A spring was the kindest month for three University of Kansas English professors who received national recognition for their work during the Spring 2010 semester. On April 1, Associate Professor Kenneth Irby was named a co-winner of the prestigious Shelley Memorial Award by the Poetry Society of America at the venerable organization’s centennial awards ceremony in New York City. On April 17, Professor Paul Stephen Lim presented the inaugural Paul Stephen Lim Asian-American Playwriting Award at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Washington, D.C. And on April 22, Professor Maryemma Graham was inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent at the 20th Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Writers Conference sponsored by the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing at Chicago State University in Chicago.

All three honors coincide with landmark events in the careers of these KU English educators.

The Poetry Society of America is the oldest poetry organization in the United States. Founded in 1910, the society still meets in the National Arts Building in New York, just as it did a century ago. In 1917, the organization was influential in expanding the new Pulitzer Prizes to include poetry. In 1930, utilizing a bequest by Mary P. Sears, the group began presenting the Shelley Memorial Award to a living American poet according to his or her genius or need. A jury of three poets selects the winner from a group of nominees. Previous winners include Marianne Moore, e.e. cummings, Theodore Roethke, Robert Penn Warren, Denise Levertov, and Gwendolyn Brooks. More recent winners include Stanley Kunitz, Thom Gunn, Robert Pinsky, and Kimiko Hahn. A cash prize of $6,000-$9,000 accompanies the award.

Ken Irby was stunned to learn that, along with fellow poet, Eileen Myles, he had been named a 2010 Shelley Award-winner. He had no idea he had been nominated. Nevertheless, the timing of the nomination and the award is fitting. News had been circulating that Irby would in Robert Kelly’s words, “root[s] down and plumb[s] the mystery of American places, land, [and] name.” UC-Berkeley poet, Lyn Hejinian, who delivered the KU English Department’s 2008 Eberhardt Memorial Lecture, calls Irby’s work “a poetry of expansively and lastingly experienced particulars” and describes The Intent On as “unquestionably a monumental work.” The collection draws its material from some twenty books published during Irby’s career. But that career is not over. Ken Irby continues to write poems. In fact, the surprise element of the Shelley Award worked against what would have been gratifying in-person recognition. The PSA ceremony conflicted with a previously scheduled poetry reading. His brother accepted the award for him.

In 2008, Paul Stephen Lim was presented with the Outstanding Teacher of Playwriting Award by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. The award recognized his long career as a teacher of playwriting and as artistic director of English Alternative Theatre, a performance arm in the KU English Department formed principally to stage original plays by its students. This year, the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival cemented his legacy by naming its award for Asian-American student playwriting in his honor. The award carries a $2,500 prize for the best original full-length play submitted by an Asian-American student during festival competition each year ($1,000 if the play judged “best” is a one-act). The winner also receives a fellowship to attend a KCACTF summer intensive playwriting workshop (or similar program), membership in the Dramatists’ Guild, and an opportunity to contract for publication, licensing, and marketing of the play. Lim presented this year’s award to Edgar Mendoza of Carnegie Mellon University for his play, Blue Note Run. The award fund is

(continued on page 2)
Message From the Chair

In my first year as Chair (2009-2010), with the department and university as a whole facing a budget crisis, my theme was “The glass is half full.” After all, despite the grim economic news, we had published a score of new books, had an exciting new incoming class of graduate students, and had even been given permission to proceed with a search in the area of Rhetoric and Composition; this became the successful hire of Mary Jo Reiff. Indeed, late in Spring 2010 we were allowed to pursue a second hire, of playwright Darren Canady. As we launch into 2010-2011, my theme is “Looking toward the future.” With an Academic Program Review coming up late this year, the English Department held its first-ever planning retreat in August to discuss our core strengths and how we can build on these strategically as we move into the twenty-first century.

Though “retreat” is an ominous word to many faculty members—for whom it sounds suspiciously like a code-word for “day-long department meeting”—faculty feedback indicates that the retreat was not only useful but even enjoyable. We met at the KU Field Station, out in the country and away from the bustle of campus. Small groups removed to the outdoors to watch hummingbirds and appreciate nature as they deliberated on the department’s direction. Faculty commented afterwards that it was a “pleasant and productive” experience, that “everyone was energized by the discussion,” and that moving “beyond half-hour cocktail conversation and narrow voting items shook things in a really meaningful way.” As an added bonus, faculty got complimentary t-shirts to promote our great department!

Through the conversations we held at the retreat, we realized anew that we have many strengths: we are interdisciplinary and boundary crossing: a number of faculty have been awarded Keeler Intra-University Fellowships to work in and learn from other Departments. We are excellent and dedicated teachers, having been awarded ten Kemper Teaching Fellowships in the last ten years. We are the core of the humanities, emphasizing the “human” through our individual engagement with our students, our emphasis on community and global engagement (service learning projects, study abroad programs), and our abiding interest in the stories of others. We teach our students crucial skills, including critical writing and critical thinking and the ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and powerfully. As one revered senior colleague put it, “We are uniquely charged with providing instruction in the skills and habits of mind that allow people to create texts and interpret texts. This is our trust.”

KU’s English Department particularly stands out for several core strengths that have been developing over time and that cross field-boundaries, including “Language, Literature and Science”; “Literature, Rhetoric, and Social Action”; “Global and Cross-Cultural Approaches”; “Popular Expressive Forms”; and “Diversity Studies.” As we think about directions for the future, we hope to hire new faculty that will build on and complement these “area clusters.” Faculty are enthusiastic about the establishment of “Cluster Research Groups” that could gather to share work intra-departmentally with colleagues and to celebrate the intellectual heart of the department. Likewise, we are excited about breaking down “silos” between our three main tracks (literary studies; language, composition & rhetoric; creative writing) and learning more about what we all do.

As we move toward our self-study and program review, we feel confident that we have a strong vision of who we are and of where we want to go next. I’m excited to see where the future takes us!

Marta Caminero-Santangelo

National Treasures (continued from page 1)

administered by KU Endowment.

KCACTF’s action coincides with the disbanding of English Alternative Theatre (EAT) and Lim’s decision to retire from KU in August to concentrate once again on his own creative writing. This brings to an end a 21-year KU English program unique in the United States. Using external funding from Professor Emeritus of History, Grant Goodman, EAT was established in 1989 to perform student scripts and to introduce edge contemporary plays that were not commercially viable in the KU and Lawrence marketplace. A review of EAT offerings over the last several years gives some sense of the organization’s range and productivity. Since 2006, EAT has performed full productions of a full-length speculative docudrama, a one-act comedy, a one-act drama, a full-length horror show, a full-length farce, and a full-length psychological thriller, all penned by undergraduate and graduate playwriting students. In Spring 2009, the theatre also revived a staple of earlier years, the EAT Final Four, a staging of four original student one-acts in a mock competition over the weekend of the NCAA basketball championships.

In the meantime, EAT also produced regional premiere staged readings of Neil LaBute’s black comedies, This is How It Goes and In a Dark, Dark House, Tracy Letts’s acclaimed over-the-top potboiler, August, Osage County, and Wallace Shawn’s melancholy meditation on the decline of culture, The Designated Mourner. In 2007, EAT staged a full production of the Bertolt Brecht translation of Sophocles’ Antigone, a text frequently studied in Freshman-Sophomore English courses. Indeed, over the years, EAT periodically coordinated with FSE, English, and other departments as it staged other classics like Lorraine Hansberry’s A Raisin in the Sun, Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, and Tennessee Williams’s The Glass Menagerie so that students studying these plays could see a live performance in conjunction with their reading. The last performance of English Alternative Theatre reprised its first, a staged reading of “Two from the Hurt,” Lim’s juxtaposition of Susan Sontag’s “The Way We Live Now” and Terence McNally’s “André’s Mother,” two-AIDS-related one-act plays (proceeds benefited the Douglas County AIDS Project, just as they did in 1989). It was a moving moment when, at the end of the second play, the titular character released a symbolic white balloon. White balloons that had been provided to the audience were then also released and, like EAT itself, drifted away into the heights of a hushed theatrical space. No one will forget, though, that, as David Crespy has written in Angels in the American Theater, for a generation, “Paul Stephen Lim and his English Alternative Theatre [became] the benchmark for the production and development of new work in American university theater, producing more [KCACTF] winning plays and playwrights than any other university in its region.” There’s an award for that—a named playwriting award that guarantees remembrance.

Early in 2010, Maryemma Graham was pleased to be invited to give a keynote address on the work of poet Nikki Giovanni at this year’s Gwendolyn Brooks Writers Conference. At the conference banquet, she learned it is pleasant to receive as well as to give. In recognition of her career-long commitment to preserving and making available the works of black writers, she was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent, an honor she now shares.
Professor Maryemma Graham is inducted into the Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent at Chicago State University

Department News Capsules

Summer Bees

With apologies to Seals and Crofts, summer bees didn’t “make us feel fine.” In June, a horde of honeybees breached Wescoe’s walls and invaded the Department conference room and a few other administrative offices. Ironically, many of them immediately became sick and sluggish (food for thought) and began dying in droves in the light fixtures and on the carpet. Others, though, survived long enough to create an ominous din and periodically buzz the seminar table. English immediately called for politcially-correct assistance from the Natural History Museum and government agencies, all of whom professed an inability to remove or control the sweet ecologically-indispensable varmints.

So the problem was turned over to Facilities and Operations and Midwest Pest Control who embarked on a summer-long strategy of sealing the building (easier said than done) and eradicating the survivors. All meetings or classes in the conference room were moved for the summer term, including Harvard professor Lawrence Buell’s Holmes Institute Seminar on (what else?) environmental literature. In August, the closure of a final chink in Wescoe’s façade solved the problem, but department members continue to discover the bees’ enduring legacy, dark deposits on walls, furniture, and equipment that everyone hopes is honey.

2010-2013 Conger-Gabels

Professors Laura Mielke, Anna Neill, and Ann Rowland have been selected as the next set of Conger-Gabel Teaching Professors in English at the University of Kansas. These three faculty members will hold this title for the next three years. They will also receive a $5000 salary supplement each year of their term. The Conger-Gabel Teaching Professorships were established in 2001 to recognize and reward outstanding teaching in the English Department at KU. The professorships were endowed by Wren and Esther (Conger) Gabel, graduates of the University of Kansas in the early 1930s. Besides having received outstanding student evaluations and top ratings in faculty teaching evaluations over a period of several years, these three professors have also contributed to the teaching mission of the Department through important teaching-related service activities. Mielke has served on the College Committee on Undergraduate Studies and Advising and been a liaison to the Department regarding that body’s deliberations. Neill served as Director of Undergraduate Studies from 2006-2009, dealing with an array of pedagogical challenges and issues. Rowland has been heavily engaged as a Faculty Fellow with the Honors Program, particularly advising and mentoring students applying for national fellowships.

Promotion and Tenure

In March 2010, the English Department received word that Geraldo U. de Sousa had been promoted to the rank of full professor and Laura L. Mielke had been promoted to associate professor with tenure, both effective 2010-2011. Professor Sousa is a specialist in Shakespeare and English Renaissance Studies. His recent book, At Home in Shakespeare’s Tragedies (see p. 6), was instrumental to his rank advancement. Professor Mielke’s field of research is nineteenth-century American literature and culture. Her Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature was a co-winner of the 2009 Byron Caldwell Smith Book Award.

With Giovanni, Toni Morrison, Langston Hughes, Edward P. Jones, Brenda Greene, and a select group of African American scribes and scholars.

This induction comes at a time when Graham is closing in on the publication of two major scholarly works. Her completed co-edition of The Cambridge Companion to African American Literature, to be released in February 2011, is the first major treatment of this subject in the twenty-first century. Her long-awaited biography of Margaret Walker, The House Where My Soul Lives, seems to have cleared all final authorization hurdles. Oxford University Press plans a release in 2012. The Project on the History of Black Writing, which Graham founded in 1983, is changing directions. Its commitment to literary preservation and recovery work as well as to textual scholarship and the history of the book faces new challenges in the age of the internet. Digitization of the volumes stored in the Project’s archives has begun.

This summer, Graham led a project that lies at the intersection of her interests in scholarship, preservation, education, and new media. “Making the Wright Connection: Reading Native Son, Black Boy, and Uncle Tom’s Children,” was a two-week summer institute for teachers funded by a “We the People” program grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Convened on the KU campus, some thirty teachers joined a few graduate students and several distinguished scholar-guests to research, examine, discuss, and write about the best-known works of Richard Wright. Participants with backgrounds in language arts, history, social studies, library/media studies, music, and the visual arts were selected to attend, lending a highly interdisciplinary element to the program. The most innovative aspect of the institute, however, involves electronic outreach. KU film students, under the direction of film professor Madison Davis Lacy, using cutting-edge equipment obtained by that department, captured not just the main events of the institute, but many of the interactions. Three cameras and live cutting lend a “you-are-there” quality to the conference recording. Post-editing will take less time and the fully digitized conference will be ready for use in distance learning and continuing education venues in the very near future. Graham hopes that The Wright Connection will keep on teaching teachers and other Wright students and scholars online long after its initial participants have dispersed.
Revisit, Rethink, Revise, Renew: Remixed Rhetoric and Composition at KU

“Y

You’re an English major! Guess I’ll have to watch my grammar around you!” Most English majors have heard this response before, and it becomes increasingly common when you say that your concentration is Rhetoric and Composition. Traditionally (and inaccurately) seen as a discipline that teaches only correct grammar and standard English, Rhetoric and Composition—or, as it is affectionately called by people in the field, Rhet/Comp—has blossomed into a field that not only focuses on student writing, but also the social and cultural contexts that shape student writing, as well as the ways we teach it.

“We study writing. How people use language. All the ways we use language all of the time. We look at readers and writers of everyday works or texts,” says Professor Amy Devitt. An interdisciplinary field that studies all forms of writing, Rhet/Comp has much in common with other areas in English, such as Literature and Creative Writing. “As an English department, we’re trying to develop advanced literacy for all students,” states Dr. Devitt.

Composition as a discipline developed from the first-year writing course by focusing on the teaching of writing, with rhetoric forming the theoretical foundation for the field. Scholars in the field have diverse interests, including rhetorical analysis, cultural critique, the nature of public writing, ethnographic research, pedagogy, and even ecomposition. Yet, this diversity coalesces around writing and the teaching of writing. “What holds all these interests together is how each adds to our cumulative knowledge about writing, and how we can use that knowledge to help our students learn how to write,” observes Professor Frank Farmer. Frequently, these studies lead scholars to explore the cultural influences on writing. “We study the cultural backgrounds of writing and not just the text,” adds Dr. Devitt.

The theme of the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication was “The Remix: Revisit, Rethink, Revise, and Renew,” a challenge to make writing relevant to a new generation of college students in an age characterized by digital media and globalization. Here at KU, the Rhetoric and Composition program has accepted this challenge and has begun to remix its program through new curricula, the recent hire of Professor Mary Jo Reiff, the semester addition of Visiting Professor Adam J. Banks, and the appointment of Amy Devitt as director of the First- and Second-Year English Program, giving Rhetoric and Composition a heightened presence within the English department.

During the fall of 2009, the English Department approved the creation of an undergraduate concentration in Language, Rhetoric, and Writing. This allows English majors to gain an overview of a discipline usually reserved for graduate students while developing their skills as writers along the way. “We want to emphasize the widest range of texts and to develop students’ abilities as writers. The Rhetoric [and] Composition emphasis also offers explicit writing credentials,” states Dr. Devitt. One class that offers background about the field became available in Spring 2010. Taught by Dr. Farmer, “Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition” is a survey course intended to introduce students to the major themes, debates, trends, and issues within the field and the historical background that informs the way society views writing and its purposes. To help illustrate his points, Dr. Farmer allowed several graduate students in Rhetoric and Composition to discuss their research interests with the class, helping his undergraduates gain a better understanding of the various research interests within the field, which range from genre studies, feminism, and audience, to the ideological production of composition textbooks.

Along with revising the undergraduate curriculum, the English Department also approved the implementation of a new five-year PhD degree in Rhetoric and Composition. While the English department currently offers a PhD in the field, the new five-year PhD degree allows promising undergraduate students to directly enter the PhD program. According to Farmer, this new program gives students sufficient time to focus on their scholarship: “Our new five-year program enables doctoral students to streamline their progress toward degree without sacrificing the rigors of their professional training.” The five-year PhD requires careful planning around specific interests. As Dr. Devitt explains, “[The new program] lets people concentrate and focus their scholarship. It also allows students to match time-to-degree to available funding.”

Once admitted into the program, the student will be assigned a faculty advisor and will develop a planned course of study. This allows the student to create an individualized curriculum according to his/her research interests that is suitable to the needs of the field. It also permits the student to create an interdisciplinary field of study by taking relevant courses in disciplines such as Communications, Linguistics, or American Studies. In creating an individualized course of study under the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, the new PhD degree allows students to develop innovative approaches to the field. It also recognizes the centrality of writing in other disciplines at the university.

As KU’s Rhetoric and Composition program revises and remixes its curricula, it also added a new faculty member to its ranks. Mary Jo Reiff, former Director of Composition at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, will be joining the faculty in the fall. She has published in the areas...
of audience, rhetorical genre theory, and genre-based rhetoric. Her current works involve public discourse and the evolution of the public petition from the 17th century to the present. (Professor Reiff will be profiled in the next Update.)

While Rhetoric and Composition faculty members and students eagerly approved Dr. Reiff’s appointment, the program also welcomed the temporary addition of Adam J. Banks as the Langston Hughes Visiting Professor in Spring 2010. A former Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Syracuse University, Dr. Banks now serves as Associate Professor of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media at the University of Kentucky. His research interests include African-American rhetoric, digital rhetorics, and the ways that new technology inform the African-American experience, while his course topics at Syracuse included the rhetoric and politics of the Black sermon, Black and Latino language and literacy traditions, community literacy, and rhetoric and composition theory. He is the author of Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground—which won the 2006 Computers and Composition Distinguished Book Award—and Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age, which is scheduled to be published later this year by Southern Illinois University Press.

Dr. Adam J. Banks was the featured speaker at February’s Composition Conversations meeting (2Cs). A monthly gathering, 2Cs discusses issues related to the field of Rhetoric and Composition.

While at KU, Dr. Banks taught two courses in the English Department. His undergraduate course, “Barack Obama and the African-American Rhetorical Tradition,” examined Obama’s oratory within the distinctive traditions of African-American speech. His graduate-level class, “Digital Griots: Story, History, Technology, and African-American Rhetoric 2.0,” explored the intersections among African-American rhetorical traditions, technology, and history. This seminar, which included students from Rhetoric and Composition, American Studies, and Creative Writing, allowed students to explore the possibilities and problems of new media in teaching and scholarship. “Banks inspired new excitement about how African-American rhetorical traditions can inform our use of new media in the composition classroom,” states Dr. Farmer. This rethinking of African-American rhetoric in terms of technology served as the basis of his Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship lecture, “Rememory, Remixed: Reimagining African-American Rhetoric for a Digital Age.” (To view the lecture, visit YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adM7kHwNV0.)

Dr. Banks also discussed his research with Composition Conversations (2Cs), a monthly meeting where professors, graduates, and undergraduates alike meet for dinner to discuss pressing issues in the field. Apart from fostering a sense of collegiality, these meetings—which students from Rhetoric and Composition, Literature, and Creative Writing attend—keep faculty, and especially students, well-versed in current scholarly conversations while building community for developing scholars. Indeed, this fostering of community has led to the increased presence of KU at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the most widely attended conference in Rhetoric and Composition. At this year’s conference in Louisville, Kentucky, several students and professors gave presentations, including graduate student Lisa Stockton and Dr. Farmer, who shared a panel centered on writing, rhetoric, and religion. This past semester also saw publications from other graduate students in Rhetoric and Composition, including Jason Barrett-Fox’s recent publication in Rhetoric Review on the life, fiction, and nonfiction of Marci Haldeman-Julius.

KU’s reputation in Rhetoric and Composition Studies has translated into excellent employment opportunities for its graduates. In a difficult job market, KU English continues to place graduates in tenure-track positions, and Rhetoric and Composition remains one of the more viable options for job placement. 2010 PhD Heather Bastian has just been hired at the College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota. “We have a strong record of placing our graduates in professional positions,” says Farmer.

One factor that makes KU graduates viable in the job market is the teaching experience developed through the First- and Second-Year Writing Program. In the fall, Rhetoric and Composition will continue its commitment to writing pedagogy as Amy Devitt takes the reins as the new director of the program. Dr. Devitt—who served as director from 1994-2000—will replace Professor Michael L. Johnson. Though she does not plan any major changes in the program, she anticipates meeting the new challenges of teaching writing in a technology-driven world. “Mike Johnson has kept the program current and consulted with Rhetoric and Composition along the way, so there will mostly be continuity with the previous administration. But the new challenge will be incorporating technology and the visual in 101 and 102,” says Dr. Devitt.

For more information about KU English’s Rhetoric and Composition program, visit http://www.english.ku.edu/rhetoric_composition/.

- Cedric Burrows, English PhD student in Rhetoric and Composition
- Rob Topinka, English MA student in Rhetoric and Composition

FSE Update

As usual, the FSE program has been hard at work! One of the first items of business in the 2009-2010 academic year was the changing of the program’s name from Freshman Sophomore English to First- and Second-Year English. After all, a student’s number of completed course hours sometimes has no bearing on whether they’re starting a first or second year of study in English. Perhaps the biggest news in the FSE program has been about the progress we’ve made with assessment. Currently, FSE is in the middle of a whole-program assessment that will culminate in 2013. This year, we developed workshops related to the findings of our preliminary surveys of student and instructor perceptions of how well 101 and 102 help students to achieve our program goals, and we administered a similar survey for 200-level courses. The assessment work has also brought about some revisions to the goals of 101, 102, and the 200-level courses for the sake of clarity and coherence. The FSE program also completed an assessment of the textbooks used for 102. We will begin to phase out Ways of Reading and adopt Composing Knowledge, The Curious Reader, From Inquiry to Academic Writing, and Sound Ideas. And this year, SAGE requested that FSE administer a training session for teachers of 200-level courses that will prepare them to teach composition and literature courses. Finally, everyone at the FSE program bids Dr. Michael Johnson, our fearless leader, a fond farewell as he hands off the position of Director of FSE to Dr. Amy Devitt, whom we warmly welcome back to the directorship!

- Erin Williams, 2009-2010 FSE Intern
AFTER last year’s release of *Reading Harry Potter Again: New Critical Essays* (Praeger 2009), Giselle Anatol was contacted by an editor at Palgrave Macmillan to see if she was interested in pursuing a similar treatment of Stephenie Meyer’s popular *Twilight* saga. Anatol accepted the challenge and is currently working with contributing scholars from around the world, including current KU graduate students Amy Hune, Margaret Kramar, and Ann Martinez, and former student Joseph Sommers, who has just taken a position in the English Department at Central Michigan University. The vampire theme crosses over from Anatol’s study of children’s / young adult literature to her interests in Caribbean and African-American literature, and she continues to work on her book-length manuscript, *The Things That Fly in the Night: Images of Female Vampirism in Literature of the African Americas*. This year she presented at two conferences: the Sidney Poitier International Conference and Film Festival, held in February at the College of the Bahamas in Nassau (Poitier was born and raised in the Bahamas), and the twelfth international conference of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars, held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA from April 20–24.

G. Douglas Atkins continued his prodigious scholarly and critical output, publishing two more books during the year: *On the Familiar Essay: Challenging Academic Orthodoxies and Literary Paths to Religious Understanding: Essays on Dryden, Pope, Keats, George Eliot, Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and E.B. White*, both from Palgrave Macmillan. He has due out in September, from Baylor University Press, *T.S. Eliot and the Essay*. He recently learned that another book, *T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets*, has been accepted by Palgrave Macmillan. His book on E.B. White is now being considered for publication, and he is nearing completion of two other books on Eliot, one of them a study of his critical writing. Doug plans to keep writing as he approaches retirement—he has already put in 41 years and hopes to keep going for another year or two (or more?). As he writes and teaches, he continues to amass *First Editions*, especially of Eliot and White, while his wife Rebecca proceeds apace with her collection of Beatrix Potter figurines and other material. Meanwhile, their beloved Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Millie grows older but (even) smarter.

Byron Caminero-Santangelo spent the fall semester as a Hall Center Fellow working on his book manuscript “Different Shades of Green: African Literatures and Environmentalisms.” He had a particularly exciting spring as a Keeler Intra-University Professor, team-teaching and sitting in on courses in the Environmental Studies program. Dr. Caminero-Santangelo was honored to receive the Mabel Fry teaching award in May 2009 and a Kemper Teaching Fellowship in August 2009. He has a forthcoming co-edited volume (with Garth Myers, Geography) on environmental studies and literary studies in Africa (Ohio UP) and an article on Zakes Mda’s novel *Heart of Redness* forthcoming in an edited volume on postcolonial eco-criticism (Oxford UP).

Marta Caminero-Santangelo successfully completed her first year as Chair of the English Department. (Well, this depends on one’s definition of “successfully.” But perhaps in this case making it to the finish line and surviving counts as successful.) All joking aside, the experience has been a fascinating one and a true learning experience. She even learned how to get the department (and herself) onto Facebook! Marta also went to Washington, DC this summer with a Smithsonian Research Fellowship to work at the Smithsonian Museum of American History on Latino/a oral histories. Last summer, she spent some time in Agua Prieta, Mexico with a migrant resource center as part of the same fellowship. Meanwhile, two articles by Marta appeared in 2009: “Central Americans in the City: Goldman, Tobar, and the Question of Panethnicity” in *LIT: Literature, Interpretation, Theory,* and “At the Intersection of Trauma and Testimonio: Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of Bones*” in *Antipodas: Journal of Hispanic and Galician Studies*. A third article, “The Lost Ones: Post-Gatekeeper Border Fiction and the Construction of Cultural Trauma,” is scheduled to appear in *Latino Studies* in 2010. A paperback edition of Marta’s book *On Latinidad* (UP Florida) also appeared in 2009.

Jim Carothers’ year featured graduate and undergraduate courses in Faulkner and Hemingway, and two Honors courses in “Short Story Masterpieces” (whatever those are), as well as an Osher Institute course called “Reading Funny Faulkner” and a junior-senior Honors Tutorial, with Mike Valk, on Shakespeare’s low comedy. He gave a paper on “Baseball Fictions and Baseball Facts” at a national conference on baseball in American literature and culture. He was glad to have his granddaughter Kelsey around as a KU freshman this year, and he addressed his 50th high school class reunion in St. Louis.

After serving as Job Placement Advisor to the graduate students for six years, Katie Conrad has put on a new hat: Director of English Undergraduate Studies. Attracted, admittedly, by the acronym, she has found that she truly enjoys helping students navigate their way through the major, and is proud to announce that, after 13 years at the University of Kansas, she can finally read an ARTS form. Speaking of hats, her major contribution to the undergraduate program so far has been the distribution of wizard hats to graduating Honors seniors (following the fine footsteps of former Director Prof. Anna Nell’s offering of purple crowns in 2008). She has also seen several publications into print recently, and is making use of KU’s Scholar Works to make her publications more widely available to the reading public. In wholly unrelated news, her band MAW released its first CD in 2009 (“Advice for the Young and Foolish”); and her daughter Rose, at the age of 2 1/2, is hard at work memorizing Blake’s “Tyger” with no pressure, but much amusement, from her mother.

Geraldo de Sousa says that he will not soon forget the 2009-2010 academic year, when he was promoted to full professor. In his travels to Sardinia, Corsica, Brazil, and Spain, he had the opportunity to hear the cuckoo bird in San Pantaleo, Sardinia, visit the wondrous mega-lithic Nuraghi at Barumini, see Sardinia’s own Sugarloaf, Pan di Zucchero in Carbonia-Iglesias, sail into the beautiful harbor of Bonifacio, Corsica, attend a family reunion on New Year’s at the remote town of Mara Rosa, Brazil, and at the end of the academic year enjoy a stroll through the famous Plaza Mayor in Salamanca, Spain. He had a productive year of writing, research, and
teaching. In spring 2010, he taught a new group of incoming graduate students in his favorite course, English 800; he also taught English Renaissance Drama, and undergraduate courses in Shakespeare and major British writers. His book, *At Home in Shakespeare’s Tragedies* (Ashgate), which was published in the summer of 2010, explores the representation of home and domestic space in Shakespeare’s great tragedies. In his article, “Travel, Imagination, and the Strangest of Theaters,” also published in 2009, he researches representations of Burma and Hindu rituals in a 16th-century Portuguese text. He continues his work as editor of *Mediterranean Studies*, through which he also brings together his expertise and interest in global issues. He is currently working on an article on global issues in *The Merchant of Venice*, and on a book-length study of London and comedy in the seventeenth century.

**Dorice Williams Elliott** has thoroughly enjoyed her first year not being Chair. Although she’d forgotten how much work it is to teach two classes (instead of one small one), she found it invigorating and challenging. Now, thanks to a sabbatical and a Hall Center Research Fellowship, she’ll have the next year to immerse herself in writing about early 19th-century British convicts transported to Australia—along with articles about Australian squatters and selectors (the equivalent of American frontier ranchers and farmers) and gift theory in *Mansfield Park*. On the home front, her oldest daughter graduated from Baker University with a nursing degree; after 12 years, all three kids have finally finished college! Two even have jobs with health insurance.

**Iris Smith Fischer** continues to enjoy teaching classes in drama, the avant garde, and literary and performance theory. Her book *Mabou Mines: Making Avant-Garde Theatre in the 1970s* is forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press in November 2010. While on sabbatical in fall 2009, she began research for a new project, the first part of which explores the role theatre and performance played in the development of semiotics in the late 19th century. Her research has taken her to the Institute for American Thought, Dartmouth College’s Rauner Special Collections, and Harvard’s Houghton Library. She recently completed a three-year term as editor of the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*.

**Stephanie Fitzgerald** spent the summer of 2009 as a Susan Kelly Power/Helen Hornbeck Tanner Fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago doing research for her book manuscript, *Land Narratives: Native Women’s Histories of Land and Law*. She presented a paper on teaching early Native American non-fiction texts in the English classroom at the Modern Language Association and a paper on the Zuni Midnighters, a Native country-western dance band, at the Native American and Indigenous Association conference in Minneapolis.

**Doreen Fowler** divided up her time this past year among three favorites: William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, and Flannery O’Connor. In January, while perusing the new Norton Critical Edition of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, she was happily surprised to find among the critical essays the chapter on *As I Lay Dying* from her book, *Faulkner: The Return of the Repressed*. Later in the spring, she delivered two presentations on Flannery O’Connor: in March, at the University of Louisville, she discussed the paradox of O’Connor’s “saving violence” for the Larry Barker Lecture series in Southern Literature; and, in May, she presented a paper on fathers and prophets in O’Connor’s fiction at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association. In this same year, the *Arizona Quarterly* accepted for publication her essay, “Flannery O’Connor’s Productive Violence.” As for Morrison, in the spring semester, Doreen developed a new course focusing on Morrison’s fiction. Finally, she is looking forward to Fall 2010 when she will be on sabbatical: she plans to make the final revisions on a book on Faulkner, O’Connor, Wright, and Morrison, and to start work on her next project, a study of racial abjection in the fiction of Toni Morrison. In personal news, Doreen’s daughter, Carina, just successfully completed her first year of college at Washington University in St. Louis.

Teaching, research and service, as the hallmarks of the academic professional life, are always filled with challenges and refreshing lessons. This has been especially true for **Maryemma Graham** in 2009-10. On leave from regular KU teaching responsibilities, she spent a semester at the University of Texas San Antonio as a senior research fellow. Her “research” involved finding the best approaches for infusing more humanities into a lock-step educational curriculum. This experience was useful preparation for the NEH summer institute, “Making the Wright Connection,” which began in July 2010, as well as the completion of the *Cambridge History of African American Literature* (January 2011), the major book project that occupied her attention during the year. She has become increasingly aware of the need to consider new interventions for reading and writing literature. The shift from looking at authors of texts to readers of texts opens up new directions for *The Project on the History of Black Writing* as well. This new thinking is already forcing itself onto the pages of her biography of Margaret Walker which reaches fruition next year!

**Peter Grund** had a very productive year of research and teaching. He saw the publication of the co-edited, 995-page *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Cambridge University Press), which he and his colleagues spent the last 10 years or so completing. He also worked on various other ongoing research projects, including an electronic edition of witness depositions from Early Modern England and an accompanying book (forthcoming from John Benjamins), and he published an article on redactional strategies in a late-medieval alchemical text (in *Ambix: Journal for the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry*). He also managed to find the time to give five lectures and papers during the year. In addition to courses on the history and present-day structure of English as well as on World English(es), he enjoyed exploring how linguistic frameworks can aid literary interpretation with a group of enthusiastic students in an Honors Proseminar (ENGL 498). His view of the language in some literary works has changed forever after reading some of the students’ excellent research papers.

**Joseph Harrington**’s book *Things Come On: An Amneoir* was accepted by Wesleyan University Press, to appear in their poetry series in early 2011. This book is one of four in a series about his mother’s life and times; David McLendon chose an excerpt from another of these volumes as a finalist for *The Collagist’s* creative nonfiction contest for 2010. Harrington was awarded the Hall Center for the Humanities Creative Work Fellowship for Fall 2010 to finish the series; he was also a finalist for a Howard Foundation Fellowship for poetry. Meanwhile, Prof. Harrington’s serial poem *earth day suite* was accepted for publication as a chapbook by Beard of Bees Press, and twelve poems and book excerpts by him appeared in 2009-10. He participated in poetry readings at the AWP conference in Denver, the Spencer Museum of Art, and the Top City Poetry Festival; he also presented the paper “Docupoetry and Archive Desire” at the K-State English Department’s visiting speaker series. He continues to co-curate...
the “Big Tent” reading series. Being Director of Graduate Studies took up much of Harrington’s time and energy this year, and it resulted, among other things, in the most successful recruitment visit ever (7 out of 8 attendees chose KU). KU English’s doctoral program rose from number 61 to 37 in the US News rankings; while there are any number of explanations for this change, Prof. Harrington hopes it will reflect well on the program. He also received word that his former mentee Anjali Nerlekar landed a tenure-track job at Rutgers University in the Dept. of South Asian Languages and Literature.

Michael L. Johnson continued this past year as Director of Freshman-Sophomore English (soon to be christened, in line with national practice, First- and Second-Year English). When not engaged with that position, he was teaching creative-writing courses (including, along with Tom Lorenz, English 803: Practicum in the Teaching of Creative Writing), publishing essays and poems, and trying to figure out when he was going to retire (it turns out the date will be January 1, 2011). His latest book of poetry is Sky Land: A Southwestern Cycle (Woodley Press, 2010).

Paul Stephen Lim presented English Alternative Theatre’s final season—starting on Labor Day with a staged reading of Wally Shawn’s The Designated Mourner, followed by a staged reading of student works; then ending the season in November with a reprise of EAT’s first presentation 21 years ago, a double-bill of Susan Sontag’s The Way We Live Now and Terrence McNally’s Andre’s Mother, featuring some members of the original cast, among them English Department professors Amy Devitt and Jim Hartman. In January 2010 Lim directed a staged reading of Before the Sceaan Gate, a one-act play by KU graduate student Ken Willard at the regional festival of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Overland Park, KS. The same play was invited to compete further at the national festival in April in Washington, DC. To celebrate Lim’s life-long work with student playwrights, the KCAC TF has named a national playwriting award in his honor. Lim was present at the Kennedy Center in April to give the award to the first recipient of The Paul Stephen Lim Asian-American Playwriting Award. And, after 37 years of teaching in the English department, Lim finally decided to retire on August 2nd. He plans now to write at least three more plays before the next Chinese Year of the Sheep, and also to spend more time working on the blog he started a year ago, which he is calling “a memoir in flux.” He hopes friends and foes alike will visit the blog periodically, if only to make sure he’s still alive and kicking (http://paulstephenlim.com).

Chris McKitterick has been teaching technical communications, writing, and science fiction at the University of Kansas since 2002, where he also directs the KU Technical Communication program and, with James Gunn, the Center for the Study of Science Fiction. Chris is the current guest editor of the special “International Science Fiction” issue and companion website for World Literature Today; and he was also an editor for the National Space Society’s Return to Luna anthology, from Hadley Rille Books. Recent fiction publications include “The Enlightenment,” in Synergy: New Science Fiction, an anthology from Five Star publishing; “The Empty Utopia,” in Ruins: Extraterrestrial, an anthology from Hadley Rille Books; and “Jupiter Whispers,” in Visual Journeys: A Tribute to Space Art, an anthology from Hadley Rille Books. His first novel, Transcendence, will appear in 2010 from Hadley Rille Books and the Easton Press Signed First Edition collection. Chris regularly presents writing workshops at venues including the Alpha Workshop for Young Writers, the CSSF Science Fiction Writer’s Workshop, and various conventions. He serves on the jury of the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best science-fiction novel and is nominations director of the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for best science-fiction story.

Laura Mielke is happy to report that she had talented, passionate students in her courses, which included an English 205, “Captive Narratives,” and a proseminar, “Intersections in 19th-Century U.S. and American Indian Literatures.” In Fall 2009, her Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature received the Byron Caldwell Smith Award from the Hall Center and a Choice 2009 “Outstanding Academic Title” recognition. In spring 2010, she received word that she has been granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at KU—and that she will serve as a Conger-Gabel Teaching Professor for 2010-2013. Along with the arrival of a baby girl in March, all of this made for a very good year.

Laura Moriarty recently finished her second year on the creative writing faculty at KU, and she continues to enjoy working with both graduate and undergraduate students. In late 2009, her third novel, While I’m Falling, was published by Hyperion. Last semester, she taught a seminar on the contemporary novel for M.F.A. students, and she hopes to use some of the material from that course this summer, when she begins work on her fourth novel.

Anna Neill spent the fall semester taking classes in the Department of Anthropology as a Keeler intra-university fellow, working with faculty in biological anthropology. In the spring, she returned to English as Associate Chair, at which point she would have fallen flat on her administrative face if it were not for the generous guidance of her predecessor, Tom Lorenz, and the office staff. She published an article in Victorian Literature and Culture in 2009, and finished the first draft of her book manuscript: “Primitive Minds: Evolution and the Dreamy State in Victorian Fiction.” In April, she was identified as a Conger-Gabel Teaching Professor for 2010-13.

Janet Sharistanian was on sabbatical during Fall 2009 to begin work on a new book tentatively entitled Home Front, War Front, History: American Literary Responses to the Great War. In March 2010, she applied successfully to co-direct (with Ted Wilson, History) a five-week NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers, “America and the Great War: An Interdisciplinary Seminar in Literature and History.” The seminar took place late June through July of this year.


Marjorie Swann is now Associate Professor of English at Southern Methodist University where her husband, Bill Tsutsui, became Dean of the Dedman College of Sciences and Humanities in Fall 2010. The Department thanks her for her many fine years at KU and wishes her well in her new position.

Assistant Professor Phil Wedge continues to teach British literature and sports literature regularly, as well as editing Cottonwood. He presented a paper on “Hercule Poirot and the Sport of Crime” at the Sport Literature Association Conference at Williamsport, PA in June and has a poem forthcoming in Coal City Review. He also coached Lawrence High School to 2nd place in 6A at the State Chess Championships. His wife, Linda Dobratz Wedge (M.A. 1985) continues teaching AP English Literature at Free State High School. Their son, Roy Wedge, was a National Merit Finalist, the 6A State Cross-Country Champion, and the Kansas Gatorade Male Cross-Country Runner of the Year. He is now enrolled at MIT. Younger brother George, as well as Roy, was named All-State in chess.
Transition

Professor Melvin Landsberg researched and taught in the KU English Department for 49 years. He specialized in American literature and was particularly interested in the work of John Dos Passos, about whom he wrote an award-winning monograph. For many years, he edited The John Dos Passos Newsletter, which he also founded. Jayson Harsin, Professor and Chair of the Department of Global Communications at the American University of Paris, remembers working with Professor Landsberg while an undergraduate.

After nearly half a century at KU, Melvin Landsberg is taking a much deserved retirement.

Melvin came to the University of Kansas in 1961 after teaching at the universities of Washington and Alabama, as well as Long Island University, Hunter College, and City College of New York.

After earning history degrees at CCNY and then Columbia, Melvin received a PhD in English from Columbia, and went on to become one of the leading authorities on John Dos Passos in the 20th century, publishing his acclaimed “political biography,” John Dos Passos’ Path to USA in 1972, which the Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Literature has recently called especially “valuable...in light of the evolution of Dos Passos’ politics.” He later published an award-winning, critically and biographically explicative correspondence, John Dos Passos Correspondence with Arthur K. McComb (1991), which added “significantly” to critical “knowledge of Dos Passos’ early career,” according to the Modern Language Review: In 1997, Melvin founded the John Dos Passos Newsletter, which ran through 2002. Thirty-nine university and research libraries subscribed to it.

Mel has also known success with creative writing projects. His “Brave New World” story about the airlines running the U.S. post office was featured in the NY Times travel section in 1994. As one letter to the editor put it: “To the Editor: Thanks for the funny article by Melvin Landsberg about the airlines taking over the Postal Service....As both a 14-year postal worker and a frequent Florida flier, I found the article was able to distill the deregulation experience to a pure goof.”

But it was another of his stories that will always stick with me, one about the absurdity of what the great Cambridge literary and cultural critic Raymond Williams called flow, the bizarre procession of montages in American TV programming, from program to program, ad to ad, and program to ad, and with Lord knows what kind of effects on our our human capability to consume and accept tragedy, comedy, and banality, perhaps conflating them, in a matter of minutes and seconds. This story was set in a living room—on a Nordic Track, in fact—where a man exercises and shifts from a potentially harrowing documentary on the Holocaust to the banal sexual appeals in advertising. There, as always, Melvin was concerned with arguably human questions, the old Greek rhetorical category of to prepon (fitting) for this collision of genres, subjects, and narrative, which left unsettling moral and ethical questions to be sorted out by those who would bear witness.

Melvin’s presence as a scholar and intellectual personality at KU deserves some detail. In the 50s, he switched from history to a literature PhD at Columbia, where his critical acumen grew out of interactions with heavyweights such as Jacques Barzun, Lionel Trilling, and Richard Hofstadter. Overall, Melvin found the historians lacked an appreciation of form and the literary critics lacked an appreciation of history. Melvin wished to treat literature in its socio-historical context and yet appreciate it formally and transhistorically, elucidating questions of humanity through a deep connection to classics of literature, criticism, and history, from Thucydides to Montaigne, Edward Gibbon, Samuel Johnson, Henry Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Edmund Wilson, and Irving Howe (with whose passages he is accustomed to regale his company at any given moment). No wonder he became enamoured of Dos Passos, a daring and convicted writer who combined both appreciations in sweeping experiments of formal, narrative, social, and historical analysis!

Like another of his favorites, Thoreau, Melvin has also had an appreciation for the independent and ethical man, a quality bound, yet appreciate it formally and transhistorically, exercises and shifts from a potentially harrowing documentary on the Holocaust to the banal sexual appeals in advertising. There, as always, Melvin was concerned with arguably human questions, the old Greek rhetorical category of to prepon (fitting) for this collision of genres, subjects, and narrative, which left unsettling moral and ethical questions to be sorted out by those who would bear witness.

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Professor Michael Cherniss served on nearly ninety graduate committees during his 44-year teaching career as a specialist in medieval languages and literatures in the Department of English. He also authored two monographs, one on Old English Christian poetry and one on Middle English vision poetry. Professor Antha Cotten-Spreckelmeyer, Associate Director of KU’s Humanities and Western Civilization Program, worked with Professor Cherniss on her doctorate. She wrote the following appreciation.

First met Mike Cherniss during an indecisive period in my education. I was considering an English Major at KU, but I was also considering Spanish, History, pre-Law, and a host of other things. I signed up for Mike’s
in parallel texts

- But, I kept hearing those Old English cadences

places and universities in the US and abroad. 

- I had never heard Middle English read aloud, and I spent a lot of time before the first class poring over my Donaldson edition of Chaucer trying to imagine what it would sound like. Suffice it to say, I was not disappointed. When Mike arrived at the first class meeting in a tiny room under the stairwell in the basement of Snow Hall, he briefly introduced himself and immediately set about introducing us (students) to the poet. He began by simply reading the initial verses of *The Canterbury Tales*, and with that reading I was hooked. I never hesitated, looked back, or considered another major despite parental misgivings and poor employment prospects for English majors in the 1970s and 80s. At that moment I knew I would be an English major, a teacher and a medievalist. I would like to attribute this decision to Mike’s charisma, or academic influence, but, in fact, the opposite was the case: Mike never put himself forward in the class; never talked about himself; never touted his research interests or numerous publications. Much to his credit, Mike simply allowed the poetry to speak for itself in a way that I had never experienced before and have rarely observed since. During that semester Mike read aloud substantial portions of *The Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, and *The Book of the Duchess*. The entire class was mesmerized, and we quickly began to identify language patterns, emphasis, and meaning in these that a silent reading could never yield. We learned a lot about character, theme and imagery, but more importantly, we learned how important it is to read poetry out loud and to listen.

Mike himself proved to be an excellent listener. He was open to all kinds of questions, interpretations, and mispronunciations of Chaucer’s verse—no matter how far-fetched—and he encouraged us to develop our own approach to Middle English literature and language. One day, in response to a student’s request, Mike read aloud a brief passage from *Beowulf* in Old English. Where Middle English had seemed vaguely comprehensible to the untrained ear, Old English was unintelligible; but, it was electric and exhilarating. Even though the meaning was obscure, we could tell this was Mike’s *forte*, and those Old English cadences lingered in that classroom for the rest of the semester. To this day, when I walk through Snow Hall en route to teach my classes, I swear I can still hear the alliteration echoing through the stairwell.

On completion of my undergraduate degree, I left Kansas and went to a variety of other places and universities in the US and abroad. But, I kept hearing those Old English cadences in my head, and eventually I returned to KU to pursue a doctorate in English. Needless to say, Old English became my specialization, and Mike became my dissertation director. Mike was unfailingly generous with his time and knowledge. He transmitted a wealth of information and skills, all with self-effacing good humor. It was not until I was well into my dissertation work that I fully realized the extent of Mike’s own research and publication. While I was writing my dissertation, he was writing a seminal work on *Piers Plowman*, all the while insisting that my work was the more important task at hand.

Although it has now been many years since my days as a KU student, I’ve kept up with Mike through my own students who often enroll in his classes, and assure me that Mike is still captivating young minds with his unique approach to literature. Even in the digital age—or perhaps especially in the digital age—reading poetry aloud still has its charm. As one student commented just last year “I love the way he reads Middle English to us. It has helped me see that if you don’t get all the words, you can still feel the passion.” Could there ever be a more apt legacy for an educator, or one more well-deserved?

*Cwêðeôn fæt he were . . . manna mildust and mon ærast, leodum līhast.*

- Antha Cotten-Spreckelmeyer (Ph.D. 1987)

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**Professor Peter Casagrande** researched and taught for 43 years in the English Department and the Humanities and Western Civilization Program at KU. He also served as an Associate Chair of English, as an Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (twice), and as Director of the University Honors Program. Jill Docking, former Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents, took courses from Professor Casagrande and later worked with him on the Kansas Humanities Council.

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**Peter Casagrande**

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*T*he 1970s were a complicated and difficult time to be a student at the University of Kansas. Issues of women’s rights, freedom of speech, and racial prejudice and inequality dominated the discussion. The Vietnam War raged, dividing us from our parents and, often, from each other. Yet if asked to choose a single formative element of my KU experience of those years, it would not be any of these great issues, but rather my time in the classroom of a professor of 19th century English Literature - Dr. Peter Casagrande.

In the fall of 1975, I attended KU as a visiting student from Brown University. My then-boyfriend (now husband of 33 years), Tom Docking, was a junior at KU, and I intended to attend for one year to be with him and then return to graduate from Brown. Through the grapevine I heard about Dr. Casagrande and, though I was a History major, I thought it would be interesting to take an English Literature course with him. I don’t remember the name of the course, and it doesn’t really matter; what was so special about the course was the man who taught it.

Dr. Casagrande was an extraordinary teacher. In only one semester he instilled in us a love of literature, writing and critical thinking that would last a lifetime; his eloquent teaching style and his demand for excellence transformed the teaching of literature into a form of poetry. We had a reverence for him that was based both on a healthy respect for his demanding teaching style, and on the way he transported us into the experience of the literary characters we were meeting. For the first time it became clear to me that critical to understanding a work of literature is understanding the experiences of the literary characters within the political and social contexts of their times.

Dr. Casagrande was part of our family’s life from the beginning – and I mean that literally. On the first day of my honeymoon – June 19, 1977 – I frantically finished my (overdue) honors thesis on Thomas Hardy and George Eliot as my husband Tom typed the last few pages. On such challenges are successful marriages made, not to mention successful honors theses! The tradition carried on as our son, Brian Docking, was also taught by Dr. Casagrande at KU.

Years later, when I served on the Kansas Humanities Council, I encouraged the board to invite Dr. Casagrande to be a member. I knew this man had the unique ability to make the humanities relevant, not only to those in the university environment, but to all readers.

When Dr. Elliott asked me to write a piece in honor of Dr. Casagrande – whom, by the way, I cannot to this day bring myself to call “Pete” – I wondered how it was that a professor of 19th century literature could have such a profound effect on a life and career focused on family, business and politics. I came back to my father’s parting words to me as I left for college. I had promised him that I would work hard at Brown, and earn
strong pre-professional credentials. He said to me: “Jill, the reason your mom and I are sending to you to college is to attain the background and skills you will need to function in the world. If you graduate from college with the ‘love of learning,’ you will have met our goals.”

It was Dr. Casagrande who did the most to instill in me that love of learning. It is my honor to take this opportunity to thank him for this precious gift.

■ Jill Docking (B.A. History, 1978)

Professor David Bergeron researched and taught for 34 years in the KU English Department. A specialist in Early Modern studies, particularly Shakespeare and Renaissance drama, he is a world-renowned scholar and critic who also received numerous teaching awards. One of his former graduate students, Daryl Palmer, now Associate Professor and Chair of English at Regis University, wrote the following tribute to Professor Bergeron upon his retirement in May 2010.

Those of us who studied with David Bergeron will always remember the first day he walked into class. For many of us, it was our first time in Spencer Research Library, and we were worried. We understood that Professor Bergeron would be demanding. We knew something of his formidable record of publication. Some of us had heard of his Higuchi Award. As it turns out, we were utterly unprepared for David’s combination of humor and mastery, warmth and precision, high expectations and gentle heart.

In Practicing Renaissance Scholarship (2000), David announces a favorite theme: “the scholar’s relatedness to all that has gone before.” Over his 34 years at The University of Kansas, David taught us that Shakespeareans have a special fondness for this idea. He celebrated Shakespeare’s birthday, the Hinman Collator, the printing press, and early modern pageantry. He introduced us to the letters of King James I, triumphal arches, the sermons of Lancelot Andrews, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the British Library. He reminded us of our place in the family of Shakespeare scholarship: Bergeron studied with Hoy, who studied with Bowers, who studied with Kittredge.

Some of us have had the good fortune to attend national and international conferences with David. He has made us proud with lectures to packed halls. In the company of famous scholars and complete neophytes at the annual Shakespeare Association of America conference, David has modeled a generous civility for us, inviting all comers to join “the Kansas group.”

This same scholarly largesse informs each of David’s many articles and books. We hear it when David writes of “four rare and priceless friends” at the beginning of Shakespeare’s Romances and the Royal Family (1985). We hear it when David recalls his scholarly journey in his revision of the magisterial English Civic Pageantry (1971, 2003): “my foraging in sacred places of original texts, manuscripts, and archives has informed and enlivened my study and enhanced my life.” We hear it when, in Textual Patronage (2006), he explains how “signs of friendship enrich my life and enable my work.”

From time to time, David has warned us, “That way madness lies.” On other occasions, he has supported us with encouragement and meals when we found ourselves “in tall cotton.” Confused by our conflicting duties on a weary day in Wescoe Hall, we have heard David remind us that we may have “other fish to fry.” David’s wisdom has always been a delightful hybrid of Shakespeare’s Warwickshire and his own Alexandria, Louisiana. Thank goodness for that.

David’s sense of humor has often surprised us. He loves The Daily Show and Scrubs. Perhaps only the twinkle in his eyes can explain his fascination with Cupid’s Whirligig or Back to School or Scrubs.

King Lear and The Winter’s Tale come to mind when I think of David’s teaching. Embodying the playwright’s deepest hopes and fears, these capacious plays have the temerity to confront great loss with honesty and wit, daffodils and redemption. David’s courses at The University of Kansas have done no less.

Bud Hirsch, back in the day, used to lean forward and nod toward his neighbor’s office. He would say, “You’re working with Bergeron. You’ll be fine.” And Bud was always right.

David has retired because he has other fish to fry. He will go on reading, writing, and publishing. If we keep him close, we’ll all be fine.

■ Daryl Palmer (Ph.D. 1990)

If you live locally or will be in Lawrence for Homecoming, please visit the English Department table on Wescoe Beach on Friday, October 22 between 11:30 am and 2:00 pm. We also welcome alumni to come to the English offices (3001 Wescoe) that day between 3:00 and 5:00 pm to enjoy some light refreshments and share your memories of the English Department on 2-minute video shoots for YouTube. Please send a message to <english@ku.edu> (subject line: Homecoming) if you know you’ll be coming.

SAGE News

In 2009-2010, SAGE continued a focus on environmental responsibility and sustainability in the English Department. SAGE members were involved in collecting aluminum cans and glass bottles at the end of a football game at KU’s Memorial Stadium; later in the semester, SAGE’s Sustainability Committee held a workshop for students and faculty on “Going Paperless,” focusing on both posting assignments and grading all student work electronically -- showing that it is possible to have a completely green classroom after all!

SAGE renewed its commitment to helping our department recruit the best faculty members and graduate students out there. SAGE helped host five open house meet-and-greets for job candidates in Rhetoric and Composition and in Playwriting, allowing our graduate students the opportunity to meet some outstanding applicants. SAGEs once more put on their meet-and-greet hats, metaphorically speaking, when nine potential graduate students came for a visit.

SAGE’s fundraising efforts were both varied and successful this past year. At the end of the Fall 2009 semester, SAGE held its first silent auction at the Department Holiday Party. This event allowed SAGE to showcase the diverse talents of our graduate students: from delicious baked goods to artsy decoupage crafts, and from professional photography to one-of-a-kind commissioned paintings, our SAGE members showcased their best work! Once the Spring 2010 semester was well underway, our bi-annual book sale took place on the steps of Wescoe, bringing in avid readers in search of good books, as well as avid participants for our open mic readathon, which allowed many to share their favorite poems or short pieces of literature.

SAGE’s successful fundraising this year enabled us to offer larger travel awards to three SAGE members who had exhausted grad school and English Department travel funding opportunities. In addition, SAGE sponsored two Academics Anonymous sessions and two professionalization sessions – some of which focused on helping prepare our graduates for the job market in and outside academia.

■ Ann Martinez
Alumni News

Shirley Cundiff Haines and Jordan L. Haines Faculty Research Fellowships in English

Shirley Cundiff Haines earned her B.A. in English in 1948. In 2009, following her death at 82, a bequest that she established along with her husband, Jordan L. Haines (d. 2006), took effect, making possible the Shirley Cundiff Haines and Jordan L. Haines Faculty Research Fellowships in the KU English Department. Cundiff Haines was an avid supporter of KU, especially of the Study Abroad program, where funds that she and her husband donated have been helping English and other humanities students gain international experience for the last decade. Jordan L. Haines, a prominent Wichita banker, served as Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents and as an executive committee member of the KU Endowment Association. He directed the highly successful capital fund campaign of 1987-1992. Terms of the Haines bequest specified that interest from the endowed fund should be used to “support faculty members.” In early 2010, the English Advisory Committee agreed to establish two annual awards of approximately $4,000 each to fund “research in preparation for an upcoming promotion. Types of expenditures that might be covered include travel, a research assistant, or other forms of research support.” The first fellowships were awarded to Frank Farmer and Iris Fischer.

1950s

Rev. Patricia (Pasha) Hafer Buck (MA 1958) shares volunteer chaplaincy duties with a colleague at a Wesley Life Community, The Village, in Indiana, IA. She teaches classes on prayer and leads retreats at her studio where she also indulges her love of spinning/weaving fleece from her own sheep and playing with clay.

Bill Sollner (MA 1954), although saddened to learn of the passing of his MA thesis advisor, Professor Carroll Edwards, continues his Therapy through Puppets endeavors in the area of Pittsburg, Kansas. He believes the puppets will outlast him, so he is making arrangements for their incarceration at an appropriate venue sometime in the future. Meanwhile, his troupe forges on with fund-raising performances for worthy causes, the latest an effort to “save” Pittsburg’s old Colonial Fox theater from the wrecking ball. Interested parties may view his troupe by googling “Pied Piper Puppets.” Each is one-of-a-kind, and all are from his workshop.

1960s

Suzann Welty Barr (MA 1967) continues to teach in the Professional and Technical Writing undergraduate and graduate programs at University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She also serves as academic advisor to departmental majors. Practicing for eventual retirement, Suzann has taken the summer off (first time in 20 years). She and husband John plan to attend the British Open Championship at St. Andrews, Scotland, in July. At swbarr@ualr.edu, Suzann would love to hear from former KU friends.

Robert Day (MA 1966) published a number of short stories and literary non-fiction in New Letters, The North Dakota Quarterly, Summer Set Review and World Literature Today among other magazines and journals. Forthcoming fiction and memoir will be published in The American Scholar and New Letters. The Committee to Save the World: Literary Non Fiction was published by Western Press in 2009 and includes many of the pieces he wrote for the Washington Post Magazine, Smithsonian, and the Prairie Writers Circle. We Should Have Come By Water (poems) was published in 2009 by Mammoth Press. Dear Reader, Make Their Presence Wherever You Go (a chapbook tribute to KU professors Ed Ruhe, Carroll Edwards, and Edgar Wolfe) will be available later this year.

B.H. Fairchild’s (MA1967) sixth book of poems, Usher, appeared from W.W. Norton in 2009 and was named by The Los Angeles Times as one of the top 25 books in poetry and fiction for that year. Poems from Usher received a Pushcart Prize and inclusion in The Best American Poetry, 2010. Fairchild was one of several poets selected to represent Los Angeles as the guest city at the Guadalajara International Book Festival in December. He also recently read in Minneapolis, where the audience included many fans of the late, great Bill Holm, a beloved and much-honored Minnesota poet and prose writer who was a grad student in English with Fairchild at KU.

James Hoggard (MA 1965) had two books published last year: Triangles of Light: The Edward Hopper Poems (Wings Press) and Ashes In Love (Host Publications), translations of poems by Oscar Hahn (b. 1938, Chile). Based on paintings and etchings by Hopper, the poems in Triangles of Light are told in Hopper’s own contrarian voice. Hoggard is the Perkins-Prothro Distinguished Professor of English at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX.

Mary Duhamel Kramer (PhD 1969) recently retired after teaching for 40 years at UMASS. During that time, she was heavily involved in the Honors Program and in Outreach programs for gifted & talented high school students. She did freelance writing for local and national newspapers and magazines, including a regular book review column and assessment of materials for ETS.

B. Eugene McCarthy’s (PhD 1966) essay, “Reading Blake: A Case for Memorization,” is being published in the bilingual, word/image journal Interfaces. Retirement continues well.

1970s

Thomas Fox Averill (BA, 1971, MA 1974) donated a part of his Kansas books to Mabee Library at Washburn University, creating the Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Studies Collection. He also helped to endow a fund through the Washburn Endowment Association, Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Studies Collection Support Fund, to make

Help Create Opportunities

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 LaRisa Lochner, Development Officer, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kansas University Endowment Association, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, KS 66044-0928.
James Bogan (PhD 1979) continues to knock the corners off engineers at the Missouri University of Science & Technology. This year’s pedagogical peregrinations included a trip to Japan and China, precipitated by the birth on the 4th of July of grandson Huckleberry James Bogan on Oklahoma. A grand reunion with classmate Eiki Senaha, now President of Meio University, brought back memories of Max Sutton’s Romantic Poets class and visions of butterflies at Potter Lake. Then there was a lecture on Blake’s Jerusalem at the Beijing Institute of Foreign Studies and a screening of Bazzilology at Hebe University of Science & Technology, all under the stewardship of Blake scholar Will Wang Weiben, a protégé of Beth Schultz. He gained 7 pounds.

After nearly 30 years spent curating and administering English and American literary manuscripts at several of the country’s foremost research libraries, Lisa Browar (MA 1976) never imagined she would be leading a science library. But as president of Kansas City’s Linda Hall Library for Science, Engineering and Technology, she is doing just that and having a wonderful time helping to increase the degree of science literacy among the general population. The Linda Hall Library’s collections date from the mid-fifteenth century to the present and reflect the continuing increase in knowledge about the physical world and the cosmos through the centuries. Lisa invites all of her humanities colleagues to get interested in science by visiting the Linda Hall Library (www.lindahall.org) online or in person.

Marsha Dutton (BA, English, French, and Philosophy, 1964; MAT, 1974, English) is a Professor of English at Ohio University, specializing in medieval literature and courses in the history of the English language. She is currently the department’s Director of Graduate Studies and will become department chair in July. She has a daughter teaching high school math in Virginia and a son who is an attorney and legal recruiter in the Czech Republic. Currently either two or three of her former students are working toward their PhDs in the KU English department.

Scott Gyllenborg (BA 1979, JD 1988) is the managing partner of Gyllenborg & Dunn, P.A., a criminal defense law firm in Olathe, Kansas. He, his wife Christina Dunn (BS Business 1991, JD 1994), and their four children ages nine, seven, seven, and four, live in Leawood, Kansas. Scott is the past president of the 1,500-member Johnson County Bar Association, vice-chairman of the association’s Criminal Law Bench/Bar Committee, and the editor of The BarLetter, the association’s membership publication. A former assistant district attorney in Johnson County, Scott is the prosecuting attorney for the city of Mission Hills, Kansas. Scott credits the enormous amounts of writing, reading, and interpreting of English required of English majors with making the practice of law less stressful than it is for engineering majors. (Scott enrolled as a freshman in the Aerospace Engineering program.) PS: I still miss my classes with Professor James Carothers, especially the one I remember as “Baseball in American Literature.”

Jack T. Lundy (MA 1970, PhD1978) “Greetings from Burlington, Kentucky! Retirement has become even more enjoyable with trips to the Atlantic states and continued involvement in church, civic and Rotary. I was appointed to the Forestry Board this year which is as political as I wish to become. My involvement in Rotary has been exciting. We hosted a Korean team in Northern Kentucky and I have taken on the responsibility of Youth Exchange for our district. Hopefully, we will be sending and receiving Rotarians and youth from and to all parts of the world. We hope to spend some time in Ireland next spring if the volcano cooperates. Rock chalk!”

Patricia Cleary Miller (PhD 1979), professor of English at Rockhurst University, Kansas City’s Jesuit University, continues in her second three-year term as chair of the Humanities Division (English, Modern Languages, History, and Communication & Fine Arts), and in her twenty-third year as editor-in-chief of the Rockhurst Review. In June she joined other Harvard University alums for a walking tour of “Literary Ireland.”

After teaching in both English and Broadcast Communications at Garden City Community College and Cloud County Community College (and serving as Department Chair or co-chair the majority of the years after his KU sabbatical in 1994-95), David Norlin (MA 1970) took early retirement in 2005. He moved to Salina, KS, and has been an active participant in Salina’s community life since. He ran for the KS House of Representatives in 2008 and served as chair of Community Access Television, in addition to writing occasional columns (on media and other matters) for The Salina Journal and other area newspapers. He is presently Chair of the Human Relations Commission and President of the Universalist Universalist Fellowship. He is married to Janice Norlin, an attorney for Marietta, Kellogg, and Price. When possible, he stops in Lawrence for a Free State beer, coffee at La Prima Tazza, or breakfast/lunch at Milton’s. The way to a man’s nostalgia is through his stomach. Especially when the old Glass Onion is now a hotel space.

Paul W. Nisly (PhD 1974) continues to teach American literature on a part-time basis. However, in preparation for his college’s centennial celebration, his major focus for these past three years has been conducting over 80 interviews, researching in the archives, and writing the college’s history of the past 40 years. The book, titled Shared Faith, Bold Vision, Enduring Promise: The Maturing Years of Messiah College, explores the many changes of the college as it grew from about 700 students in 1970 to almost 3,000 currently. The book was released on March 31 with a celebratory party, with no one rejoicing more than the relieved author!

Since leaving the “gown” for the “town” in 1971, Elizabeth Scalet (BA 1970, MA 1971) has had dual careers, one as a professional musician and one as a technical writer/editor. She retired from her “day job” in 2004 due to MS but she has continued writing songs. She performs infrequently. Currently she is involved in a CD of songs written by Scalet and frequent collaborator former KU English major Kathryn (Buehler) Lorenzen. It is scheduled for release later this year. She is enjoying getting to know the koi, frogs, and dragonflies who inhabit her backyard water garden.

1980s

Clare Cross (MA 1988) achieved her fifteen minutes of fame this year as coauthor of the tasteless online parody Goodnight Keith Moon (GoodnightKeithMoon.com), which became something of an internet sensation, garnering mentions on numerous sites, including The Huffington Post, as well a favorable review on The New Yorker book blog, which called it “the most inappropriate bed time story ever.” Two self-published editions have sold out and the YouTube version has received nearly 26,000 hits, but she and partner Bruce Worden are still seeking a traditional publisher (so if you know someone). Clare was amused when an underground comics publisher, well known for taking chances in the 60s, expressed interest, then backed out in fear of a lawsuit from the Keith Moon estate. This is how she found out that the 60s are truly over.

1990s

Brad S. Born (PhD 1993) continues to serve as the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bethel College, a liberal arts college in North Newton, Kansas. He still teaches one literature course per year, usually in the College’s distinctive core general education sequence. In January 2011 he will teach a Literature of War course in the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies program; in January 2012 he will likely lead a theatre travel course to London with a cross-cultural learning focus. As part of his administrative professional
development, Brad attended a week-long seminar this July in Annapolis, Maryland on the topic of “Administrative Wisdom for Chief Academic Officers: Classic and Contemporary Readings on Leadership and Responsibility,” co-sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges and the American Academic Leadership Institute. In October he will present a paper at the University of Winnipeg titled “When the Bruised Reed Breaks: The Art of Consolation in Four Monennote Women’s Writing about Familial Mental Illness.”

Virginia (Ginger) Brackett (PhD1998) continues teaching at Park University, Parkville, MO, as an associate professor serving as chairperson of the English and Modern Languages department. She also directs the Honors Program and the Missouri Arts Council grant-supported Ethnic Voices Poetry Series. Brackett was named the University’s 2010 Distinguished Humanities faculty member and serves on the board of the Great Plains Honors Council. She has published several literary encyclopedia entries this year and is presently under contract to Facts on File writing a study companion for Mary Shelley. She also serves as a reviewer during the development and pilot phase for the new initiative CES4Health, info <https://owa.park.edu/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://CES4Health.info> that offers community-engaged scholars the opportunity to share scholarly products in forms other than journal manuscripts. Ginger lives in Kansas City with her husband Edmund who works as Director of Sponsored Programs for Park. They are expecting their third granddaughter in July 2010.

Joanna Penn Cooper (BA 1993, MA 1997) received a PhD in English from Temple University in 2005, focusing on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American fiction, and received an MFA in poetry writing from New England College in 2009. Joanna’s scholarly and creative work has appeared or is forthcoming in a number of journals, including MELUS, Poetry International, Opium, Pleiades, el ima, and Ping Pong. Her second chapbook of poetry and short prose pieces, Mesmer, was published in April 2010 by Dancing Girl Press, a feminist press based in Chicago. Joanna’s full-length poetry collection, How We Were Strangers, was a final finalist for the Beatrice Hawley Award from Alice James Books, and the book is currently under consideration by publishers. A recipient of the Gerald Stern and Joel Oppenheimer Scholarships in Poetry at New England College, Joanna was also in residence at the Elizabeth Bishop House in Great Village, Nova Scotia in August 2009. Currently a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Fordham University, Joanna lives in New York City.

Stan Galloway’s (PhD 1993) first book of literary criticism, The Teenage Tarzan: A Literary Analysis of Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Jungle Tales of Tarzan, was released in January. The foreword was written by James Gunn. Stan has been teaching at Bridgewater College in Virginia since leaving KU.

Allan T. Grohe Jr. (MA 1996) is the Information Architect for Technical Documentation at Juniper Networks, in the Document Engineering team. Allan manages the information architecture and user experience for over 950,000 books and topics in .pdf, .html, .xml, and printed formats. Allan and his wife Heather have two sons—Ethan (6 years old, graduates from kindergarten in June) and Henry (2 years old, thinks he’s already President of the World). They live in Wichita, KS. In his spare time, Allan still writes poetry and publishes role-playing games.

Chris Haven (MA 1993) is Associate Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University. This year he has an essay in Reed; stories in Flatman-crooked, Hunger Mountain, and New Orleans Review; and poems in Memorious, Puerto del Sol, Fourteen Hills, Sentence, Controlled Burn, Wisconsin Review, The Los Angeles Review, and The Normal School. His first novel, The Disappearance of Hope Trimble, was a semifinalist in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.

Brian K. Herrin (MA 1993) obtained his MBA from Rutgers University (Executive MBA program) in May, 2010. He currently works as Director of Finance for Brooklyn Academy of Music, a major performing arts center that presents acts from around the world. Previously, he held similar, finance-related positions at an education-focused software company called Wimba. He has lived in and around New York City since 1996. Despite this apparent move away from the liberal arts, he still regularly reads good literature (or at least works that came with good recommendations.) Moreover, he credits the graduate program at KU with teaching him how to teach himself, a skill that continues to pay dividends decades after graduation. bkherrin@gmail.com

Jeanette Lugo (MA 1996) is a lecturer at Valdosta State University.

Jane Wood (PhD 1999) is currently the Interim Dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Park University. Wood joined Park University as an Associate Professor of English and Chair of the English Department in the fall of 2006. Prior to joining Park University, Wood was the Director of the UMKC Women’s Center and a lecturer in the UMKC English Department (2002—2006). From 1997—2002, Wood served as an associate professor and chair of the Masters in Liberal Arts program at Baker University, where she was elected by students as an outstanding faculty member. She has published a collection of autobiographical essays with co-author Rev. Sue Dolquist titled, What Eve Didn’t Tell Us (2002). Wood is a past president of the Board of Directors of the Unicorn Theatre and currently serves as Co-Chair of the Governance Committee for The Writers Place. She has recently published The Theme of Peace and War in Virginia Woolf’s War Writings from Mellen Press.

2000s

Sarah Arbuthnot (MA 2007) works as the Curriculum Specialist for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in Lawrence where she facilitates and develops continuing education for a national membership. She continued her work with the Project on the History of Black Writing as grant writer and coordinator for the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded institute for secondary teachers, “Making the (Richard) Wright Connection: Reading Native Son, Black Boy and Uncle Tom’s Children,” held at KU July 11-24, 2010. Sarah is also busy planning a wedding to be held January 1, 2011.

Troy J. Bassett (MA 1997, PhD 2002) received the Fredson Bowers Award from the Bibliographical Society (U.K.) and a summer stipend from the N.E.H. for his project At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837-1901. The former will help fund a research trip to the British Library. His article, “Living on the Margins: George Bentley and the Economics of the Three-volume Novel, 1865-1870,” will appear in the next volume of Book History. He is currently teaching Victorian and Native American literature as an assistant professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

John Bruni (PhD 2003), published articles on Henry Adams and thermodynamics.

Amy Cummins (PhD 2004) was awarded tenure and promotion at Fort Hays State University. She
then relocated to Edinburg, Texas, to join the Department of English at Texas Pan American, where her husband, Shawn Thomson (PhD 2006) works. Shawn’s book *The Fortress of American Solitude: Robinson Crusoe and Antebellum Culture* was published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in 2009. Any KU English grads driving through south Texas are invited to visit Shawn and Amy.

Stephen Evans (PhD 2000) reports another rewarding year. In addition to teaching eight on-campus classes (plus several students in Independent Study and the Honors Essay), as well as the online Foundations of Technical Writing course for KU Continuing Education, Steve also mentored Laurie Lewis (English 203 and 495), winner of the $1,000 undergraduate Chancellor’s Writing Prize, and authored the new, first-ever online Shakespeare course for KUCE. In his spare time, Steve managed to place a major article on Sherman Alexie and a book review, both in press at this time.

Tracy Floreani (PhD 2000) accepted a position as Chair of the English Department at Oklahoma City University. Previous to this appointment she taught at Baker University for ten years, during which time she received four teaching awards.

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Mr. Robert L. Zimmerman
Micah P. Hawkinson (MA 2007) lives in Topeka, KS with his wife, Magen. Their first child, Myrick Leonard Hawkinson, was born on March 19, 2010. In mid-2007, Micah obtained a respectable job at a life insurance company. He spends most of his time trying to soothe policyholders who are infuriated because “the girl” in the interactive voice response system does not understand their policy numbers. He has long since stopped trying to explain that “the girl” is, in fact, a computer playing prerecorded voice prompts. Micah resides in a desirable neighborhood and associates with a good class of people. He has no known drug addictions and does not use intoxicants to excess. He does not have any dangerous hobbies and does little to no commercial flying. He has been taking steps to reduce his cholesterol and is considered a very desirable insurable risk.

Kristin K. Knight (MA 2000), after years of dabbling in editing, tutoring, and teaching as time allowed, currently works as a praeceptor, writing coach, and grader for the Classical Liberal Arts Academy, a Catholic, classical distance learning academy, and the CLAA’s Schola Scriptorum (Writers’ School). She is able to work for the CLAA while raising and homeschooling her own seven children (ages newborn to 9) full-time with her husband, Jason, in Leawood, KS.

After four years as assistant professor at Xavier University and two years as visiting assistant professor at K-State, Kara Northway (Ph.D. 2004) has just become assistant professor at K-State. She is happy to be back in Kansas and finally living and working in the same town as her husband.

Karen Ohnesorge (PhD 2005) attained tenure and was appointed Dean of Instruction and Director of the Adawe LifePlan Center for Ottawa University in June 2009. She had taught at OU from 1986 to 1992; she returned there as instructor of English in 2003, and was promoted to assistant professor in 2005. In the meantime, she has also published one article in American Indian Quarterly (2008: “Uneasy Terrain: Image, Text, Landscape, and Contemporary Indigenous Artists in the United States”), and another in a Palgrave MacMillan anthology edited by Tony Bolden, Funk and Beyond (2008: “Cane Fields, Blues Text-ure: An Improvisational Meditation on Jean Toomer’s Cane and Jean-Michel Basquiat’s Undiscovered Genius of the Mississippi Delta”).


Simone Sessolo (MA 2006) recently entered PhD candidacy in the Comparative Literature Program at the University of Texas at Austin. His dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Katherine Arens, deals with an emerging form of contemporary genre fiction (mystery): texts that first engage with the conventions of genre fiction familiar to its readers, and then transcend the genre’s conventions. After teaching for years in the French and Italian Department, Simone will teach in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing for the academic year 2010/11.

Doug Steward (PhD 2000) is associate director of Programs and the Association of Departments of English at the Modern Language Association in New York City.

Shelley Stonebrook (MA 2009) began working as an assistant editor at Mother Earth News Magazine in Topeka, Kansas, in December of 2009. While she misses teaching, her new job is a perfect fit. She not only gets to read, write, edit, think and discuss all day alongside a great team, but she also gets to garden on her lunch break. Can’t beat that!

Kristin Van Tassel (PhD 2003) was granted tenure at Bethany College (in Lindsborg, KS) in February 2010, where she teaches writing and American literature.

Carey R. Voeller (PhD 2008) is currently Assistant Professor of English at Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC. At Wofford, he teaches Early American and Nineteenth-Century American literature. In addition to teaching, Voeller is currently revising his dissertation for publication. He particularly enjoys the greasy food in the South. In December 2009, his wife, Debbie, gave birth to their first child, a son named Graysen Eugene. The family currently lives in Moore, SC.