the country by The Huffington Post and applications have risen accordingly in both quantity and quality. The graduate program as a whole has become more selective and the students have become more diverse. The number of “minority” doctoral students jumped from 13% to 20% between 2008 and 2010. But perhaps the most significant change in KU English graduate education has been conceptual. In 2009, new Chair of English Marta Caminero-Santangelo declared that her top priority during her three-year term would be locating and providing funds -- teaching and research assistantships, fellowships, scholarships, internal and external resources of all kinds -- to fully support current and future graduate students during their years in the department. In 2011-2012, that goal was achieved, but tentenously. It will take continued commitment and new sources of aid to maintain this achievement and keep the KU English graduate program competitive as the twenty-first century unfolds.

Changes in KU English graduate education accompany (and are sure to be affected by) changes at the University of Kansas in general. “Bold Aspirations,” a strategic plan designed to overhaul both the academic and support missions of the University, has reached the implementation phase (see http://boldaspirations.ku.edu/). The KU Core, a new regimen of general education requirements goes live in Fall 2013. The Core will profoundly affect the English Department’s First- and Second-Year English program, since only two writing courses will be required of incoming students from 2013 on. The Department is already hard at work revising its undergraduate major, partly in response to this seismic change. In this new academic landscape, the status of graduate teaching assistantships, the principal source of funding for English graduate education, is unclear. At the same time, Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, Provost Jeffrey Vitter, and the Kansas Board of Regents have put a high priority on recruiting and retaining the strongest possible undergraduate students possible. The interest from numerous discretionary endowed funds (donations made with no identified purpose) has been diverted to these efforts. While these goals are laudable, one consequence of this shift in focus has been further erosion of graduate funding. Several private revenue streams that once supported English graduate students are now earmarked to entice and assist talented prospective English undergraduate majors.

KU administrators recognize the need to support graduate education. In conjunction with “Bold Aspirations,” the University of Kansas has launched a $1.2 billion comprehensive fundraising campaign, “Far Above: The Campaign for Kansas” (follow the “Far Above” links at http://www.kuendowment.org/). Campaign publicity acknowledges the
Closing Thoughts

As most of you know by now, I stepped down as Chair at the end of my term in July 2012. It has been a momentous three years, and I learned a great deal. I am exceedingly proud to have been Chair of the Department of English during this time of much change, planning, and growth. Looking back, it seems incredible to me that so much happened in that three-year period. The department saw its first-ever planning retreat, at which we discussed our special strengths and strategic approaches to building on them. As a result of that retreat, in the years that followed we passed new proposals streamlining our MA and PhD programs, instituting important benchmarks for timely progress toward degree and implementing a new, formalized research mentoring program for our PhD students, among other changes. The Department’s external program review in 2011 resulted in high praise for our “sense of shared mission, purpose and passion,” the current atmosphere of “intellectual foment,” our clear commitment to strong teaching, and our excellent research strengths in several areas.

We saw five outstanding new faculty hires in the three-year period, in fields as diverse as Early Modern Studies, Fiction Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, Science and Literature, and Playwriting. Several of our faculty won prestigious awards recognizing careers of distinguished teaching and research: Amy Devitt was named a Stiefel Professor; Professor Emeritus David Bergeron was honored with a Career Achievement Teaching Award; Philip Barnard has just been named a Chancellor’s Club Teaching Professor, and Maryemma Graham was one of only three KU professors to be named last year as a University Distinguished Professor. One of our English majors, Kelsey Murrell, did us proud by earning a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford. At the same time, our Creative Writing faculty have been in the national spotlight over the past three years: Ken Irby was honored with the Shelley Memorial Award for his poetry; Laura Moriarity’s new novel The Chaperone was named the #1 hot fiction book of the summer by USA Today; Darren Canady won the M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award; and our brand new fiction hire, Kij Johnson, was recognized with the prestigious Hugo Award for science fiction writing. Our new literary journal Beecher’s, run entirely by graduate students, has now published its second issue.

KU itself, as an institution, is currently undergoing major and momentous changes; the English Department, at the heart of any great university, is heavily involved in many of these efforts. Last year, I co-chaired one of four strategic initiative summits, on key research areas in which KU wants to develop international prominence: “Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities.” The theme fits well with our departmental strengths in social justice issues in literature and rhetoric. Another area in which we have an obvious contribution to make is “Sustaining the Planet, Powering the World,” with our growing expertise in literature and the environment. A third is “Harnessing Information, Multiplying Knowledge,” which includes advances being made in the digital humanities. As KU moves forward with its strategic initiatives, it is our special calling and responsibility to keep at the forefront the essential role of the humanities in contributing in essential ways to scholarly knowledge.

Still more significant changes lie ahead. The department is now under the very capable stewardship of Anna Neill. The English Department will be navigating the major transition to a new, university-wide, KU Core Curriculum. This is a challenging period, in what we hope is the best possible sense: challenging us all to think creatively about new ways to expose our students to the depth and breadth of what English Studies have to offer, while meeting the urgent need to ensure that those students move through their KU program in a timely manner. With Professor Neill as our leader, we are in both wise and humane hands. And that is a very good place for a humanities department to be.

Thank you, now and always, for your support for the Department and its mission.

The importance of graduate education at a Research 1 institution and pledges to emphasize this essential scholastic enterprise at the state’s flagship university: “Academic stature rests heavily upon the quality of graduate and doctoral programs. The campaign will mount a major effort to fund graduate fellowships, which drive KU’s national capacity to recruit and report the success of outstanding students and faculty alike.”

Some English donors have provided graduate student fellowship and scholarship money for years. In 2005, Kalman Oravetz endowed The Elsie I. Oravetz Scholarships in honor of his late wife. Funds from this account have been used to support a graduate student each year since then (when the economy cooperated). In 2007, The Frewin L. and Dorothy K. Craven Graduate Scholarship in English was established by Dr. Alan Craven (Ph.D. 1965) and his wife, Janice, in honor of Alan’s parents. That same year, Dr. John C. Runnels (B.A. 1957) created The Runnels Family Endowment in memory of several Runnels family members. It was in 2007, also, that Jo Ann Klemmer (M.A. 1963) began donating to KU English. In 2012-13, Klemmer Scholarships are assisting four first-year graduate students. This year, long-time donor Patricia Cleary Miller (Ph.D. 1979), who has supported English programs like Cottonwood and Lecturers & Readers for many years, established an endowed account in her name that will fund the expenses of a graduate student. None of these awards are field- or degree-specific. In other words, the donors have left it up to the Department to determine which applicants or advanced graduate students benefit from their funding. Obviously, English administrators appreciate this flexibility. This year’s Klemmer Scholarships, for instance, were awarded to two incoming students who plan to pursue degrees in rhet/comp (one M.A. and one Ph.D.) and two others who will seek Ph.D.s in literature. But more restricted funding of graduate students is equally welcome and, during the ongoing capital campaign, there has been a trend toward the establishment of graduate scholarships and fellowships that target specific fields of study or emphases. Such gifts allow donors to encourage advanced work in English studies that is close to their own hearts and/or that they believe will make an important contribution to the discipline and the world.

The Jamie Crockett Otis Scholarship

Jamie Crockett Otis earned a B.A. in English at the University of Kansas in 1971. Over the course of her lifetime, she retained her love of books and literature while also supporting numerous organizations dedicated to improving health care for the disadvantaged and solving social problems created by racial and economic
inequality. Following Jamie’s death in 2009, her immediate and extended family debated how they might suitably memorialize Jamie’s life and endeavors. Her husband, David, his mother, Pat Otis, and Jamie’s brother, Bill Crockett (and his family) decided to pool resources and endow a graduate student scholarship in KU English. Jamie and David’s daughter, Kelsey Holt, selected a specific emphasis for this scholarship.

The Jamie Crockett Otis Scholarship, first awarded in Fall 2012, will support English graduate students who have a special interest in social justice. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Chair of English at the time the scholarship was endowed and herself a researcher and teacher of courses in this field, expressed her excitement about the new scholarship in a KU press release following the announcement of its creation: “We have a strong cohort of faculty and graduate students interested in addressing how language and literature contribute to questions of social justice and social action. The new Jamie Crockett Otis Scholarship will allow us to feature this as a strong and growing interest in our department and will help us to attract strong graduate students with that particular interest to KU.”

The first Otis Scholar in the KU English Department is Erin Stryka. Her mother, a counselor, and her father, who works in homeless services, raised her with a strong commitment to social justice. Erin earned her BA with a double major in English and Religious Studies from Grinnell College. Beside excelling academically, she has been extremely active in service and social justice initiatives. She has worked with Americorps Vista in Kansas City as a researcher, grant/copy writer, and graphic designer for Healthy Kids, a program that increases urban access to healthy foods. In Kansas City, KS, she has worked with campuses and churches to promote social justice and religious dialogue. As a public policy intern in Dallas, TX, she researched abuse and neglect issues for people with disabilities, then prepared an abuse prevention proposal based on her research. As a planning intern in Oklahoma City, she helped generate a city-wide HUD grant application and participated in research related to the city’s homeless. As a volunteer in Tanzania, she taught math, reading, and English to small children and developed sustainable food and funding sources for the Kilamanjaro Centre for Orphans. After all these experiences, she has reached the conclusion that she can be of most service in education. In her words, “...my way of confronting the world’s injustices [lies] in reading, writing, and teaching literature.” She plans to specialize in post-colonial literature and the literature of religious minorities. “Eventually,” she adds, “I would like to study the ways religious minorities in the US have used literature to create and pass on religious identity, and to shape the stories that are told about justice in the U.S.”

Kathryn Muen Braeman

The Margaret Fuller Award

When Kathryn Muen Braeman completed her M.A. in English at the University of Kansas in 1968, there were almost no female faculty members in the Department. (She does not remember any, but records show this exotic species did exist.) Women were not encouraged to pursue advanced degrees. “Kat” Braeman did not acquiesce. She moved to Nebraska to attend law school and garnered national attention by mounting an upset campaign for Congress against an entrenched incumbent. Her bid was unsuccessful, but, in 1975, her J. D. in hand, she took on Washington anyway. Following stints with the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the Department of Justice, and the U.S. Senate, she was appointed General Counsel in the Defense Investigative Service, then Litigator in the Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals. She capped her legal career by serving for thirteen years as an Administrative Judge at DOHA, holding hearings and issuing decisions in personnel security clearance cases for the Department of Defense and numerous other federal agencies and departments. Braeman has been an advocate for women’s causes throughout her life. Currently, she is a member of the National Board of the American Association of University Women, and has served as that unit’s liaison to the Legal Advocacy Fund, which works to combat sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace.

Like many first-wave feminists, Braeman reveres Margaret Fuller, a nineteenth-century American educator, journalist, critic, and women’s advocate, who first came to prominence as the editor of the transcendentalist journal, The Dial, in 1839. She later became the first woman to enter Harvard Library to do research, the first woman journalist (critic of drama, literature and social conditions) for Horace Greeley’s New York Herald Tribune, and the first woman foreign correspondent to serve under combat conditions. Fuller’s feminist work, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), created a national and international sensation. It also served as an inspiration to future promoters of women’s rights. In 2011, when Kathryn Braeman decided to donate funds to support a female graduate student in the KU English Department, she specified that the financial package be called The Margaret Fuller Award and that the student should have an interest in feminist studies.

Jessica Weatherford received the 2011–2012 Margaret Fuller Award. Weatherford holds a B.A. in English and History from Purdue University and an M.A. in English with a Women’s Studies Graduate Certificate from Ohio University. Originally attracted by the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Weatherford explored a broad cross-section of feminist theorists in her work at Ohio U. Her interests also expanded to include research in postcolonial, neocolonial, and Indigenous theory and literature, culminating in a thesis on “rape” in two works by Native American author Sherman Alexie. In her letter of application to KU English’s Ph.D. program in literature, Weatherford expressed her desire to further study female rage, “particularly the rage of poor women, women of color, and women working in the sex industry. I would like to explore representations of and potentials for women’s rage, specifically rage in response to sexual assault and to being considered ‘disposable’.” She is working with Professors Marta Caminero-Santangelo and Stephanie Fitzgerald whose research “coincides with [her] interests in women’s studies, ethnic U.S. literature and culture, and the intersections of gender and ethnicity.” Weatherford recently presented a paper on Indigenous women writers’ responses to sexual violence at “Social Justice Feminism,” a conference sponsored by the University of Cincinnati College of Law’s Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice.

Coincidentally, the second recipient of the Margaret Fuller Award attended the University of Ohio as well. Simone Savannah received a B.A. in English and a M.Ed. in Cultural Studies from the Athens campus. She was accepted...
Help Create Opportunities

Would you like to help support a graduate student’s research in a field of special interest to you? Private donations that provide assistance to KU English graduate students, like the Jamie Crockett Otis Scholarship and the Margaret Fuller Award, are now more important than ever. In this time of financial challenges to the quality of education at KU, please consider supporting a scholarship, award, or some other opportunity for students in English at KU. Tax-deductible donations for these purposes or for discretionary use may be submitted online at kuendowment.org. If you prefer, you may mail your contribution (specify it is for English) to Brian Friedman, Development Director, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kansas University Endowment Association, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, KS 66044-0928.

Caution: Mini College Can Be Contagious

The fourth edition of “Mini College” (Monday–Thursday, 4–7 June) was a resounding success, drawing more than 145 participants from 22 states. Mini College is an annual on-campus event that offers attendees the opportunity to reconnect with their college experience by engaging in four days of educational sessions covering a wide range of subjects. At the same time, it provides faculty from various fields, disciplines, and departments a forum to showcase their research interests to audiences of avid “lifelong learners.” In addition to the learning component, a re-experiencing of the social dimension of college life also is made available to participants through a full round of activities. For example, this year groups of Mini Collegeans were delighted to return to the Wagon Wheel Café, graciously opened for lunch on Tuesday and Thursday by owner Rob Farha; a festive graduation party held at the Oread Hotel rounded out the week’s activities.

As in past years, KU English made a strong showing at this year’s Mini College. On Monday morning Professor Jim Carothers reprised his hit from last year, “Out to the Ballgame: Reading Baseball in American Literature and Culture”; that afternoon, Full-time Lecturer Steve Evans (PhD ’00) was amazed to find sixty-five Mini Collegeans awaiting his presentation on “Americans in Paris”; and on Tuesday afternoon doctoral candidate and GTA Louise Krug hosted a well-attended session on one of her specialties, “Memoir Writing.” (Based on her ’09 MFA thesis, Louise: Amended was published last spring by Black Balloon Press.)

A week-long afternoon track designed to introduce students to the work of the Project on the History of Black Writing (HBW), founded nearly thirty years ago by Professor Maryemma Graham (now University Distinguished Professor), “Reading without Oprah” kicked off on Monday with “What We Can Learn from 100 African American Novels,” presented by GTA Kenton Rambsy (Project Digital Initiative Coordinator, HBW); Tuesday afternoon DaMaris Hill (PhD ’12) offered a session on “10 African American Novels and Wikipedia”; and on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, respectively, Maryemma held forth on the topics of “Two Major Cities in the History of African American Novels” and “Why Education and Awards Matter for African American Novelists.”

Managing Mini College is one of Jessica Beeson’s favorite duties as Director of Community Engagement (CLAS). Asked to sum up the experience of Mini College for both participants and faculty, Jessica says simply that “it’s a blast.” New friendships are forged, networks established, and, because of the relatively intimate nature of the sessions, including opportunities to meet and talk with the instructors one-on-one, Mini Collegeans “feel like they have a VIP pass to KU.” In addition to presenting their research to audiences of eager adult learners, faculty enjoy certain other peripheral benefits, such as increased book sales and the potential for attracting support for their research. As anyone who has participated in Mini College can attest, the passion and enthusiasm generated by the event is contagious. In fact, as Jessica would say to faculty who might be considering participating in next year’s Mini College, “Once you do it, you’ll want to do it again!”

- Steve Evans
Jonathan Lamb’s first move to the Lawrence area came after his father, a pastor, left an application for a position at a Tonganoxie church under a rock by the church’s front door. The application was successful. His return followed submitting an application (one of more than 150) for a position in the University of Kansas English Department that had to negotiate the intricacies of PeopleSoft, pass muster in initial screenings, and survive the 2011 MLA interview gauntlet in Los Angeles and then on campus. That application was successful as well. In Fall 2011, Jon Lamb, a specialist in Early Modern literature who did not expect to return to Kansas, became KU English’s newest assistant professor.

NEW FACULTY

Born in Phoenix, Jon lived in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas before his family moved to Kansas during his middle school years. He attended Tonganoxie High School where he participated in cross country, track, and forensics and eventually graduated as a valedictorian. An avid reader all his life, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that sensitive interpretations of literature in his classes—and toting around a copy of the Oxford Shakespeare throughout his senior year—earned him significant “cultural capital” that, in the social marketplace of high school, could be exchanged for female attention. In short, he became a chick magnet!

Nevertheless, when Jon departed for Kansas State (“KSU recruited me first, offered me more money, and was 90 miles from home instead of 10”), he planned on pursuing engineering and computer science as majors. Like his fellow millennials, he grew up with and was fascinated by the Internet. This agenda, however, lasted just one semester and three days, the exact amount of time necessary to fulfill the demands of a scholarship. He migrated to math education and then English education, perhaps because his mother was a wonderful and versatile primary and secondary school teacher who, at one time or another, had taught students at every grade level. But a Shakespeare course in his second semester convinced him that he wanted to pursue literary scholarship in the Early Modern period and eventually teach in a setting where advanced intellectual engagement is possible.

In his later undergraduate years and in his graduate program, Jon focused on philological issues in Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, and Bacon. He loves the details of language. Indeed, he stayed an extra year at Kansas State to bolster his knowledge of French and Latin. He also dabbled in another classical language. Like Shakespeare (if we hold with Ben Jonson), Jon has comparatively “less Greek” — but more than most of us these days!

That fifth year at K-State also allowed Jon to nurture his relationship with April Williams, a fellow student. When the time came to choose a Ph.D. program, he applied widely and was accepted almost everywhere, but chose to study at the University of Texas-Austin both for its major strengths in Renaissance and its geographical proximity to April. They married in June 2006. April has taught middle school math and served as an instructional technology specialist in Oklahoma and Texas. The couple shares a love of distance running. On the day after Jon’s interview at KU, Jon and April (two months pregnant at the time) ran a half-marathon together. A daughter, Charlotte (“Charlee”), was born in May 2011. Jon and April expect a second child in November 2012.

At Texas, Jon Lamb’s early work focused on Philip Sidney. He did archival research at Cambridge, UK, as preparation for writing an M.A. thesis entitled “Between the Brackets of Philip Sidney’s Arcadia,” which won the UT Graduate School’s Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award. This paved the way for the eventual publication of his first critical article, “Parentheses and Privacy in Philip Sidney’s Arcadia,” in a 2010 issue of Studies in Philology. In 2009, he won a highly competitive ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship to conclude work on his dissertation, “Shakespeare’s Writing Practice: ‘Literary’ Shakespeare and the Work of Form.” Jon has also published reviews of works about Shakespeare, the Martin Marprelate Tracts, and the early modern book market. At national and international conferences, he has delivered papers on Chaucer, Bacon, Shakespeare, Sidney, and the University Wits. In his first year at KU, Jon taught two sections of the undergraduate Shakespeare survey, an honors course on the English Renaissance, and a capstone/graduate course entitled “Renaissance Con Artists and Mad Scientists,” the title of which reflects his characteristic rollicking demeanor. Jon will soon have an opportunity to employ his continuing love of internet and computer culture professionally. In May, he won a grant from KU’s Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities to assist him in developing a “Digital Shakespeare” course in which at least 50% of the content employs digital humanities skills, methods, and tools.

Professor Lamb describes his work and current research agenda in this way: “Broadly, I study Renaissance humanism, rhetoric, and poetics, as well as the complex relationship (in the Renaissance and today) between literature and science. I am also deeply engaged with the field/methodology of bibliography and textual studies. . . . Overall, I am interested in the complex relationship between the various aspects of text and the ideas and stories presented in those texts. I study, in other words, the dynamic between how texts and writers say things and what they say. To my mind, this line of inquiry constitutes one of the chief ways in which literary and cultural study impacts the world. My current book project investigates the way Shakespeare responded to—and powerfully shaped—the early modern English literary marketplace in and through the ‘thick’ formal features of his works. Whether writing for the page, the stage, or both, Shakespeare wrote in constant interchange with other writers, writings, trends, and ideas. I argue that this interchange occurs first and foremost at the verbal, formal level, and as a result we can understand Shakespeare’s writing practice only by scrutinizing the formal features of his works and showing how they circulated in an economy of imaginative writing.”

New Associate Professor of Science and Literature Paul Outka grew up in a rich academic environment but took a circuitous path to that lifestyle himself. Born in New Haven where his father was a graduate student at Yale, he lived in Princeton, NJ, from ages 1-10 except for an early two-year stint in Oxford, UK, where he learned to read and picked up a short-lived British accent. When his father was appointed Chair of Religious Studies and Ethics at Yale, the family returned to New Haven where Paul distinguished himself in fields he enjoyed, like music and athletics, but was generally an indifferent scholar in high school. Two years at a private school righted his grades, though he still found time to run track and sing/play bass in a rock band. He then attended Yale, graduated with a philosophy degree, thought about law school, and then broke out of the academic mold once
more. For a year he raised funds for the United Way of New York City (deans take note: he pulled in $10M). For two years he worked as a speechwriter and ghostwriter for the New York State Commission on Government Integrity while living in Hoboken, just across the river from his 84th-story office in the twin towers — about where the first plane hit a little more than a decade later. He loved the vibrant music, art, and social scene of New York, but also found himself reading a great deal of literature. Eventually, he applied to the graduate program in English at the University of Virginia.

Virginia accepts about 100 MA students, then eventually picks 20 to continue on for a Ph.D. The competition was fierce. Knowing he had another life back in New York that he liked freed him from some of the worry that hindered his fellow students and allowed him to focus on his own ideas. He basically read and wrote about what he wanted regardless of coursework and program structure. In the process, both he and UV discovered he was good at what he did. He was admitted to the Ph.D program, spent time working with Jerome McGann’s groundbreaking Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, and (eventually) wrote his dissertation on “Whitman and the Sublime,” the fruit of a compelling association with the eminent American philosopher, Richard Rorty, his first reader. But not before another academic hiatus.

This time the departure was briefer. For two years, with his dissertation on hold, he did technical writing and web design for a video-game enterprise in Charlottesville. He also contributed to the company’s graphic novels and, generally, made everybody but himself rich. Still, there were unexpected fringe benefits to running in corporate circles. He met his wife, a long-time Charlottesvillian, Uma Sackett, during this time. Paul and Uma married in 1998. Attracted by the prospect of an extended beach idyll with his new partner, Paul applied for and was hired for a visiting position in American Literature at New College of Florida in Sarasota. Sometimes fantasies become reality. Paul and Uma rented a place close to campus, turned off the AC, adapted to the climate, forsook their car for bikes, and, as Paul puts it, essentially “lived outside for eighteen months.” It was during this period, when they so fully interacted with the beautiful but fragile environment of the Sunshine State, that both Paul and Uma began to focus on environmental issues. Paul’s readings of environmental criticism explained both what he loved about his new home — and what had gone wrong with its stewardship.

Doctorate finally in hand, Paul accepted a tenure-track job in a very different environment. The University of Maine-Farmington receives an average of 120 inches of snow each winter. The Outkas took up residence in a farmhouse 17 miles from campus. Eventually, they moved to Portland, a 180-mile round-trip commute. The roads were often slippery, but both Paul and Uma found real traction in their careers. Uma earned a law degree and a master’s in public policy and administration with specialties in environmental and energy law. With a major boost from an ACLS/Mellon Foundation Fellowship, Paul researched and wrote Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance (2008). This monograph, published as part of Palgrave Macmillan’s “Signs of Race” series in critical race studies, won the ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) Biennial Prize for “best book of ecocriticism” and vaulted Paul to the forefront of scholarship in his field. After a four-year return to Florida, this time at FSU, where Paul advanced to the rank of associate professor, Uma and Paul achieved the academic couple’s ideal by securing tenured positions at the same Division I university, in this case in KU’s law school and English Department respectively.

The Outkas have two children, Isaac, 6, and Juliet Pearl (think The Scarlet Letter). 3. While contemplating accepting KU’s job offers, Paul and Uma whimsically asked Juliet for her opinion on the subject. She replied “Rock Chalk Jayhawk!” The family enjoys downtown Lawrence and Paul continues to bike regularly. Interestingly, Paul also has a younger sister, Elizabeth, who followed in his footsteps to Yale and Virginia, earning a Ph.D. in British Modernism. Elizabeth Outka teaches at the University of Richmond. Like Paul, Elizabeth married an environmental lawyer. Brother and sister remain very close and share a mischievous sense of humor. She served as his best man and he served as her maid of honor.

Paul Outka states in his faculty profile that he began his career as a critic of American poetry, but, as his work has developed, he has focused his attention “less on particular authors for their own sake, and more on how a range of political, theoretical, and historical problems have been refracted through literary and other forms of cultural representation.” His trailblazing first book “examines a neglected but centrally important issue in critical race studies and ecocriticism: how natural experience became racialized in America from the antebellum period through the early twentieth century.”

Drawn on theories of sublimity, trauma, and ecocriticism, the book provides “a critical and cultural history of the racial fault line in American environmentalism that to this day divides largely white wilderness preservation groups and the largely minority environmental justice movement.” Outka’s new book project, Evolution, Essentialism, and the Organic Sublime: the Nineteenth-Century Posthuman, builds on his earlier work’s concern with materialism, embodied identity, and ecocriticism. He taught his first KU graduate seminar on this topic in Spring 2012. In his first year, he also taught the early American literature survey, as well as capstone courses on Whitman/Dickinson and American Literary Environmentalism.

Professor Outka was recently elected President of ASLE for 2012-2013. In that capacity, he and the English Department will host the Association’s 10th Biennial Conference in late May 2013. Some 700-800 specialists in environmental humanities are expected to gather in Lawrence to deliver papers and engage in discussions related to the conference’s theme, “Changing Nature: Migrations, Energies, Limits.”

**FACULTY UPDATE**

In Summer 2012, Giselle Anatol completed an eight-week fellowship through the Scholars-in-Residence Program at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (a branch of the New York Public Library system). She pored over diaries and manuscript drafts from Melville and Frances Herskovits—early Caribbeanist folklorists—among other archival materials as she continued to research her...
booklength manuscript, The Things That Fly in the Night: Images of Female Vampirism in Literature of the African Diaspora. In May, she presented a small section of that work at the 13th International Conference of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars (ACWWS), held this year in Paramaribo, Suriname. In October 2011, Anatol was invited to speak at her alma mater, Ezra Stiles College of Yale University, about her popular culture analyses of the Harry Potter and Twilight series. Anatol now serves as the Director of Graduate Studies in the English Department.

During 2011, G. Douglas Atkins continued to pursue his furious publishing agenda. Although no new books appeared during the year, he had two more accepted, both by Palgrave Macmillan and scheduled for publication in early 2012: Reading T.S. Eliot: “Four Quartets” and the Journey toward Understanding and E.B. White: The Essayist as First-Class Writer. He estimates that four books will see print by the end of 2012. Doug has now committed himself to retire (no later than May 2013). Meanwhile, he and Rebecca traveled several times, checking out real estate, to Charleston, SC (Doug says you haven’t lived until you’ve tried shrimp and grits), and Flat Rock, NC (a.k.a. Little Charleston and the home of Carl Sandburg and of the Flat Rock Playhouse, State Theatre of North Carolina).

Back to full-time teaching after a year of research leave, Dorcie Elliott enjoyed leading an undergrad class on Victorian Women, a graduate class on Empire and Imperialism in Victorian Literature, and reprising her version of the newly required Introduction to Literary Criticism and Theory, a class to which she is firmly committed. She is still working diligently on her book manuscript and was very grateful for a Shirley Cundiff Haines and Jordan L. Haines Faculty Research Fellowship in the Spring semester, which enabled her to substantially revise one chapter to submit for publication and to write a draft of a new one. Besides her busy academic schedule, she continues to travel regularly to Lincoln, Nebraska to visit her mom and, in December, hosted a crowd of family and friends who came to Lawrence for daughter Jane’s wedding just two days after Christmas. She’s happy to have a new son-in-law, Artem Nadayev from Ukraine, who this spring worked closely long as a seminar professor. The best news, though, is that two Ph.D. students with whom I’ve worked closely have been hired to tenure-track positions at liberal arts colleges.”

This year, Doreen Fowler’s book, newly titled, Drawing the Line: Boundary Negotiation in Faulkner, W r i g h t , O ’ C o n n o r , and Morrison, was accepted for publication by the University of Virginia Press. Currently in press, the book is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2013. Doreen gratefully acknowledges the support of the Friends of the Hall Center of the Humanities who honored her with the Friends of the Hall Center Book Publication Award. At spring break, Doreen and Steve traveled to France to visit daughter Carina, a junior at Washington University in St. Louis, who spent the spring semester studying abroad in Toulouse. Then, in May, Doreen presented a paper at the American Literature Association Conference in beautiful San Francisco, where she was very happy to see former and current KU graduate students: Sandra Cox; Adam Long, Jordan Von Cannon, Jana Tigchelaar, and Nate Williams. All in all, it was a very good year.

Stephanie Fitzgerald ended her five-year term on the Modern Language Association’s Executive Committee for the Division on American Indian Literatures in January 2012. She presented a paper at the MLA annual meeting in Seattle, and also chaired a panel at the American Studies Conference in October 2011. Her new course, English 305: World Indigenous Literatures, filled to capacity in its inaugural semester this past fall. Her essay “I Wunnatuckquannum, This Is My Hand’: Native Performance in Massachusetts Language Indian Deeds” was finally published this year in Laura Mielle’s edited volume Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603-1832. She was also pleased to receive a Haines Research Fellowship to work towards the completion of her book manuscript Land Narratives: Native Women and Dispossession from Removal to Climate Change.

Maryemma Graham’s Cambridge History of African American Literature (2011 CUP) continues to earn accolades and was named “Best Reference Work in the Language and Linguistics category for 2011” by Library Journal. With a grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, she began working on a book, Margaret Walker’s South, a photographic essay that will appear alongside the Walker biography (The House Where My Soul Lives: The Life of Margaret Walker), both due out in 2014 in time for the author’s centennial. Readers can “see” and “hear” Walker as they read her life story, since the volume will contain a CD, the Margaret Walker Song Cycle, an adaptation of the poems from For My People. The Project on the History of Black Writing has had an incredible year with record attendance at its fall lecture by cultural critic and professor Thabiti Lewis, and its ongoing public arts series, the Black Literary Suite, developed by English PhD student and HBW’s PDI coordinator Kenton Rambsy, and co-hosted by KU Libraries. The Project learned recently that it has won a seventh grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. “Don’t Deny My Voice: Reading and Teaching African American Poetries,” an institute for college and university teachers, will be held July 14-August 3, 2013, supported by the Department of English and the Hall Center for the Humanities.

In the fall of 2011, Peter Grund saw the end of a six-year project with the publication of the co-authored book (with Merja Kytö and Terry Walker) Testifying to Language and Life in Early Modern England, including the CD An Electronic Text Edition of Depositions 1560–1760 (ETED) (John Benjamins). He spent his research-intensive semester in spring 2012 working on his new book project, The Nature of Evidence: Discourse, Narrative, and Stance in the Witness Depositions from the Salem Witch Trials. He also found time to join two colleagues in Boston for two weeks of research on the recorders of the Salem documents. In January 2012, he became one of two coeditors of Journal of English Linguistics, a premiere peer-reviewed journal in English language studies. Although he has
greatly enjoyed his research-intensive time, he looks forward to getting back to teaching ENGL 387 (Introduction to the English Language) in the fall, which he always finds great fun.

In June, 2011, Susan K. Harris’s book God’s Arbiters: Americans and the Philippines (The War that Sparked Mark Twain’s Conflict with America), was published by Oxford University Press. The book is a study of the role that religious and racial biases played in the battle over annexation of the Philippines in 1899, with Mark Twain—a vocal opponent of annexation—playing a major part. Since publication she has given a number of talks and readings associated with the book, including in Lawrence, Wichita, Kansas City, Hannibal (MO), Elmira (NY), and New York City. On the home front, she has continued to serve as Job Placement Officer for PhD and MFA students. She also developed a new undergraduate course in Bi-Raciality in American Literature, and chaired or co-chaired three honors theses.

In December 2011, Laura Mielke joined her co-editor, Joshua David Bellin, in celebrating the appearance of Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603-1832 (University of Nebraska Press). Throughout the year she continued work on a monograph concerning theatrical and oratorical arts in nineteenth-century America, presenting portions of it at the American Studies Association meeting in October 2011, the C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists meeting in April 2012, and the ATDS Work-in-Progress Colloquium at KU (organized by Iris Smith-Fischer) also in April 2012. Finally, she served as Interim Associate Chair in Spring 2012 while Anna Neill was on sabbatical.

Laura Moriarty’s fourth novel, The Chaperone, was released by Riverhead Books on June 5th. Moriarty began to imagine the novel after reading that, in the summer of 1922, a fifteen-year-old Louise Brooks, soon to be an icon of the silent-film era, left Wichita for New York City, accompanied by a thirty-six-year-old chaperone. The real chaperone’s story is lost to history, but Moriarty’s novel invents her as Cora Carlisle, a complicated woman with her own reasons for making the trip. Vogue writes: “Carlisle, who came of age in an era of corsets, and Brooks (bursting with flapper fervor) observe each other across a generational gap, a space that Moriarty fills with a mesmerizing take on women in this pivotal era.” Moriarty also continued to enjoy working with talented undergraduate and graduate students on their creative writing projects. And in January of 2012, as a member of the hiring committee for a new fiction writer, she accompanied four of her department colleagues to Seattle for the MLA conference. They required no chaperone. Moriarty is also very happy to report she married Ben Eggleston, KU philosophy professor, in October of 2011.

In Fall 2011, Anna Neill was awarded a Kemper Teaching Fellowship. The same semester, she co-directed (with Leslie Tuttle in History) a Hall-Center Faculty Colloquium on the topic of “Consciousness in Inter-disciplinary Perspective.” The collection of written dialogues that came out of this event will shortly be available on-line through KU ScholarWorks. She also published an essay in the November ‘11 issue of Studies in English Literature and a shorter piece in a spring issue of Connotations. While on sabbatical leave in Spring 2012, she was an honorary research fellow at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. There she completed revisions on her book manuscript, “Primitive Minds: Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel,” and began work on a new project investigating evolutionary themes in Victorian literature for children. She completed her service as Associate Chair in Fall 2011, and began her term as Chair in July 2012.

Misty Schieberle has had a busy and productive year. She has had three articles accepted for publication: on teaching Chaucer’s The Nun’s Priest’s Tale, on late medieval views of Fortune, and on John Lydgate’s use of proverbs. She presented papers at international conferences in Valladolid, Spain, and Kalamazoo, Michigan. This spring, the American Association of University Women awarded Misty an American Post-Doctoral Fellowship for 2012-2013 for her project Feminized Counsel: Women Counselors in Late Medieval Advice Literature, 1380-1500. She will spend part of the time researching at British libraries and the rest completing the book manuscript. In May, she was also honored with the department’s Mabel S. Fry Teaching Award. She is grateful to the students who nominated her and who make teaching such an enjoyable, rewarding activity.

During the academic year 2011-2012, Mary Jo Reiff published a series of articles, including a piece that reflects her ongoing interest in public genres entitled “The Spatial Turn in Rhetorical Genre Studies: Intersections of Metaphor and Materiality” (JAC 31.1-2, 2011). Related to her ongoing research on the rhetoric of public petitions, an excerpt of her work, “Taking Up Narratives as Civic Actions: The Genre of the Public Petition,” was published as part of a chapter (co-authored with Angela Jones and Anis Bawarshi) in a collection entitled Narrative Acts: Rhetoric, Race and Identity, Knowledge (Hampton Press, 2011). Two other articles saw print as well. Reiff presented on “The Role of Genre Success/Enjoyment in Transitioning to New Writing Contexts” at the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication as part of a “featured panel.”

Ann Wierda Rowland’s Romanticism and Childhood: the Infantilization of British Literary Culture came out from Cambridge University Press in June 2012. This study explores how emerging ideas of infancy and childhood gave Romantic writers and readers new ways of conceptualizing history and literature. About the same time, she finished a fellowship at Harvard’s Houghton Library where she began research on her new project, Keats in America, a study of what role Americans, an idea of America, and the transatlantic exchange of money, manuscripts, artifacts and other forms of cultural capital have played in the formation of Keats’ posthumous reputation and critical reception. In Fall 2012, she continued working on this project with a Research Fellowship at KU’s Hall Center for the Humanities.

Philip Wedge (M.A., 1985), Senior Lecturer and Assoc. Director of English Dept. Publications, presented a paper on “Sport in the Novels of Jane Austen” at the Sport Literature Association’s 2012 Annual Conference, at Springfield College, Springfield, MA. He also chaired a session on “Analyzing Ballgames.” Phil taught a course in Austen and Hardy in 2011, as well as Sport Literature in the Movies. He continues as Poetry Editor of Cottonwood Magazine and Press.
Honors and Awards to Graduation Week

For decades, the English Department’s annual Honors and Awards Ceremony has been held the week before May graduation. This year, the Department moved the event to the Friday of Graduation Weekend. The result was tremendous enthusiasm and far greater attendance, resulting in a determination to establish this date as a new tradition. The move also grows out of a desire to recognize all the BA recipients from that academic year. KU Commencement does not include a walk across a stage to receive a diploma. Now all English graduates have a chance to share such a moment with their families. Following this activity, the program continues, as it has in the past, with the presentation of awards and scholarships to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students.

The Trollope Prize

Last year’s Update reported that KU would begin administering the annual Trollope Prizes in 2011-2012. In October 2011, Lauren Harmsen Kiehna, Trollope Prize Administrator, announced that the winner of the graduate competition was Lucy Sheehan, a graduate student at Columbia University for her essay, “The Intensive and Extensive Worlds of Anthony Trollope’s Framley Parsonage.” Sheehan received a $2000 honorarium as well as a hardback copy of one of Trollope’s novels. In addition, her essay was published by The Fortnightly Review, which provided an additional monetary reward. Special commendation in the graduate competition went to “Trollope and the Hunt for West Country Identity,” written by Heather Miner, a graduate student at Rice University. The winner of the undergraduate competition was Katie Blankenau of the University of Kansas for her essay, “‘More awful in his silence’: Speech and Male Power in Can You Forgive Her?” Blankenau received a $1000 honorarium. The runner-up in the 2011-2012 undergraduate competition was “The Chase of Chaldicotes is to vanish from the earth’s surface’: Loss of the Pastoral in Trollope’s Chronicles of Barsetshire,” by Alyssa Parker of the College of William & Mary. Parker’s adviser, Deborah Denenholz Morse, was invited to KU to deliver the annual American and British Lecture in April 2012. The author of several works on Trollope, her address was entitled, “The Legacy of Slavery and the Creole Beauty: Marital Estrangement in He Knew He Was Right and Bigamy in Dr. Wortle’s School.” The Trollope Prize is designed to help promote the study of Trollope in college classrooms and to encourage student engagement with both Trollope’s work and Victorian literary history through their own intensive research and writing.

Career Achievement Teaching Award

In April, The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences named David Bergeron as the recipient of its 2012 Career Achievement Teaching Award. This annual award recognizes “a retired faculty member in the College who has made a significant contribution to the teaching of College students at either the undergraduate or graduate level and who has distinguished her or himself through excellence in teaching.” A letter to Bergeron from CLAS Dean Danny Anderson acknowledged “the profound impact” he has had on the lives of his students and expressed “how deeply you are valued in the College. Your excellence as an instructor is well noted by colleagues, faculty, and students, which lends integrity, honor and distinction to this award.” As is customary, Bergeron was invited to speak at a fall reception for new and existing CLAS faculty. He also received a $1000 cash prize. The last Professor Emeritus of English to receive this award was Haskell Springer in 2005.
New Chair of English

Associate Professor Anna Neill succeeded Marta Caminero-Santangelo as Chair of the University of Kansas English Department on July 1, 2012. A native of New Zealand, Neill received her Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1995. She joined the KU faculty the following year. Her field of study is 18th- and 19th-century British literature. She is the author of one published monograph, British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce (Palgrave, 2002). A second monograph, Primitive Minds: Evolution and Spiritual Experience in the Victorian Novel, is forthcoming from Ohio State UP. She has also authored articles on Dickens, George Eliot, and Conan Doyle. In Fall 2011, Professor Neill received a W. H. Kemper Award for Teaching Excellence. She has previously served as Director of Undergraduate Studies in English and as Associate Chair of English. Her term as Chair runs until June 2015. In related moves, Associate Professor Giselle Anatol has accepted appointment as Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor Laura Mielke has been named Associate Chair.

SAGE News

In 2011-2012, SAGE continued honing fundraising efforts in an attempt to both offset a very slim starting treasury and to continue to offer graduate students more funding options to encourage professionalization. In October, SAGE hosted its previously bi-annual (perhaps now annual, depending on our supply of used book donations) book sale, which set a new sales record. In addition, SAGE’s third annual silent auction at the departmental holiday party was its smoothest and most profitable yet, thanks to the creation of a Silent Auction Committee to oversee soliciting auction items from graduate students, organizing the items at the party, and collecting payments following the auction. As a result, SAGE was able to award five students who had exhausted departmental and grad school funds with travel awards.

SAGE also assisted the department in recruiting the best and brightest faculty member and graduate students. SAGE hosted three meet-and-greets for candidates for the fiction assistant professor positions, where graduate students had the opportunity to meet with, ask questions of, and respond to questions by visiting job candidates. In addition, SAGE compiled the results of a survey about the candidates into a report to inform the department about graduate student thoughts on the candidates. Prospective graduate students also once again met with SAGE members at an informal mixer, which is an excellent annual opportunity for informal questions and conversation about the benefits of KU’s graduate programs in English.

SAGE also renewed its commitment to contributing to the collective voice of graduate students in the university community. Continued concerns about the potential impact the Electronic Theses and Dissertations Policy would have on graduate students’ work led to a collective effort with other Graduate Student Organizations, organized by the Graduate Student Advisory Board, to approve a memo to send to the Dean outlining our issues. The resulting memo has helped further awareness of graduate student concerns at an important administrative level.

FSE Update

This year, the FSE Program was busy working on projects and activities both new and old. The year began with orientation and training for 20 new GTAs, along with an optional training workshop for instructors teaching 200-level FSE courses. The five-year internal assessment continued, collecting and reviewing materials from teachers and students to assess how assignment sequences and student writing fit the goals of FSE courses. The textbook review process took a different turn this year, since a recent survey meant that the scheduled handbook review wasn’t needed. Instead, FSE administrators and a textbook subcommittee began research on creating a custom textbook to meet our program’s needs. After many consultations with publishers about the extensive options available, the FSE program hasn’t made any specific decisions about implementing a custom textbook, but the research and decision-making will continue next year. FSE and the Applied English Center collaborated on a professional development workshop about understanding and working with international students on their writing. Finally, inspired by the custom textbook research process, FSE instructors participated in staff development workshops in which instructors discussed the key textbook components needed to meet course goals across all FSE courses. This helped instructors and the program as a whole recognize and discuss the goals we all have in common for our students, as well as some goals that differ in importance between courses or instructors. Jennifer Nish was the FSE intern for the 2011-2012 academic year. Charlene Summers will be the intern for the 2012-2013 school year, beginning with orientation of our new GTAs in Fall 2012.

Prestigious Recognitions

Two full professors in the KU English Department have earned further high distinctions. In June, Maryemma Graham was named one of three new University Distinguished Professors, effective Fall 2012. Provost Jeffrey Vitter stated, “The title is a very significant honor. . . . Appointment as a University Distinguished Professor is a
reflection of many valued accomplishments and contributions to KU that range from excellence in the classroom to ground-breaking research.” Publicity regarding these three professorships cited Graham’s work as founder and director of the Project on the History of Black Writing, her ten books, and her numerous achievements in public outreach in the humanities, including the Langston Hughes Poetry Project, Language Matters (an international teaching initiative); and the recent Haiti Research Initiative. Also in June, Amy Devitt was named the second Frances L. Stiefel Professor of English by a selection committee comprised of members of the KU English Faculty Evaluation Committee and two faculty members from other departments. The three-year professorship honors a Department of English full professor who has generated a distinguished record of research, teaching, and service. Devitt has published several pioneering works in rhetoric and composition and her name is almost synonymous with the influential study of genre in that field. She has won Grier, Fry, Conger-Gabel, and Kemper Awards for her teaching, and has held a Chancellor’s Club Teaching Professorship since 2007. She currently serves as Director of First- and Second-Year English – again! Devitt previously held the same demanding position from 1994-2000. From 2005-2008, she was a member of the Executive Committee of 4Cs (Conference on College Composition and Communication).

Chancellors Club Teaching Professor

In October 2012, Professor Philip Barnard was awarded a Chancellors Club Teaching Professorship at KU. The professorship is one of just five Chancellors Club Teaching Professorships awarded as part of a new series of these positions that was inaugurated this year. Barnard’s appointment is for five years, during which time he will receive an annual salary stipend of $10,000. Chancellors Club Teaching Professors are selected based on a record of distinguished teaching over an extended period of time at KU. Letters from faculty colleagues (at KU and elsewhere), along with letters from current and former students also must attest to a strong reputation for excellent teaching, particularly (but not exclusively) undergraduate teaching. Chancellor Gray-Little congratulated Barnard for joining “a very select group of outstanding teaching professors on this campus.”

Employee of the Month

Administrative Associate Senior Robin Holladay has worked at the University of Kansas for 32 years, half that time in the Department of English. On Wednesday, 25 April, her consistently cheerful and devoted service was recognized by the University as she was named Support Staff Employee of the Month for April 2012. Robin received this designation, including a cash award of $750, as a result of an enthusiastic nomination package, which included letters from supervisors, co-workers, and students, combined with a sparkling work record. The award was a complete surprise. Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Sara Rosen and Human Resources Liaison Lynn George, along with a bevy of colleagues and grads, lurked in the hallway of the office suite, while Associate Chair Laura Mielke, bearing a suspicious bouquet, encouraged a puzzled Robin to step outside her office. The officials pounced, Rosen read a summary of Robin’s duties and a compilation of the praise contained in the nominating letters, and Robin declared herself grateful for and honored by the award.
1950s

In 2011, Robert Murray Davis (MA ‘58) published his fourth book of creative nonfiction, Born-Again Skeptic & Other Valedictions (Norman, OK: Mongrel Empire Press). He is the designated editor of Evelyn Waugh’s Brideshead Revisited for the Oxford University Press Complete Works. He has delivered papers on Waugh at the Waugh Society meeting in England in 2011 and at the Loyola (Maryland) conference on Waugh in 2012.

William Sollner, (MA ‘54) remains active in retirement, having spent two months, (Dec. 2011 - Jan. 2012) at Jinan University in Guangzhou, China. Though it does not get as much attention as Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, Guangzhou is rich in 6000 years of history. It was the center of revolutionary efforts to end the Qing dynasty and bring on the first Chinese republic in 1917. For his leadership in that struggle, Dr. Sun Yat Sen is revered in Guangzhou with a university bearing his name and several impressive monuments to his honor. Chiang Kai Chek, Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong were also major figures involved. Sollner is completing a DVD featuring events, people, and sites of historic importance in Guangzhou. He says it will be ready for release by mid-June this year. He can be reached at <sollner@ckt.net>.

1960s

Tommy R. Burkett (PhD ’67) Professor Emeritus of English, Denison University, retired in 1993. He and his wife (Karolyn Holm Burkett, KU 1953) reside in Granville, Ohio, and still lead May Term theater courses for Denison in London.

In recent years, Dr. R. Kenton Craven (Ken) (PhD ’67), has served as Visiting Associate Professor of Literary Criticism at Kuwait University, Kingdom of Kuwait (1991-92); Chair, Communications Division, College of Commerce and Economics, Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman (1995-1999); and Adjunct Associate Professor, English Department and Honors Program, Tennessee Tech University (2004-2008), Cookeville, TN. He has since retired as a hermit and scholar-in-exile in Sparta, Tennessee.

Where Am I Now, a collection of short fiction by Robert Day (MA ’65), was published in September 2012 by Book Mark Press. Also in September, he gave a reading at Yale University in honor of Howard Lamar (the former president of Yale) who wrote the introduction to the special edition of The Last Cattle Drive. On that occasion Day presented the typescript of The Last Cattle Drive to the Beinecke Library in advance of making a gift of his literary papers to Yale University.

Thomas Leonard Erskine (MA ’64) died June 23, 2011 after a long illness. After earning his Ph.D. at Emory University, he began his teaching career at the University of Delaware. Six years later, he accepted an appointment at Salisbury University in Maryland where he taught for 31 more years, eventually serving as Chair of English, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Fulton School of Arts and Sciences. Erskine was especially interested in the relationship between literature and film. He organized the first MLA panel on the subject and co-edited three books in the field. He also was the founding editor of the journal, Literature/Film Quarterly. With Dr. Connie Richards, he founded the Women Writers of Color Conference. As a Fulbright and Rotary Scholar, he taught at universities in Jordan, Thailand, Romania, and Sri Lanka. With his wife, Dr. Edward Quinn, he conducted travel-study courses in England, Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand. He retired to Portland, ME in 2001.

Judith Graham Gunn (MA ’68), now Judith Humbert, remembers that back on Mt. Oread in 1966-1968, George Worth was chair of the English Department, then housed in the gender-segregated dormitory at the end of Mount Oread. Charlton J. K. Himman ruled over the Introduction to Bibliography & Methods of Literary Research course, and John Meixner (20th Century British & American Fiction) was chair of her MA committee. After KU Judith went to Brazil to teach English as a Second Language in the U.S./Brazilian bicultural centers in Sao Paulo and in Fortaleza, and British Literature and Shakespeare to upperclass students at MacKenzie University in Sao Paulo. Judith returned to the U.S. in order to earn a second M.A., this one in Ibero-American Studies, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, while serving as assistant to the editors of the Luso-Brazilian Review (a biannual scholarly journal) and working in the cartography lab. She then segued to working for a nonprofit and two Government agencies in Washington, DC. Now residing in Scottsdale, AZ, she teaches English Composition and Contemporary Literature at Brookline College. She serves as an officer in the Phoenix Writers Club, founded in 1926 in reaction to the Arizona Press Club’s denial of membership to women, and as a lay leader at Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix. Judith’s appraisal is that it has been interesting so far, and she would be delighted to hear from Rock-Chalk friends at judithhumbert@cox.net.

James Hoggard (MA ’65) has a new novel that’s been published: The Mayor’s Daughter (Wings Press), his 20th book. He’s the Perkins-Prothro Distinguished Professor of English at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX.

Mary Duhamel Kramer (PhD ’69) has retired after teaching for forty years at UMASS. She is very active as a library volunteer and enjoys having time to devote to reading for pleasure, not for classes.

Rev. James La Valley (MA ’66) has published his treatise, Paul Invades Rome, on Amazon.com, available in Kindle, or in paperback, illustrated in either color or a cheaper black-and-white version. It investigates Paul’s victorious first trip to Rome, during which about half the New Testament was written.

1970s

James E. Anderson (PhD ’72) died 26 November 2012, having been diagnosed with Parkinson’s a year earlier. He was 71. Jim ended his career at the University of Eastern Louisiana in Lafayette. Ever devoted to Old English and Medieval Studies, he was still teaching and researching just a few months before his death.

Thomas Fox Averill (MA ’74) stepped down from being Interim Chair of the Department of English at Washburn University, and resumed

Alumni News

Keeping in Touch

Those interested in locating old KU friends and instructors should contact the University of Kansas Alumni Association at kualumni@kualumni.org; fax: 785/864-5397. Please report changes of address here also. Following are relevant websites and addresses:

- General KU Information: http://www.ku.edu
- English Department home page: http://www.english.ku.edu
- English Department e-mail: english@ku.edu

The Department is now on Facebook at “KU Department of English.”
regular teaching in the Fall of 2012. His most recent novel, *rode*, published by the University of New Mexico Press, was inspired by Jimmy Driftwood’s “Tennessee Stud,” and was named Outstanding Western Novel of 2011 as part of the Western Heritage Awards administered by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Past recipients include Thomas Berger (Averill fondly remembers meeting with the author of *Little Big Man* when Berger was a visiting writer at KU), Barbara Kingsolver, Larry McMurtry, Edward Abbey and Cormac McCarthy. *rode* was also named a Spur Award finalist by the Western Writers of America. Averill’s first novel, *Secrets of the Till Cafe*, was reprinted by New Mexico Press in the Spring of 2012. Tom continues writing “Garden Plots,” short, short stories, poems and brief thoughts about gardens, gardening, plants, and our relationship to the natural world. He lives in Topeka with wife Jeffrey Ann Goudie, and son Alex Goudie-Averill. His daughter, Eleanor Goudie-Averill (BFA, Dance, 2004), dances in Philadelphia and teaches as an adjunct in the dance department at Temple University.

**Dean Bevan (PhD ’71)** and wife Judy continue to live busy and happy lives in Lawrence. This year Dean is president of the board of Theatre Lawrence (formerly Lawrence Community Theatre) and of the Jayhawk Chapter of Military Officers Association of America. Theatre Lawrence successfully raised $6.5 million to build a new theatre, just south of Free State High School, and construction is now underway. Theatre also kept him busy this spring, as he played Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot*, Jacob in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and Sigmund Freud in *Freud and the Poet*. He continues to write as well, and his plays have been performed this year in San Diego, Seattle, and Spokane, as well as Lawrence.

**Richard Harp (PhD ’75)** was elected this spring to serve a second three-year term as Chair of the English Department at UNLV. The *Ben Jonson Journal*, which he co-founded and continues to edit, is in its twentieth year of publication (Edinburgh UP). He has four grandchildren—two children still in school—9th and 5th grades. He always remembers fondly his many years in Lawrence and at KU.

**Raylene Hinz-Penner (MA ’72)** received lecturer emeritus status from Washburn University, Topeka, as she retired in Spring 2012 exactly forty years after taking her first teaching job in English. She intends to trade the paper grading—at Bethel College-North Newton for nearly two decades and most recently Washburn—for time to do her own poetry and nonfiction writing, and travel with husband, Douglas, to Italy in the fall and Mexico in the winter.

**Rick Pangborn (MA ’75)** completed his 13th year of employment with the New Mexico Department of Health. For the past 6 years, he has served as the Medical Care Program Manager for the Health Facility Licensing & Certification Bureau within the Department.

**David Radavich (PhD ’79)** received the 2012 MidAmerica Award from the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature for his contributions to midwestern literature and scholarship. He represented the University of Kansas at the inauguration of Dr. Carol Everhart Quillin as Eighteenth President of Davidson College last October. He maintains a lively schedule of readings and workshops and as president of the Charlotte Writers’ Club and poetry editor of *Deus Loji*.

**Elki Senaha (PhD ’77)** was appointed as the President of Meio University, a public university in Okinawa, Japan, for a third term as of April 1, 2012. In December, 2011, he visited Springfield College, Massachusetts, to sign an international exchange program between Meio and Springfield, “where basketball was invented by James Naismith. I am very proud that he was a professor at the University of Kansas. This also reminded me of Naismith Hall on the KU campus.” In September, 2012, he will stop over at KU on the way back from a visit to Southwest Missouri State College.

**Jon-Christian (Chris) Suggs (PhD ’78)** is 99.9% finished with his manuscript “Black Cleopatra: Hannah Elias and the Murder of the Man Who Invented New York,” a book-length study of the 1903 murder in New York City of Andrew Haswell Green, that city’s most beloved citizen of the day, and the complex aftermath of his death. At the same time, Chris is editorial director for a new smart-phone app, “morethanamap.” The app is linked to your phone’s GPS and gives you the location of sites of African American history near you, text, photos, videos, and web links for more information about the persons and events associated with the site. The app pinpoints sites in every state and DC and is growing daily; we will be adding Canadian and European sites later in the year. The app is free (available at the moment only for iPhone but the Android platform is on its way) and you can get it from Apple’s App Store by searching “morethanamap” or “mtam.” If you prefer, you can go on line to [www.morethanamapp.org](http://www.morethanamapp.org) (yes, two ps) and check out the app and the documentary film associated with it, “More Than a Month.”

**John Arie Vanderhorst** and **Dotty Adams Vanderhorst** arrived in the fall of 1974 at the KU English Department, both got MAs in 1977, and then married each other. This year they are celebrating their 35th anniversary (the wedding took place in Marvin Grove on the KU campus) with a walking tour on the Kerry peninsula in Ireland. They plan a look at the Book of Kells in Dublin as well. In their everyday life in Kansas City, John continues to pastor at Cornerstone Community Church in Overland Park, while Dotty has finished her homeschooling career after 27 years and is picking up editing jobs, most recently for *Homeschooling Today* (appropriately enough). Four of their eight children are married and have produced nine grandchildren, with one on the way. You can read a word from John at [www.cornerstonekc.org](http://www.cornerstonekc.org) or find devotions under Dotty’s name at [www.faithwalkersonline.net/journal](http://www.faithwalkersonline.net/journal).

**1980s**

**Kiesa Kay (MA ’89)** works as a forensic interviewer and community educator. She interviews children and teens when allegations of abuse or neglect arise, or after they’ve witnessed violent crimes. She and her co-author, Elaine McAlister Dellinger, enjoyed the book release of their history title, *Yancey County*, and now Kiesa’s working on a book on forensic interviewing. Her book about Camille Claudel, the French sculptor, remains in progress, mainly because doing the research is so much fun. Kiesa’s website is [www.kiesakay.com](http://www.kiesakay.com).

**Linda Dobratz Wedge (MA ’85)** teaches AP Literature at Free State High School and was a finalist for Teacher of the Year at Free State for 2011-2012. Son Roy is a Junior at M.I.T., while son George is a Sophomore at Lawrence High School.

**1990s**

**Virginia (Ginger) Brackett (PhD ’98)**, Associate Professor, recently concluded her service as department chair for English and Modern Languages at Park University. Her new title as of August 1, 2012 is Assistant Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In addition to completing new duties in that position, Brackett will design transition of the Park University Degree with Honors Program to an Honors Academy for fall 2013. In October, 2011, Brackett received the Missouri Campus Compact Community Engagement Professional of the Year Award for her work with service learning on the Parkville campus. She remains active in conference presentation
and publishing: her *Facts on File Companion to Mary Shelley* was published in March 2012, and she entered the world of online publishing with her novel for fourth graders, *Angela and the Gray Mare*, available at amazon.com. She and her husband Edmund, who serves as Director of Sponsored Programs at Park, continue to enjoy their three granddaughters and also traveling, visiting Madrid in May 2012.

**Marlon Fick** (PhD ‘92) and his wife are at Wenzhou University in China as part of an arrangement between Kean University, the State of New Jersey, and Wenzhou to found a new university (Wenzhou Kean University). He anticipates the publication of his fifth book, a novel called *Bolivar*, in 2013, from Jaded Ibis Press in Seattle. And, oh yes, he’s expecting his first grandchild (a girl) next week.

**Chris Haven** (MA ‘93) is Associate Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. He helped conceive a new curriculum for the department that allows students in the major to balance creative and professional writing courses according to their own interests. The new curriculum was passed and will begin in the fall. This year he had poems in *Crab Orchard Review, Sycamore Review, The Brooklyner, The Michigan Poet, South Dakota Review, Poet Lore, Gargoyle, NOÖ Journal, Owen Wister Review, Yemassee, Slice Magazine, Copper Nickel, Cold Mountain Review, Quiddity*, and *Blackbird*. He’s still working on a novel set in Oklahoma in 1955, and will hopefully report in next year’s *Update* that the book is finished.

**Denise Low**’s (PhD ‘97) *Ghost Stories of the New West* (Woodley) received a 2011 Kansas Notable Book Award from the Kansas State Library and Kansas Center for the Book. The *Circle of Minneapolis* named it one of the best Native American Books. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser chose a poem from this book for his American Life in Poetry (sponsored by the Poetry Foundation), a nationally serialized print and electronic column. She is a 2008-2013 board member of the Associated Writers and Writing Programs, for which she served as president in 2011-2012. She reviews poetry regularly for the *Kansas City Star*; The Poetry Foundation posted excerpts of these on their Harriet blog, Feb. 2012. Recent poems appear (or are forthcoming from) *Yellow Medicine Review, Yokhika-latuhse, Once Was Indian, Vol. 2, 1-70 Review, New Mexico Poetry Review, New Letters*, and others. Throughout 2011, Low had an NEH faculty fellowship grant to study Cheyenne ledger art associated with the 1878-79 Fort Robinson Breakout. This resulted in an article co-authored with Ramon Powers, “Northern Cheyenne Warrior Ledger Art: Captivity Narratives of Northern Cheyenne Prisoners in 1879 Dodge City” (*Kansas History* 35.1 (Spring 2012). She is an NEH panelist for 2012. A highlight of 2011 was participating in the *Kenneth Irby* 75th birthday Eberhardt Colloquium. A special Irby edition of *Jacket 2*, edited by *William J. Harris* and *Kyle Waugh*, will publish the colloquium paper “Sensory Type/Topographies: Kenneth Irby’s Atlas to the World.” Low teaches for the Baker University School of Professional and Graduate Studies, freelances, and consults. She taught at Haskell Indian Nations University for 27 years, until Jan. 2012. Her poetry blog is [http://deniselow.blogspot.com](http://deniselow.blogspot.com), nominated for a Fascination Blog Award, and her website is [www.deniselow.com](http://www.deniselow.com). Other recent books are *Natural Theologies: Essays* (critical essays, The Backwaters Press 2011), *To the Stars* (Mammoth/Washburn University, Kansas Notable Book), *Thailand Journal* (Woodley, a Kansas City Star notable book), and *Words of a Prairie Alchemist* (Kansas Notable Book).

**2000s**

**Sam Bell** (PhD ‘10) is an Assistant Professor of English at Johnson County Community College, where she teaches Composition, Creative Writing, and Literature classes. She continues to publish creative nonfiction and poetry and runs a Creative Writing Reading Series at JCCC on campus for students and faculty.

**Geneva Diamond** (PhD ‘08) is an Assistant Professor of English at Albany State University, Albany GA. She can be contacted at [Geneva.Diamond@asurams.edu](mailto:Geneva.Diamond@asurams.edu).

Full-time Lecturer *Stephen Evans* (PhD ’00) finished another productive teaching year, with his usual four-four on-campus classes as well as Shakespeare and Technical Writing for KU’s new Center for Online and Distance Learning. This past spring Steve inaugurated his new Freshman Honors course, “Americans in Paris,” which he believes has rich future possibilities and directions. In addition to receiving in-depth training in research at Watson Library, students in the course took field trips to the Spencer Museum of Art and Kenneth Spencer Research Library and were treated to engaging lectures by Jim Carothers and Maryemma Graham.

**Susan Dunn-Hensley** (PhD ‘07) is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Wheaton College in Illinois. She received The Agnes Strickland Prize for her paper “Reigning in a New Generation: Elizabeth I in Adolescent Literature,” presented to the Queen Elizabeth I Society at the South Central Renaissance Conference. Her article “Return of the Sacred Virgin: Memory, Loss, and Restoration in Shakespeare’s Later Plays” recently appeared in *Walsingham in Literature and Culture from the Middle Ages to Modernity* (Ashgate). She is currently working on a book project, *A Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern Englishwomen, Exemplary Lives and Memorable Acts*, 1500-1650, edited by Carole Levin and Anna Richel Bertolet. Susan lives in the Chicago suburbs with her husband and four children: James, Elizabeth, Mary Katherine, and Anna Victoria.

**Mikeaw Hawkinson** (MA ‘07) and his wife, Magen, welcomed their second son into the world on November 9, 2011. Matthew James thinks the world a fine place indeed and looks forward to becoming mobile so he can dog the steps of his two-year-old brother, Myrick.

**Rachel Hile** (PhD ‘04) was granted tenure and promotion to associate professor in the Department of English & Linguistics at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne in July 2012.

In 2011, **Angela Jones** (PhD ‘01) earned tenure and promotion at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and completed a 200-hour yoga teacher-training course. While continuing to teach in WKU’s professional writing program and coordinating the English Department’s internship program, Angie has co-founded a community yoga studio and teaches regularly there. She is also completing her second year as president of a local non-profit organization, the Bowling Green International Festival. She enjoyed celebrating Jim Hartman’s retirement with him and fellow KU alumni at the 2012 4Cs in St. Louis.

After a good deal of internal dialogue and debate, **Ryan Murray** (MA ‘00) realized he could no longer ignore the call to ministry. In May 2012 he finished his first year in the Master of Divinity program at Saint Paul School of Theology, the United Methodist Seminary in Kansas City. As soon as he began his studies, he knew he was in the right place. Currently he serves part-time as the youth pastor at Bonner Springs United Methodist Church and also does a little bit of work as a hospice chaplain. He is pursuing ordination as a deacon in the United Methodist Church, with a particular interest in hospital chaplaincy. Many years ago, he could hardly have imagined himself as a pastor, but sometimes the old cliche is true: the Lord does work in mysterious ways, and now things are starting to make a lot of sense to Ryan. He sends a warm greeting to all of his former colleagues and professors.
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Dr. Jill M. Zasadny
Mr. Brian J. Zimmer & Ms. Jennifer L. Pehlke
Mr. Robert L. Zimmerman
Since February 2011, Jason Preston (MA ‘10) has busied himself as a market research analyst in Los Angeles, California. He is ridiculously happy, afflicted only with a hefty commute. He would love to hear from his old friends and all those who were kind enough to let his matriculating self into their offices whenever he was feeling chatty.

Joy Raser (PhD ‘00) just completed her twelfth year at the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, KS where she serves as Chair of the Department of Language and Literature and teaches writing, literature, literary criticism, and inter-disciplinary courses. Joy lives in Olathe with her husband, Harold, and is enjoying being a grandparent.

Simone Sessolo (MA ‘06) defended his dissertation, “Crime and Narrative: Violence as a Master Narrative in Contemporary Crime Novels,” at UT Austin in May 2012. He’s been hired as a Lecturer in the Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan, where he will teach composition and continue his research.

Masami Sugimori (PhD ‘09) started out as a full-time instructor at University of South Alabama, and has just accepted an assistant professor position in U.S. modernism at Florida Gulf Coast University. His recent publications include an article on James Weldon Johnson’s prose (MELOS, 2011). His short stories also appeared in Hawai’i Pacific Review (2010, co-authored with Kevin Rabas) and Imagination & Place: Weather (2012).

Thomas Veale (PhD ‘07) is a lieutenant colonel in the Army and currently serves as a public affairs officer at the Pentagon.

Ann Volin (PhD ‘06) presented at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities in January 2012, where she met her mentor, Professor Emerita Beverly Boyd, who had helped Ann develop the paper she presented on Chaucer’s Griselda and Constance. Dr. Boyd was a participant as well, presenting on the Wife of Bath. Another KU graduate, Kevin Rabas, now at Emporia State University, was also a presenter; he and Ann caught up with each other in the Honolulu airport while departing Hawaii. Ann is at Rockhurst University, where she is the Director of the Learning Center.

2010s

Sheryl Craig (PhD ’10) served as the Jane Austen Society of North America’s Central Region Traveling Lecturer in 2011-12. She lectured on Jane Austen and economics in Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Denver, Dallas, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Omaha, and Chicago. In August of 2012, Sheryl returned to Edinburgh, Scotland to lecture on Jane Austen and politics at the summer meeting of the Scottish branch of the Jane Austen Society UK, and, in October, Sheryl gave a “Special Session” lecture, an overview of Jane Austen and economics, at the annual general meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America in Brooklyn, New York. Sheryl also published an article “‘Wealth has Much to Do with It’: The Economics of Sense and Sensibility” in Persuasions, the Jane Austen Society of North America’s annual academic journal. Sheryl continues to serve as editor of the Jane Austen Society of North America’s newsletter which is mailed to 4,000+ members in the United States and Canada and to Jane Austen Societies and academic libraries throughout the English-speaking world.

Dennis Etzel Jr. (MFA ‘10) recently was awarded the Washburn University Student Life’s Achieving Excellence Award and was also a Muriel D. Clarke Student Life Award Nominee at Washburn, where he teaches English. His poems appeared in BlazeVOX, 3:AM, and Flint Hills Review, with others forthcoming in DIAGRAM, Fact-Simile, Indiana Review, and 1913: A Journal of Forms.

Kristen Lillvis (PhD ‘11) is an Assistant Professor of English at Marshall University in Huntington, WV, where she teaches contemporary American literature and African American literature courses.

Katie Savage’s (MFA ‘11) first book, Whirlybirds and Ordinary Times: Reflections on Faith and the Changing of Seasons, has just been released from Howard Books.