Dear Friends of the English Department,

I write to report the news of the Wayne State English Department for the past two academic years – 2011-12 and 2012-13. It has been an eventful two years for our students, our faculty, our staff, and our institution. In this issue of the English News, there are articles and pictures for Faculty and Staff News, Undergraduate and Graduate Student News, and Alumnae and Donor News. I hope you enjoy catching up with the English Department at Wayne State.

At Wayne State, we have a new President – W. Roy Wilson, MD, will be the twelfth President of Wayne State University, succeeding President Allan Gilmour. In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, we also have a new Dean – Wayne M. Raskind, PhD (mathematics), arrived at Wayne State at the beginning of the Fall, 2012, term. Two of our own faculty members in the English Department have become Associate Deans at Wayne State. Ken Jackson (Shakespeare and Early Modern drama) has been named Interim Associate Dean in the WSU Graduate School, and Robert Aguirre (Victorian literature and American Studies) has been named Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They join several other English Department faculty members who serve in administrative positions at Wayne State, including Walter Edwards (Director of the Humanities Center), Julie Klein (special faculty liaison in the Office of the Vice President for Research), Geoff Nathan (special faculty liaison in Computing and Information Technology), and Jerry Herron (Dean of the WSU Honors College). The English Department is well-represented in the administrative ranks of Wayne State!

Over the past two years, there has been much news coverage about the state of the humanities in higher education and the value of liberal arts majors like English. We proudly argue in the English Department and at Wayne State that the humanities remain essential in the university, not only so that students receive a well-rounded education but also so they are career-ready upon graduation. Two recent reports make the same argument. In June, the National Academy of Arts and Sciences released a report calling the humanities “the heart of the matter, the keeper of the republic, a source of national memory and civic vigor, cultural understanding and communication, individual fulfillment and the ideals we hold in common.” The humanities ask the central questions, specialized to disciplines such as history, languages, philosophy, and English. In English, we ask our students questions that require critical thinking -- questions about language and literature, texts and contexts, writing and communication, history and culture. Employers want to hire graduates with just this sort of preparation: In April, a report from the Association of American Colleges and Universities reports that 93% of employers say that “a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems” is what they look for in hiring. That’s what we teach every day in the English Department, in every single class.

Please continue to write to us with your news and visit us on campus. It has been my pleasure to meet many alumnae and donors over the past few years, both in person and in letters/emails. Feel free to plan to visit the English Department the next time you are in Detroit. I would love to give you a tour of the English Department and the campus of Wayne State. In the best traditions of the humanities, much has changed, but much remains the same.

Elizabeth Sklar

a publication of the WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
Faculty and Staff News

The English Department faculty as a whole has continued to publish research and scholarship, teach with dedication, and serve the university and community. The English faculty is well-recognized locally at Wayne State and in the community as well as nationally and internationally in the profession, as evidenced by the list of awards for 2011–12 and 2012–13.

English Department Faculty Awards (2011–2013)

Robert Aguirre
• WSU Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship for "Crossroads of Culture: Representing Panama, 1821-1914" (2011-12)

Sarika Chandra
• WSU Career Development Chair (Winter, 2014) for "The Global Food Crisis and the Contemporary American Imagination"
• WSU Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship Award (Summer, 2013) for "New Capital Fictions: Narrating Financialization"

Simone Chess
• 2012 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Award
• Department of English Keal Faculty Fellowship (Winter, 2013), also for ‘Where’s your man’s heart now?’

Jaime Goodrich
• 2012 President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching

Gwen Gorzelsky
• WSU OVPR [Office of the Vice President of Research] Graduate Research Assistant for “Investigation of Transfer in Two Versions of Writing about Writing” (2012-13)

Renee Hoogland
• Department of English Keal Faculty Fellowship (Summer, 2012) for “A Violent Embrace: Art and Aesthetics after Representation”

Chera Kee
• WSU OVPR [Office of the Vice President for Research] (2013-14) for “And the Dead Shall Walk Again”

John Patrick Leary
• University Research Grant (Summer, 2012) for “A Cultural History of Underdevelopment: Latin America in the American Imagination”
• American Antiquarian Society Peterson Fellowship, December, 2011

Richard Marback
• 2012 WSU Humanities Center’s Marilyn Williamson Endowed Distinguished Faculty Fellowship for “The Virtue of Vulnerability in Public Persuasion”

Caroline Maun
• WSU OVPR [Office of the Vice President of Research] Research Enhancement Program for the Arts and Humanities (2012-13), also for “The Complete Poems of Charlotte Wilder”
• Thornton Wilder Fellowship in Wilder Studies, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (2013)

Ljiljana Progovac
• Department of English Keal Faculty Fellowship (Summer, 2013) for “A Program for Evolutionary Syntax”

Martha Ratliff
• WSU Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award for Hmong-Mien language History [Pacific Linguistics/ Australian National University Press, 2011]
• WSU Distinguished Faculty Fellowship (2013-14, 2014-15) for “Lexical Stability as a Diagnostic Tool in Historical Linguistics”

John Reed
• WSU Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award for Dickens’s Hyperrealism (Ohio State University Press, 2010)

Elizabeth Reich
• University Research Grant (Summer, 2012) for “Hollywood’s Invisible Men: Black Soldiers and the Transformation of American Cinema”
Promotions and Hires

One of our number, Jeff Pruchnic (Composition/Rhetoric) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure this past spring. Within moments of his promotion, he was named the Director of Graduate Studies for the next two years. We also have a new Associate Chair in the English Department: Lisa Maruca (18th century British literature) stepped in at the beginning of 2012-13 for a two-year term. Gwen Gorzelsky has been renewed as Director of Composition for the next three years, so the departmental team of administrators is in place for the immediate future. It is good to see departmental leadership being taken up by our Associate Professors!

For the long-term future, the English Department welcomed two new Assistant Professors in 2011-12: both Chera Kee (PhD 2011, University of Southern California) and Elizabeth Reich (PhD 2011, Rutgers University) joined us as new faculty members in the Film Studies Program. Chera’s research focuses on the history of American horror films, particularly zombie movies. I await a zombie walk in the English Department any day now. Elizabeth’s research focuses on the history of African-American cinema, from World War II propaganda films to the “blacksploitation” films of the Civil Rights era (e.g., Shaft). Both Chera and Liz received prestigious awards this year from the WSU Office of the Vice President of Research in support of their scholarly book projects.

In 2012-13, we received a record four tenure-track searches, a major commitment to the importance of the humanities at Wayne State and in the English Department. Joining us as Assistant Professors in Fall, 2013, will be a new medievalist, Hilary Fox (PhD 2012, University of Notre Dame); a new linguist, Robert Henderson (PhD 2012, University of California-Santa Cruz); and a new faculty member in Composition/Rhetoric, Donnie Sackey (PhD 2013, Michigan State University). We will also welcome a new Associate Professor in creative writing: Donovan Hohn (MFA 2007, University of Michigan), author of Moby-Duck: The Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea (Viking, 2011).

Within the Department, the Composition Program also added faculty in 2011-12 and 2012-13. In 2011-12, the English Department welcomed a cohort of five Lecturers to teach freshman composition. Thomas Trimble PhD is a Senior Lecturer who received his degree from our own graduate program, and he was joined by four Lecturers: LaToya Faulk, MA, Michigan State University; Nicole Vary, MA, Eastern Michigan University; and two more ABD (all but dissertation) students from our PhD program, Jared Grogan and Adrienne Jankens. These Lecturers have brought a great deal of energy to our Composition Program. In 2012-13, the English Department searched for another cohort of five Lecturers to teach in our basic writing course, the course that prepares students for freshman composition. Karen Springsteen is a Senior Lecturer (PhD 2008, Michigan Technological University), and she

Continued on page 6
# Student News 2012-2014 Scholarships and Awards

## Scholarships

### Gilbert R. and Patricia K. Davis Endowed Merit Scholarship for part-time undergraduate students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Edward Baranek (5 2014)</td>
<td>Emily Brush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul Einhaus</td>
<td>Shavaughn Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mirinda Fleenary</td>
<td>Stephanie Kastaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominic Guerriero</td>
<td>Janelle Sears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tara Nolan</td>
<td>Courtney Szymbki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dawn Taylor</td>
<td>JayAnn Vipond</td>
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### Albert Feigenson Scholarship for full-time undergraduate and graduate students:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>John Kalogerakos</td>
<td>Robin Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ashley Whitmore</td>
<td>Ryan Cox</td>
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### Professor Arnold Goldsmith Annual Scholarship for full-time undergraduate and graduate students:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Felicia Ghrist</td>
<td>Aaron Pellerin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Thomas R. Jasina Endowed Scholarship in English for full or part-time graduate students:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Erin Bell</td>
<td>Kinyel Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Harris</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Dustin Rose Memorial Scholarship for full-time or part-time at the undergraduate level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Rasha Almulaiki</td>
<td>Ricardo Castaño IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vincent Perrone</td>
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</table>

### Doretta Burke Sheill Endowed Memorial Scholarship for full or part-time junior, senior and graduate students:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Erin Bell</td>
<td>Kinyel Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Kalogerakos</td>
<td>Joseph Harris</td>
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### Stephen H. Tudor Memorial Scholarship in Creative Writing for full or part-time undergraduate and graduate students:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Shelley Wettergren</td>
<td>Christine Bettis</td>
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</table>

### Terrance King Endowed Memorial Fellowship in English for a Ph.D. student based on the quality of the dissertation project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Andrew Winckles</td>
<td>Joan Wedes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Christopher T. Leland Endowed Scholarship in Creative Writing for gifted student writers:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/2013</th>
<th>2013/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Vincent Perrone</td>
<td>Kerin Ogg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE PEARL A. WARN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN ENGLISH for returning full time or part time graduate or undergraduate students

2012/2013  2013/2014
Edward Baranek  Catherine Donaldson
John Kalogerakos  Ny'Ree Williams
Shelley Wettergren

JOSEPH J. AND MARY E. YELDA ENDOWED MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FOR ENGLISH for full-time undergraduate students

2012/2013  2013/2014
Stephen Austin  Stephen Austin
Christine Bettis  Christine Bettis
Nicole Hayden  Devon Holland
Devon Holland  Claire Holton
Eric Lennemann  Kyle McCormick
Molly Gail Shannon

SPECIAL UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS for English and Film Studies majors

ESSAY AWARD (best upper-division paper for the academic year)

2012 James Shuryan for “Modernity at the Owl Creek Bridge”
2013 Devon Holland for “Essentialism and Transgressive Performativity in Rudyard Kipling’s Kim”

DISTINGUISHED GRADUATING SENIOR AWARD (highest g.p.a of English majors not enrolled in an honors program)

2012 James Shuryan  2013 Ricardo Castaño IV

SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

2012  2013
Nicole Hayden  Abiola Akinpelu
Ricardo Castaño IV

WRITING AWARDS
Open to all WSU students

JUDITH SIEGEL PEARSON AWARD (Emphasis on women’s issues)

2012 (Drama) Karen Minard “Ella Baker: If You Don’t Want to Know, Don’t Ask”
2013 (Poetry) First Place: Sophia Rivkin for “Collection: Come to the Edge”
Honorable Mention: Maude Larke for “Collection: Promiscuité”

PHILLIP LAWSON HATCH, JR. MEMORIAL AWARD (Encourages expression and investigation of ethnicities)

2012 First Place (Poetry): Kiren Chaudhry for “Lithograph Ethnocide”
Second Place (Fiction): John Kalogerakos for “The Saturday Night Fishing Club”
2013 First Place: Vincent Perrone for “A Cockroach Poem”

JOHN CLARE AWARD IN POETRY

2012 First Place: Mirinda Fleenary “Great and Terrible Miracles”
Honorable Mention: Alan Harris “Life-stories Collection”
Honorable Mention: Kiren Chaudhry “Group of Poems: 20 Something Detroit”
2013 Vincent Perrone for “Selected Poems: late funeral, etc.”

TOMPKINS AWARDS

DRAMA
2012 First Place: Alexander Schott “Teacher’s Lounge”
Second Place: John Kalogerakos “Swing”
2013 First Place: Vincent Perrone for “Shade”
Second Place: Katelin Maylum for “The Front Lines”

NONFICTION
2012 First Place: Alexander Schott “Memoir of a Water Head Boy”
Second Place: Elizabeth Acosta “ ‘I Play the Man I am’: The Boy Who Could Never Grow Up: Coriolanus and his Battle with Manhood”
2013 First Place: Stefanie Bohde for “Sappho’s Song”
Second Place: Adina Shuttari for “Anorexia as a Weapon of Opposition in Margaret Atwood’s The Edible Woman”
Honorable Mention: Jennifer LoPiccolo for “This is it: A Cheerleading Brief”

FICTION
2012 First Place: Douglas Craig “The Testament of Birdsong”
Second Place: Matthew Polzin “Oobleck: Short Stories”
2013 First Place: Joseph Harris for “The Grace of Lust”
Second Place: Hannah Loesch for “A Secret for Keeping”
Honorable Mention: Edward Sosnoski for “Verbose”

POETRY
2012 First Place: Molly Gail Shannon “Ephemera”
Second Place: Ricardo Castaño IV “Poetry Collection”
2013 First Place: Christine Bettis for “The Root Word of Brick”
Second Place: Jennifer LoPiccolo for “Kaleidoscope”
Promotions and Hires
Continued from page 3

will be joined by two new colleagues with MA degrees from Eastern Michigan University
(Ryan Flaherty, 2009, and Joe Torok, 2013) plus two more PhD students from our own program (Amy Metcalf and Clay Walker). We expect even more energy in the Composition Program when school starts in the fall.

We also added two new staff members to the English Department. In 2011, Susan Rumps came to us from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to become our financial officer, and in 2012, Tia Finney came to us from the Medical School to become our Academic Services Officer for Scheduling and Staffing.

Donation in Support of 2013-2014 HASTAC Scholars

The English Department has supported several graduate students in the past as Scholars in the Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory known as HASTAC. The Scholars program is a virtual collective of students doing innovative work at the intersection of digital media and learning, digital humanities, and technology in arts, humanities and sciences. Scholars blog, host forums, organize events, and develop new projects that rethink pedagogy, learning, research, and academia in the digital age. The Department is proud to announce HASTAC’s selection of three students for the 2013-2014 cohort of Scholars: Christopher Susak, Melanie Zynel, and Luke Thominet. Their fellowships are funded by a donation from Julie Thompson Klein in honor of her daughter Sarah Thomasen Klein, who died tragically in a car accident Memorial Day weekend 2013. Former cultural editor of the Detroit Metro Times, Sarah was a journalist, editor, and web designer in the San Francisco area, and a well known burlesque performer. Julie is Professor of Humanities in the Department, and a Faculty Fellow for Interdisciplinary Development in the Division of Research. She is also co-editor of the University of Michigan Press series Digital Humanities@digitalculturebooks and is currently completing a new book on “Interdisciplining Digital Humanities.” Her most recent books include the 2010 co-edited Oxford Handbook of Technology and the single-authored 2010 Creating Interdisciplinary Campus Cultures (translated in 2011 by Nemat Mousapo and Hedayat Etemad of the Institute for Social and Cultural Studies in Iran).

English PhD Degrees 2011-13

BRITISH LITERATURE
Michael Martin, Fall, 2011
“Hallowed Ground: Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England, c.1550 – 1704”
Advisor: Ken Jackson

Abigail Heiniger, Spring/Summer, 2013 “Jane Eyre and her Transatlantic Literary Descendants: The Heroic Female Bildungsroman And Constructions of National Identity”
Advisor: Anca Vlasopolos

Andrew Winckles, Spring.Summer, 2013 “Drawn Out in Love: Religious Experience, the Public Sphere and Evangelical Lay Women’s Writing in Eighteenth-Century England”
Advisor: Michael Scrivener

AMERICAN LITERATURE
Jill Darling, Fall, 2011
“Writing the Self: Feminist Experiment and Cultural Identity”
Advisor: Barrett Watten

Sarah Ruddy, Winter, 2012
“This Fact Which is Not One: Differential Poetics in Transatlantic American Modernism”
Advisor: Barrett Watten

Denise Yezbick, Spring/Summer, 2012
“Faith and (Un)Certainty in the Writing of Stowe, Hawthorne, and Dickinson: The Intersecting Language of Theology and Feminism”
Advisor: Ross Pudaloff

Advisor: Barrett Watten

FILM STUDIES
Justin Remeselnik, Spring/Summer, 2012 “Motion(less) Pictures: The Cinema of Stasis”
Advisor: Kirsten Thompson

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
Ethriam Brammer, Fall, 2011
“La Patria Perdida o Imaginada: Translating Teodoro Torres in ‘El Mexico De Afuera”
Advisor: Renata Wasserman

Advisor: Jeff Pruchnic

Hilary Ward-Sarat Saint Peter, Spring/Summer, 2012
“Wired and Dangerous: Hacks, Hair Extensions and Other Twists on Traditional Technical Communication”
Advisor: Frances Ranney

Michael Ristich, Spring/Summer, 2013 “Without Content: Rhetoric, American Anarchism, and the End(s) of Radical Politics”
Advisor: Jeff Pruchnic

RHETORIC/COMPOSITION
Andrew Engel, Spring/Summer, 2012 “Flickering Cities: Multimedia City Fabrics and the Changing Nature of Citizenship”
Advisor: Richard Marbach

English News
This article begins with an account of dry, academic bureaucracy: the English Department underwent formal program review at Wayne State in 2012-13. This involved producing a massive report. It also involved a site visit from external and internal reviewers in February, 2013. Much to my surprise and delight, the highlight of the site visit was a luncheon with 14 alumnae, donors, and partners of the English Department. After lunch, each person spoke about the English Department, and it was a joy to learn how they regard the Department.

Three alumnae of our PhD program – Michael Martin (British literature), Justin Remeselnk (Film Studies), and Kim Lacey (Composition/Rhetoric) talked about the intensive mentoring they received during and even after they completed their studies and went on to academic jobs. Michael Martin is an Assistant Professor at Marygrove College; Justin Remeselnk is a Lecturer at Oakland University; and Kim Lacey is an Assistant Professor at Saginaw Valley State University. One MA alumna, Jane Hoehner, now the Director of the Wayne State University Press – talked about the quality of undergraduate student interns from the English Department who work at the Press. Two BA alumnae – Vytautus (Tiger) Malesh (creative writing) and Dominic Guerriero (literature) – talked about leveraging their English major into interesting careers. Dominic, by the way, was the student commencement speaker at the December, 2012, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences graduation, an honor for him and for the English Department.

Two of our donors who have endowed scholarships in the English Department were also present: Julie Long, sister of our late colleague Chris Leland, talked about his love for his students at Wayne State; the Leland family has established the Christopher T. Leland Endowed Scholarship in Creative Writing in his honor. Steve Trowbridge, husband of the late English Department staff member Pearl Warn, represented the Pearl A. Warn Endowed Scholarship in English, a scholarship for both undergraduate and graduate students in English.

Five partners with the English Department also talked about the contributions of the faculty and students at Wayne State to their academic and community programs: Darin Ellis, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering, talked about the importance of our program in technical communication to engineering students, and Terry Blackhawk, Director of the Inside/Out Literary Arts Project, praised our creative writing students who work for the project by teaching mini-courses in public schools in the community. Two of our community partners in service learning, Pat Baldwin, of the Hannan House, a service organization for senior citizens, and Diane Renaud, of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, an educational organization for at-risk children and adults, talked about the contributions of writing students from the English Department in their programs. The external reviewers for the program review, one from the University of Pittsburgh, and another from the University of Colorado Boulder, said that the lunch was the highlight of the site visit, and I agree. For me, the luncheon started as an administrative task, but ended as a proud moment for the English Department.
Endowing a ‘Delight’

by Brian Escamilla

The reflecting pool that sits along the McGregor Memorial Conference Center was meant by its designer, famed architect Minoru Yamasaki, to offer visitors a sense of delight — a change from what one expected as they moved from space to space on an urban campus.

“I feel that this quality of surprise, the man-made instilling of delight is a terribly important consideration and one that we must think very deeply about to bring about the kind of environment which would be exciting for us,” Yamasaki explained to an interviewer in 1959, the year he won the First Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects for his design of McGregor.

Since the late 1990s, when it was drained due to functional problems, “delight” has not been a word used to describe the McGregor pool. But that will change. Last March, the Wayne State University Board of Governors approved funding for the restoration of the pool to match Yamasaki’s original design. Further, Wayne State is now armed with an endowed fund to help support the ongoing maintenance of the pool from alumna Carol Jonson, CLAS ’71, M.CLAS ’72.

“I’ve always had this fondness for that particular area of campus,” Jonson says. “It used to be such a tranquil, beautiful place to sit.”

Due to scholarship support, the Royal Oak native was able to receive both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English literature at Wayne State with designs on getting her doctorate and, eventually, teaching at the university. Marriage, working as a writer for The Daily Tribune in Royal Oak and then a successful career in communications and marketing for healthcare, social service and educational institutions, shifted that plan, but Jonson did manage to have an impact on education at Wayne State.

While pursuing her degrees, Jonson worked as a tutor and manager for the English department’s tutoring labs for Project 350, a program that supports first-generation college students with educational potential or economic need.

“All I wanted to do was be a professor,” Jonson says. “So I was very interested in being able to work with that program.”

Instead of doing a traditional thesis in English literature to earn her master’s degree, Jonson wrote about the tutoring program and the problems and solutions that evolved during her experience. Her paper went on to form the basis for the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Wayne State. Though she never became a professor at Wayne State, while working and running her own marketing and communications business, Jonson served as adjunct faculty at Davenport University, Oakland Community College, East Mississippi Junior College, The College of the Air Force, and Mississippi University for Women. She also had a teaching fellowship and completed post-graduate courses in Medieval and Renaissance literature at the University of Detroit Mercy.

Her love of teaching continues to this day in Naples, Fla., where she is a charter faculty member with the Frances Pew Hayes Center for Lifelong Learning at Hodges University. For retired seniors, she teaches classes in literature, art history, travel, and other interests. Not one to partake of some of the stereotypical pastimes of Florida retirement years (“I don’t play golf”), Jonson also is involved in Greater Naples Leadership, an organization designed to educate leaders about the issues and needs of Naples and provide community volunteering opportunities.

Jonson also is seeking ways to give back to her alma mater. In addition to maintaining the reflective pool, she is providing funding toward special collections at the library and scholarship support for graduate students in English.

“I never would have been able to go to school without my scholarship, and I got such a marvelous education at Wayne State,” she says. “I remember all the different professors I had through the years, and what an inspiration they were and how I wanted to be just like them.

As for the special collections, it was Jonson’s experience studying at Wayne State that prompted her support.

“It was just a thrill to go and touch those ancient books that they had there, and there’s a certain smell about a library,” she recalls. “I always thought it would be nice to do something to give those books a special home.”

But while those gifts are significant and will make a difference at Wayne State, knowing that the reflective pool will be renewed and maintained for future generations to enjoy has special resonance. Wayne State students and all of Detroit once again will experience Yamasaki’s vision of serenity and delight.

“I think McGregor represents the essence of our father’s idea about architecture, which is to combine water and reflection and use that to soften the environment and create a tranquil space for people,” Kim Yamasaki, the architect’s son, explains.

“McGregor was actually one of our father’s favorite buildings,” adds Carol Yamasaki, the architect’s daughter and a health and education instructor at Wayne State. “We’re totally happy that it will be the little jewel that it once was and having the water there is really part of that. Being around water is very important. It’s good for the soul.”
When Gil Met Pat

by Brian Escamilla

It was a scene more reminiscent of a classic love story than a Greek tragedy when a girl from the east side of Detroit, Patricia (Pat) Kittinger, met a boy from the west side of Detroit, Gil Davis. They came together in the middle of town, on the campus of Wayne State, in Professor Thomas Cutt’s Greek Drama night school class in 1959.

Pat, CLAS ‘61, had started working as a full-time secretary in the Wayne State registrar’s office years earlier and like many Wayne State students over the years, she was taking classes part time at night and sometimes during her lunch hour to earn a bachelor’s degree in English. She would achieve her goal after nine years, earning an English degree with high distinction and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

Gil, CLAS ’51, M.CLAS ’56, Ph.D. ’63, began his college career studying engineering at the University of Oklahoma. After deciding the field of engineering wasn’t for him, he returned to Detroit and followed the path of some of his neighborhood pals and enrolled in classes at Wayne State, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English literature. He pursued further graduate studies at the University of North Carolina, but when his father died, he returned to Detroit, continued his Ph.D. studies at Wayne State and began teaching.

As a doctoral candidate in the English department, Gil had gotten to know some of the faculty, including Professor Cutt, who taught the Greek Drama class where he met Pat. “I told Dr. Cutt, ‘I’m going to marry Miss Kittinger,’” Gil recalls. “He looked at me for a moment and said, ‘Davis, that’s the first intelligent thing I’ve heard you say.’”

And so the two began their life together, first at Wayne State where she was a counselor in liberal arts and later an editor for the University Press, and he wrote his dissertation on Shakespeare for a Ph.D. in English literature. After teaching at the State University of New York–Rochester, Gil took a position at the then-nascent Grand Valley State University and the couple moved to Grand Rapids in the mid-1960s. “It seemed like a good place to live and work,” says Gil.

Grand Rapids turned out to be a very good place. Gil helped build the academic integrity of Grand Valley and chaired the English and honors departments, among other duties in his 25 years with the university. Pat meanwhile became the first program coordinator of the new VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program in Grand Rapids. Together, she and 12 VISTA volunteers developed a tenants’ union, a school lunch program in the public schools, a Spanish-language community house and a senior citizens’ meals program.

During one of Gil’s sabbaticals in Paris, Pat took a class at Le Cordon Bleu, the cooking school that Julia Child made famous in the United States. Returning to Grand Rapids, Pat launched a cooking school of her own that taught hundreds of budding chefs the fundamentals of French cuisine for more than 20 years. She also wrote a weekly food column for the Grand Rapids Press.

In 1989, Gil retired from Grand Valley and a few years later Pat closed her cooking school. Their love for other cultures, and conscious avoidance of the rigors of regular travel, combined to form the perfect way to enjoy their new free time. For the next 20 years they rented apartments for the winter months and lived among the locals in far-away places like London, Paris, Prague, Vienna and Barcelona. They continue their travel-stop approach, but now only for a month or so at a time.

During this time, Gil and Pat also began to consider how to give back to the universities that provided so much to them. They started with Wayne State and established one of the first scholarships to support part-time students, as Pat had been. “We wanted to help students, particularly part-time students, who are frequently overlooked when it comes to financial aid,” Pat says. “We all need help now and then.”

More recently, the couple has bolstered their original endowed scholarship given in 1994, The Gilbert R. and Patricia K. Davis Endowed Merit Scholarship for English majors, with a recent estate gift to ensure the fund helps Wayne State students in perpetuity. “We try to give in a way that is meaningful to us,” says Gil. “We’re interested in helping people who work hard, do a good job and could use a little encouragement along the way.”

The Davises support English majors at Grand Valley as well and, owing to Pat’s longtime interest, culinary students at Grand Valley as well and, owing to Pat’s longtime interest, culinary students at Grand Rapids Community College. They also help a number of organizations in Grand Rapids through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, along with several national and international groups. “We give to organizations that reflect our interests and our hopes for the future,” Gil says.

But the place that has received the greatest support is where they met, Wayne State. “Our feeling is we’re bound to the university,” Pat says. “We’re products of the university and we’ve had good lives. We are grateful.”
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