Distinguished Professor Boyd Heads to Hollywood

Distinguished Professor Melba Boyd, Chair of the Department of Africana Studies, has been holding the winter and spring, with her most recent book—Roses and Revolutions: The Selected Writings of Dudley Randall, published by Wayne State University Press—up for several national awards, in addition to being named a 2010 Notable Book by the Library of Michigan. Boyd edited this career-spanning collection of Randall’s poems and short stories, most of which could only be found previously in collections that were out-of-print. The critical reaction to having so much of Randall’s work in one volume has been overwhelmingly positive, so much so that Boyd—the author of the biography Wrestling with the Muse: Dudley Randall and the Broadside Press, as well as a biography of Frances Harper and seven collections of poetry—spent a portion of the past semester being feted for the book in awards ceremonies on both coasts.

First up, in February, was the NAACP Image Award ceremony in Los Angeles, where Roses and Revolutions was a finalist in the poetry category. “The NAACP Image Awards is a Hollywood event,” Boyd says, noting that the venue, the Shrine Auditorium, used to be the site for the Academy Awards. The event was broadcast on Fox, though the awards for books were not televised, having been held before the broadcast. Boyd describes the event, and the lunch at the Beverly Hills Hotel that preceded it, as “surreal.” Seeing a star of television or film up-close can be disorienting, Boyd says, one thinks one “knows” that person, even though he or she is a total stranger. Among the actors Boyd met and spoke with were Idris Elba, from the HBO Series The Wire, and Eric La Salle, formerly of ER. “The movie stars were excited to meet the writers,” Boyd says. “Without us, they don’t have stories.” She was also introduced to Julian Bond, Chairman of the National Board of the NAACP at the time of the ceremony. Bond “congratulated me on the book,” Boyd says, “and immediately began to talk about Dudley Randall’s poem, ‘Booker T. and W. E. B.’ He said, ‘I remember this poem well.’ That very poem graces the cover of Roses and Revolutions.

The NAACP nomination was an honor not only for Boyd but also for the Wayne State University Press, which published Roses and Revolutions as part of its African American Life Series. “We are just thrilled that Melba Boyd’s Roses and Revolutions has been selected as a finalist,” Press Director Jane Hoehner said at the time of the NAACP nomination, “and [that] it is being celebrated by an organization with a rich tradition of showcasing the literary impact of the history of African Americans.”

Both Boyd and the WSU Press were further celebrated in May, when Boyd traveled to New York City for the Independent Publisher Book Awards, where Roses and Revolutions won a gold medal in the poetry category. The day after that ceremony, Boyd attended another ceremony, this one at the Javits Center in New York, where Roses and Revolutions was nominated for the ForeWord Book of the Year in the anthologies category.

Though Boyd says that it was “invigorating” to talk with so many prominent writers, actors, and scholars at these various awards presentations, her most affecting interaction was with a young poet, R. Dewayne Betts, with whom she spoke after the NAACP Image Awards. Boyd says that Betts said to her, “I really wanted your book [Roses] and [Revolutions] to win, because when I was in prison, someone gave me a copy of Randall’s book The Black Poets, and it changed my life.” “Thank you,” Boyd says she replied. “That was what Dudley Randall was about, poetry changing lives.”

So much of Boyd’s work over the last several years has been focused on Dudley Randall and Detroit’s African American literary history that she was particularly pleased, on May 9th, when the Women’s Committee at the Charles H. Wright Museum for African American History honored her for her contributions to education. “What felt special about the Wright Museum honor,” Boyd says, “was being honored, at home, by people I work with all the time, and by an institution I am deeply committed to and proud of, one that is a special part of Detroit history and culture.” She notes that “Dudley Randall was a colleague of Dr. Charles Wright,” and that “Randall’s name appears in bronze in the museum’s genealogy ring in the floor of the museum’s rotunda.”
Urban Poet—Liebler

His past winter, M.L. Liebler of the Department of English was a recipient of a 2010 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award. A popular Senior Lecturer and a prominent poet, Liebler says that he learned of the award as he was preparing for class. He got an e-mail from Elliot Figman, a friend at Poets & Writers, who said he had good news. Figman asked Liebler to call him. Liebler assumed the good news was Figman’s rather than his own.

“When I called, he told me,” Liebler says, “and I was truly stunned.” Liebler then taught his class as usual. “After class,” he says, “I looked up the award online and saw that it had been won by writers like Russell Banks, A.M. Homes, Stanley Kunitz, Bob Holman, Edward Albee, Judy Blume, Mary Higgins Clark, Stephen King, Barbara Kingsolver, Wally Lamb, Walter Mosley, Susan Sontag, and Amy Tan. Then I was in shock.” This year, his co-awardees were the memoirist Maxine Hong Kingston and the novelist Junot Díaz.

As its name suggests, the Writers for Writers Award is given to established writers who generously support their fellow writers. Though this description certainly fits Liebler, “I didn’t think to look at what I was doing in this way,” he says. “As a working-class person, I was just doing my job.”

Just doing his job has brought Liebler plenty of notice locally, nationally, and internationally. The website “CollegeStats.org” recently listed the “25 Most Famous College Professors Teaching Today,” a list that included Maya Angelou, Jimmy Carter, Noam Chomsky, Spike Lee, and Al Gore. Liebler ranked 16th, six places ahead of Salman Rushdie, and was the only professor from Michigan to make the list.

When asked how he maintains a balance between his teaching at Wayne State and his own writing—he is the author of thirteen books—Liebler says, “My teaching and creative writing are one big continuum for me. I see my life, my passions, and my work as totally entwined. However, if I have to rank them, or choose one, teaching at WSU over the past 31 years has been my true love and passion—but the writing, somehow, connects to all of that, too.”

This fall, Working Words: Punching the Clock and Kicking Out the Jams, an anthology of working-class and labor literature that Liebler edited, will be published by Coffee House Press. “This book comes directly from my experiences teaching this type of literature in my WSU classes,” Liebler says. “Instead of Xeroxing tons of poems, stories, and essays every term, I asked my many friends and contacts in the literary world if they would contribute, grands, to such a project. I did, and they responded.” The book contains work by Bob Dylan, Philip Levine, Amiri Baraka, Diane diPrima, Edward Hirsch, Jack White, Michael Moore, Eminem, and Woody Guthrie, among others.

At the ceremony in New York where Liebler accepted his Writers for Writers Award, he spoke of his grandfather, who’d worked on the line at Dodge Main, and who was one of the family members who instilled in Liebler his working-class outlook. Just as he has managed to make his teaching and his writing continuous with one another, Liebler has combined poetry—sometimes considered a rarefied pursuit—with a lunch-pal approach that is pure Detroit in Liebler’s view of things, his efforts on behalf of other poets and writers are akin to those of an experienced autoworker, helping the next guy or gal down the line.

Urban Poet—Levine

By Rebecca Jones

Philip Levine, CLAS ‘50, M.CLAS ‘55, Honorary ’93, remembers standing in a long line. It was 1946, and he was waiting his turn to sign up for classes at Wayne University.

When he made it to the front, Levine didn’t know what to do.

What do you want to be? the admissions counselor asked.

A college graduate, he told him. With “amazing tact,” the counselor helped him enroll. Levine would take classes to see what interested him (though he had quickly ruled out engineering). He would go on to become a great American poet, winning several accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize for his 1994 book The Simple Truth and the National Book Award in 1991 for What Work Is.

“I hadn’t really considered college,” Levine says. He figured he would enter the service like his brother. But when WWII ended just as Levine was graduating from Central High School, a counselor suggested he apply at Wayne.

“I still think that Wayne University was the perfect university for me. It was actually perfect,” Levine says, adding words of praise for his instructors. “I will never forget their kindness.”

In the next few years, Levine went on to discover the Miles Poetry Room in Old Main, where professors and fellow students taught and encouraged him.

“It was just marvelous. Suddenly I belonged to a community of poets,” he says. “I thought I was the only person in the world writing poetry.” Levine declared himself an English major. He graduated in 1950 and earned a master’s degree in 1955.

Levine left Detroit for good at age 26, but he never lost touch with the city or the working class. Levine found fellowships and teaching jobs, eventually settling at California State University, Fresno, where he taught in the English department for many years before retiring last autumn at the age of 80.

Born in 1928, Levine was one of three sons of Russian-Jewish immigrants. Beginning at age 14—about the same time he started writing poetry—Levine began working at industrial jobs, making car parts and plumbing equipment. The work didn’t suit him. He doesn’t think it suits anyone.

“Making things is marvelous,” he says, but adds, “working on a factory floor, you don’t get the sense that you’re making anything. A piece of metal would come at you and you’d drill a hole in it and pass it down the line.”

It wasn’t for nothing.

“I met marvelous people doing industrial work. People with character, humor and hope,” Levine says. The jobs and these people became the theme for the majority of his poems.

In a collection of essays, “On the Poetry of Philip Levine,” former Wayne State English professor and fellow poet Edward Hirsh calls Levine “a poet of the nightshift ... a late ironic Whitman of our industrial heartland.”

Levine’s poems reference beer gardens in Detroit. Chevrolet Gear & Axel. Wyandotte. Ecorse. The Packard plant. Time clocks. Grand River Avenue. He wrote about visiting Belle Isle with a friend on a warm spring night and running into the Detroit River “to baptize ourselves in the brine of car parts, dead fish, stolen bicycles and melted snow.” His poetry speaks to the autoworkers, machinists, plumbers and union members, whom he considers his ideal readers. Wayne State professor M.L. Liebler says although Levine has become a legend in the poetry world, he never lost the grit he grew up with.

“Detroit is still a prominent theme even in poems that are being written today. They’re still right to the heart, the working-class poems about working class people,” Liebler says. “He’s still Phil from Detroit.”
Adnan Hussain Commencement Speech

On May 6th, Adnan Hussain spoke at the CLAS commencement for the majors in the sciences. Adnan received his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences Honors with a Chemistry minor and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics with a University Honors co-major.

A generation ago, my parents emigrated from Bangladesh, a country with rampant poverty and overpopulation, to America, a land where they believed anything was possible. They came here for opportunities for themselves and a better life for the family they would one day start. My father and uncle’s generation was the first in their family to attend high school, let alone an American University. Coming to America without a firm grasp of the English language and an even weaker educational background than his American peers, my father faced an incredible challenge. For this reason, I look to my father as an example of how to attain success and as a source of advice. When talking to him and others who immigrated to this country, I realized one thing. They achieved success not by sitting back and holding on to the past, but by constant improvement through self-reinvention.

In fact, success often comes from reinvention. America reinvented government by having a system administered by the people for the people. Here in Detroit, Henry Ford reinvented the assembly of the automobile and changed the lives of the working class. This reinvention has not only happened on a national scale, but also locally with Wayne State students. Groups of students have realized the suffering that is happening around the world and decided to go to Belize to alleviate healthcare disparities. Countless numbers of students have volunteered their time to better neighborhoods in need. And this reinvention has happened within all of us, with constant tenacity in the classroom necessary to earn our degrees.

The fortunes of Michigan have shown us what happens when reinvention stalls. The loss of manufacturing jobs highlights that we must not be only hard-working, but also innovative and efficient. The old status quo will no longer succeed in this globalized world. With the resources Wayne State has provided us, and with the efforts we’ve put in at Wayne State, we now hold the tools to reinvent our lives, our communities, and our country.

Our Wayne State education has brought us to the next stage in life, a stage Dr. Seuss sums up best when he says:

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who’ll decide where you’ll go.”

Urban Affairs Professor in China

The Clarence Hilberry Professor of Urban Affairs in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, George Galster arrived at Wayne State in 1996 from The Urban Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan institute in Washington, D.C., where he was Director of Housing Research. “I have been working for thirty-five years on urban housing issues,” Galster says, “in order to formulate better policies to help neighborhoods prosper and provide equal opportunities for all individuals.” He has studied such issues in a number of settings. Before his appointments at Wayne State and The Urban Institute, Galster spent two decades as a professor at The College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio, where for most of that time he served as Chairperson of Urban Studies, an interdisciplinary program that incorporated coursework from Political Science, Sociology, and Economics. Galster holds a PhD in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His undergraduate degrees are from Wittenberg University and Case Western Reserve University, both in Ohio, where he was born and raised.

Though Galster enjoyed his four years at The Urban Institute, where he conducted a variety of research studies for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, he did not teach there, and his research agenda was set, in part, by the foundations, cities, and states that had contracted with the institute to carry out various research projects. “I was interested in returning to teaching,” Galster says of what precipitated his arrival at Wayne State, “and I wanted more control over my research.” He also wanted to come to Detroit. Despite his Ohio upbringing, Galster’s family has a long history in Detroit, and he viewed his arrival at Wayne State as a sort of homecoming. “I’m the fifth consecutive George Galster in my family to reside in the City of Detroit,” he said. The first George Galster in this series arrived in Detroit from Germany in 1851. In the faculty office of the series’ latest George Galster

Public Housing Policy System, held at Tsinghua University, Beijing, People’s Republic of China. The purposes of the conference were to present the major urban housing challenges faced by the People’s Republic of China and to discuss how various Western nations have confronted similar housing problems. In China, Galster says, the problem is “a raw shortage of housing, which creates a problem of expense”—that is, the housing shortage has pushed home prices beyond the means of millions of rural residents migrating to China’s big cities.

Galster was impressed by how receptive the Chinese officials were to the talks from the international housing experts. “They seem open to ideas from the outside,” Galster says. “They are not at all a closed society in this regard. Of course, it remains to be seen what directions in housing policy they will actually select.”

George Galster
Alumnus G. Michael Loewe’s Legacy of Giving

Reflecting the “student-focused” approach that has characterized his administration, Wayne State University President Dr. Jay Noren announced the launch of the Aim Higher for Students fundraising campaign during his inauguration as 10th president of the university in April 2009. The campaign aims to raise financial assistance to achieve their goals by raising money for scholarships and other educational resources that will enhance student success. As the university of opportunity for students from the city of Detroit, the state of Michigan and countries around the world, our foremost responsibility is to assist and encourage students from all walks of life who want a Wayne State degree. Since the launch of the campaign, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of CLAS have rallied around this effort, donating over $1 Million in newly created scholarships and student resources. We are tremendously thankful to each and every one of the 7,000 donors to this campaign.

In hopes of inspiring even more support toward this effort, we would like to share (in the below article and in the article on the bottom of page 7) how alumnus G. Michael Loewe chose to make a meaningful legacy to assist students in reaching their potential here in CLAS.

Sterne-Lion Recipients Travel the Globe

Each year, at least two students from the History Department who have received Undergraduate Research Awards from the Irvin D. Reid Honors College are selected to also receive the department’s Sterne-Lion Award, made possible through a generous donation from department benefactor G. Michael Loewe. With the money from these two awards, Sterne-Lion recipients have taken or will soon begin taking research trips to Poland, South Dakota, London, Cambridge, Paris, Beijing, Halifax, New York, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Antwerp, and Amsterdam, among other locations.

Below are testimonials from two students, Stephen Al-Hakim and John Tattershall, who received Sterne-Lion Awards in 2009:

Stephen Al-Hakim

The summer and fall of 2009, without a doubt, has been the defining point of my academic career at Wayne State University. Through the Sterne-Lion scholarship and an Undergraduate Research Award, I was able to pursue my own research on the Great Lakes Royal Navy during the American Revolutionary War. The funding allowed visits to Ottawa, Ontario and London, England for two weeks each. While travelling, I scanned various public archives for primary documents; some days I got lucky, some I didn’t.

Overall, however, my trips produced a number of useful sources, which turned into a twenty-page paper.

John Tattershall

My introduction to the History Department’s Sterne-Lion Award came at the Spring Awards Banquet in 2008. I was receiving the Johanneson Endowed Scholarship and an Undergraduate Research Award, so I was able to delve much deeper into the subject of English responses to the American Civil War as part of a more general debate about domestic electoral reform. The funding allowed visits to Ottawa, Ontario and London, England for two weeks each. While travelling, I scanned various public archives for primary documents; some days I got lucky, some I didn’t.

The vast majority of my waking moments in London were spent scanning microfilms in a semi-industrial building on the city’s far north end. This was the most rewarding part of the Sterne-Lion experience. It was an archive teeming with scholars, and at times intimidating. This sink-or-swim environment helped intensify the pace of my research. The feeling is hard to describe, but was certainly palpable. Thus, I vastly exceeded my goals for material collection, and came home with a mountain of newspaper and journal articles from 1860’s England. I allowed this heap of evidence to guide my thesis, and an awareness of a recurring idealization of America as a “Model Republic” emerged. The English press often discussed America and its war as part of a broader national debate about domestic electoral reform.

I did not see Buckingham Palace. I only stumbled through Trafalgar Square by accident, and only ventured into Piccadilly Circus to buy a handbag for my wife. The trip did coincide with the May Bank Holiday, but my time in London spent outside of reading rooms was off the beaten path, to say the least.

Research was my unrelenting focus, and I am truly grateful for the valuable opportunity to conduct research at a world-renowned archive. I was pleased to meet Dr. Loewe, the benefactor of the Sterne-Lion Award, a few months ago, thanking him personally for his generosity. This was the highlight of my undergraduate studies.
By Julie O’Connor

On April 29, informational signage was posted at many sites along the Detroit River to aid anglers in identifying the types of fish that are safe to eat from the river, as well as which to avoid.

Due to increased chemical contamination in the Detroit River, several fish, including catfish and carp, are unsafe to eat, especially for children and women ages 15 to 45.

“The Detroit River is under several fish consumption advisories that impact both human health and economic revenue,” said Donna Kashian, assistant professor of Biological Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at WSU. “Little progress has been made in developing effective strategies to aid anglers in understanding consumption advisories. The new signage is a great first step in promoting the status of fish contaminant levels in the Detroit River, ultimately reducing human health risks.”

Sites for the signage were identified by a large cohort of collaborators, including WSU, the Friends of the Detroit River, the Michigan Department of Community Health, Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, Detroit Recreation Department, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment’s Fisheries Division, Michigan Sea Grant, University of Toledo and Wayne County Public Health Department.

Signage also identifies lakes in the Detroit area where anglers can catch catfish and carp that are less contaminated and safer to eat than those found in the Detroit River. In addition, the signs show how to cut fat from the fillets, which helps remove some of the chemical contamination.

Kashian’s research project, “What are the causes, consequences and correctives of fish contamination in the Detroit River AOC [area of concern] that cause health consumption advisories?” was funded by the Michigan Sea Grant.

Matt Allen Receives National Science Foundation Funding

By Julie O’Connor

A team of Wayne State University researchers recently received a $600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop new ways to study chemical reactions in water and to design and study catalysts for these reactions that yield very specific products that ultimately could be better for the environment. The researchers will focus on testing the influence of anion dissociation and water coordination on catalyst and the formation of a new series of precatalysts modeled after lanthanide-based contrast agents for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

According to the study’s principal investigator, Matthew Allen, Ph.D. of Plymouth, Mich., assistant professor of chemistry in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, lanthanide-catalyzed reactions are poorly understood in water, and this lack of understanding has impeded synthesis of water-tolerant lanthanide-based precatalysts. Because of this, Allen says that new methods for studying reaction mechanisms in aqueous systems are greatly needed. “It takes a lot of energy to make solvents anhydrous (without water), and so the ability to run reactions in water is ultimately better for the environment because it takes less energy,” said Allen. “In addition, less harmful solvent waste is produced when water is used as a solvent, which is ultimately much better for our environment.”

The project will also provide high school students from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds research experiences. This is expected to have a great impact on the propensity of students to pursue careers in science. A communication skills component for formal university and high school science courses will also be integrated into the project that will provide mentoring and formal science courses at the university and high school levels.

“Dr. Allen and his research team may one day offer a more environmentally friendly way of making important molecules like pharmaceuticals,” said Gloria Heppner, associate vice president for research at WSU. “Dr. Allen’s commitment to inspiring young minds with the excitement of science is also seen in the many activities he is involved in on campus and beyond. The programs to be offered through this grant will greatly enhance science education, particularly in Detroit, and hopefully will excite more students to aspire to careers in chemistry and other science-related fields.”

New Signage Educates Anglers

By Julie O’Connor

On April 29, informational signage was posted at many sites along the Detroit River to aid anglers in identifying the types of fish that are safe to eat from the river, as well as which to avoid.

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Kashian’s research project, “What are the causes, consequences and correctives of fish contamination in the Detroit River AOC [area of concern] that cause health consumption advisories?” was funded by the Michigan Sea Grant.
I am proud to say that I have failed to meet any of these goals. My dad used to say I fell off track when I chose Philosophy as my major—which, he constantly reminded me, he was better at than I, despite never taking one course in the subject. I remember him asking how a Philosophy degree would help me become a doctor. After all, Plato wasn’t an M.D., Aristotle couldn’t perform surgery, and Socrates was put to death for being annoying… My father is an engineer, so to him the straight path from point A to B was the one I should have taken. I was proposing taking a detour through the whole alphabet. At the time, I argued that I was doing what interested me. I was doing something fun, something I was good at, and I could still become a doctor if I just took all my prerequisites. But I was unsure of myself, of my decision, and of what I really wanted to do. I was scared, like all students are, that my dad was really right. I majored in Philosophy, not History or Biology. I have gotten good grades, but my dream for a 4.0 GPA died first semester. I still haven’t taken the MCAT, and I still have yet to apply to one medical school. I know what you’re thinking; my dad was right. Well, not necessarily. If he and I have learned anything over the last four years it is this: the straightest path may be the most logical, but then again, logic is overrated.

During the last four years I have jumped at every opportunity to do what was not in my curriculum guide. I spent the summer between my freshman and sophomore year in China teaching English to impoverished children. I volunteered in a research lab studying traumatic brain injury. But, it wasn’t until this last summer when I won a summer internship with the Department of State and chose to be posted in Harare, Zimbabwe that I realized what I wanted to do with my life. The economy in Zimbabwe was so unstable, the inflation rate so high, that someone who walked into a store with enough money to buy a loaf of bread would walk out of the store empty handed because the price had changed while they were shopping. Needless to say, my parents were pretty nervous… But it was in Zimbabwe that I learned, not that I wanted to be a doctor, but WHY I wanted to be a doctor. With the American Ambassador’s wife, I visited a school to donate supplies and was greeted by 200 of the 800,000 children in the country orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The kids were all so happy—grabbing our arms to take pictures with us, thanking us. These children were so young they didn’t even understand the suffering taking place around them. Their innocence protected them, but I felt saddened, knowing that this protection would be short-lived. I knew I wanted to help, and I realized that becoming a doctor and a public health activist was the way I could help repair a broken system. I once read that only 44% of college students graduate with a degree in the major they chose as freshmen. Judging from the looks on the faces of the students and parents in this room, I would have to say that is pretty accurate. Like the good Philosopher I have become—though I hesitate to say I am any better than my dad—I have learned that I really don’t know much of anything. I don’t know how to solve the problems of the children I met in Zimbabwe, but I do know that I want to dedicate my life to finding the answer. And you can’t ask more from a philosophic, university education than that.”

Andrian Marcus Receives National Science Foundation CAREER Award

By Amy Oprean

Increasing the speed and efficiency by which computer programmers manage large amounts of computer code is the goal of a Wayne State researcher and recipient of a National Science Foundation (NSF) Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award.

The NSF CAREER Award is one of the highest honors granted by the NSF to young faculty members in the area of science and engineering and is intended to support their career-development activities. The $400,000 grant was awarded to Andrian Marcus, Ph.D., associate professor of computer science in WSU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and resident of Troy, Mich. Marcus will use the award to develop tools and methodologies that could improve programmers’ ability to understand, navigate and manage large amounts of code while performing maintenance and update tasks.

“We want to develop techniques that will make the maintenance of many types of software systems faster, less expensive and result in higher quality products,” Marcus said. “This could result in speedier improvements to many different kinds of software systems and growth for the software sector of the United States, which is already a $300 million-plus industry.”

The tools and techniques Marcus hopes to develop are increasingly relevant to the needs of today’s software systems, which are larger and more complex.
Distinguished Professor Arthur Marotti Retires

The following remarks were delivered by CLAS Associate Dean Donald Haase at the conference “Why Literary History Still Matters,” held in honor of Distinguished Professor of English Dr. Arthur Marotti, who retired this year after more than four decades at Wayne State:

“I am very happy to be here representing Dean Robert Thomas and to welcome you, on his behalf, to this Academic Conference in Honor of Arthur Marotti.

Now, I am in a room full of literary scholars, and I know that you recognize already in that first sentence the generic conventions of the traditional “Welcoming Remarks.” But please don’t mistake my claim to be “very happy to be here” for mere obedience to the genre. I am actually very happy to be here to take part in celebrating the career of Arthur Marotti. I am especially happy to be here in Dean Thomas’s place because it gives me the opportunity to say publicly what I have always really wanted to say about Arthur.

When I first came to Wayne State University in 1981, one of the names I heard again and again was “Arthur Marotti.” Over the years, as I came to know the man, I recognized in him a model of rigorous scholarship, university citizenship, and first-rate teaching and mentoring.

One of the things—among many—that has especially impressed me about Arthur has been the way he encourages and supports the careers of young scholars. This is not the kind of mentoring that is departmentally “assigned” or becomes an entry on a mentor’s curriculum vitae. It is mentoring that occurs in the course of university life and has helped young scholars across the university. Identifying, supporting, and encouraging young faculty is, for Arthur, simply the right thing to do. I know I have benefited from his encouragement, advice, and mentoring—still do, in fact—and I’ll always be grateful to Arthur for that.

For many years, I had the pleasure of serving with Arthur on the editorial board of Wayne State University Press. In those many editorial board meetings, where we discussed hundreds of book manuscripts, I came to know Arthur as a scholar of deep integrity, who had rigorous standards, impeccable judgment, and an unwavering sense of fairness.

Those are the same exemplary qualities that have made Arthur a valued adviser to administrators, faculty, and students. Now, I’m trying hard not to mythologize Arthur, but I have to confess that in moments of administrative crisis, I sometimes resort to the mantra: What would Arthur do? To quote a colleague of mine, “Arthur Marotti has gravitas.” I don’t know if Arthur was a young radical in 1967 and participated in the demonstration to levitate the Pentagon, but I have the suspicion that, should he ever actually leave Wayne State, the loss of that gravitas would cause the university to levitate at least several inches off the ground. So, I’m glad that Arthur plans to stick around after retiring and will remain a serious presence on campus.

Now, again, you will have noticed my generic meanderings—that I slid from “Welcoming Remarks” into “Laudatio,” and might even, despite my best attempts, have prematurely slid into “Eulogy.” So let me circle back to the beginning by welcoming you once again to this important day of celebration and scholarship, and thereby bring an end to my confusion of traditional genres, which demonstrates why, indeed, literary history still matters.”

Economics Students Shine at FED Challenge

By YoungKey Chung

On November 9, 2009, the Wayne State University Federal Reserve Challenge Team, with the generous support of G. Michael Loewe, competed for the first time at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Competing against 18 other schools from the Midwest such as Northwestern University, University of Chicago, Michigan State University, and Iowa State University, WSU was able to deliver a well-researched presentation to the panel of judges. After months of researching various indicators and analyzing those findings, our team made a decision to keep the Federal Funds rate at a target of .25%. During the question and answer round, our team answered all of the questions to the best of our ability. After completing this competition, we realized our areas of weakness and we have a renewed sense of commitment for the Fed Challenge. With this in mind, we will focus on our next competition in November 2010.
Let us hear from you!

Our alumni and friends are important to us and we look forward to hearing from you. Please let us know what is happening with you.

Name ____________________________
(Please also include your name as it was during your time at WSU, if it has changed.)

Address ____________________________________________________________

City ____________________________ State ______ ZIP ______________

E-mail ________________________________ Graduation Year(s) and Major(s) ______

Describe any career advancement, honors, publications, appointments, activities, etc. __________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

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Feel free to send additional pages if you need more space. Or, even better, respond entirely via e-mail to Bonita Watkins-Gamble at ah2361@wayne.edu.

If responding via hard copy:
Bonita Watkins-Gamble, CLAS Notes, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Wayne State University, Old Main 4841 Cass, Suite 2155 Detroit, MI 48201 FAX: 313.577.9693

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