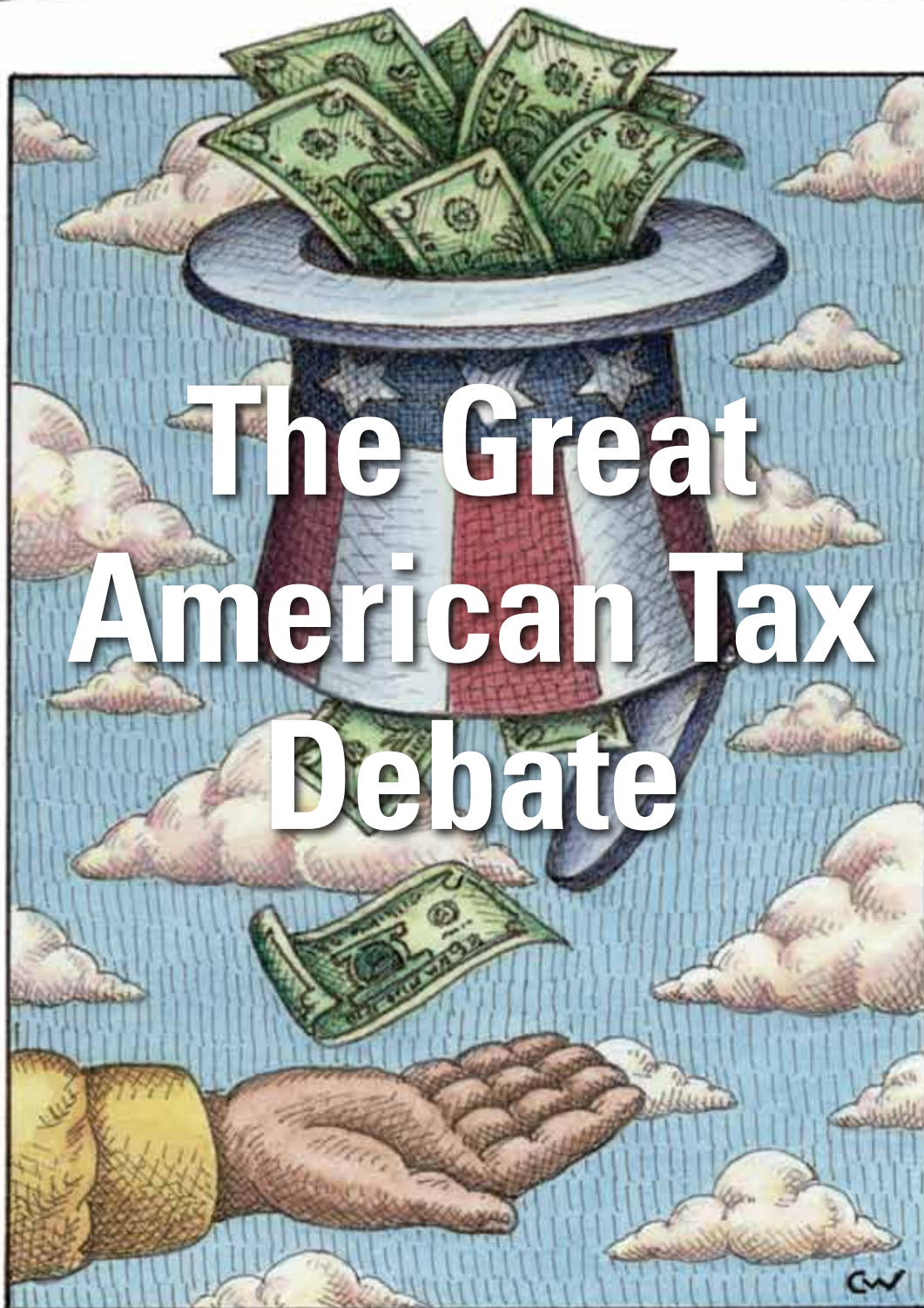


University Magazine

CREIGHTON



The Great American Tax Debate

Letters from the Civil War

The Asthma Epidemic

Building Leaders

Alleluia! Creighton Brings
Online Retreat to China

Spring 2011

View the magazine online at:
www.creighton.edu/creightonmagazine

SPRING 2011

U n i v e r s i t y M a g a z i n e
CREIGHTON



8

The Great American Tax Debate 8
How should Americans be taxed? What is fair? Should the “rich” pay more than others? As we approach the April 15 tax-filing deadline, Creighton experts weigh in on these questions and more. Their answers may surprise you.



12

**My Wild Cracked Brains:
A Story of Personal and Historical Discovery 12**
Creighton University senior Nathan Tye knew of the family story of two obscure relatives who fought in the Civil War. His research led to a journey of discovery and an unexpected twist.



16

The Asthma Epidemic 16
By all accounts, asthma is an ancient disease, but its affect on society has not been relegated to history books. In fact, asthma is on the rise in the U.S. — affecting nearly one in 13 Americans. Creighton researchers are investigating how to combat this troubling health trend.



20

'Building Leaders for the Greater Good' 20
Creighton's new online Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) Program in Leadership offers an interdisciplinary approach to leadership education, with an emphasis on developing leaders who will effect positive change in the world.



24

Alleluia! Creighton Brings Online Retreat to China 24
Creighton University has established a unique and vibrant relationship with the Catholic Church in China through its innovative Online Retreat — which is based on the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.

Online Extras ...

How are Creighton faculty and staff infusing the University's Ignatian mission into their work? Watch the video on Creighton's inaugural "All Things Ignatian" event.

As chaplain of the men's basketball team, the Rev. Tom Shanahan, S.J., is part cheerleader and part counselor. See the video recognizing this courtside believer.

www.creighton.edu/creightonmagazine

Correction: Rod Shkolnick became a partner in the Omaha law firm McGrath-North in 1966 while teaching at Creighton. The date was incorrect in the last issue. Also, Catherine Boe, one of Shkolnick's assistant deans, is a 1979 graduate of the Creighton School of Law. Her Creighton degree was not included in the article.

University News 4
Philanthropy News 26
Alumni News 28



Message from the University President

Crafting Our Purposeful Future

In Nebraska, one has an opportunity to fully enjoy the four seasons. (At least that's what we keep positively reminding ourselves in mid-January.)

Now, as we shake off the cold and ice of winter, we welcome the return of spring to campus — students lingering on the mall, birds calling, the sun splashing its life-giving radiance on newly forming foliage. There is a renewed vibrancy, an energy.

This is also a holy season, a time to reflect and recommit. A time to plant the seeds for tomorrow's bountiful harvest. A time, at Creighton University, to craft our purposeful future.

As I noted in my February Convocation address, I am very grateful for the opportunities of these past 11 years. I have had the pleasure of watching a place that I deeply love grow and prosper.

Thanks to the commitment and tireless efforts of the entire Creighton community — alumni, friends, faculty, staff, fellow Jesuits — we have realized a transformational change in the physical footprint of the campus. We have enhanced our Catholic and Jesuit identity, our academic quality and professional distinction. And we have opened our hearts in service to the Omaha community and beyond.

We have challenged ourselves to dream big — to embrace a bold vision for the future. I am delighted and humbled by our success. And I am proud to say that our momentum continues.

Indeed, many of our efforts over the past years involved improving our infrastructure — a purposeful, measured investment in our future. This includes bricks and mortar, but so much more.

Our dramatic eastward expansion — coinciding with Omaha's downtown renewal — has been well documented and exciting. We have grown our campus by some 40 acres, and we have developed new state-of-the-art facilities that have been transformational for the quality of life and learning on this campus.

At Convocation, I shared two examples: Our new junior/senior residence halls — Davis Square and Opus Hall — and the Wayne and Eileen Ryan Athletic Center and D.J. Sokol Arena.

Davis Square and Opus Hall have dramatically altered the dynamic of undergraduate life on campus. Our juniors and seniors are more involved in campus life — sharing their time and talents as leaders, mentors and role models. Indeed, students want to live and learn on campus. Now they have more opportunity.

The Wayne and Eileen Ryan Athletic Center and D.J. Sokol Arena is not only an outstanding on-campus facility for women's athletics, but it is emblematic of our commitment to the continued growth in opportunities for women at Creighton, where 58 percent of our student body is female.

As I mentioned, enhancements to our infrastructure go beyond bricks and mortar. In 2003, we put in place an enrollment management structure that involves a seamless approach to

student recruitment, matriculation, retention, graduation, professional placement and career counseling. We have reaped what we have sown, with historically high enrollments, impressive student academic credentials, solid retention rates and nationally recognized graduation rates.

I am also extremely proud of our efforts to bring more diversity to campus. Today, one in four students is a student of color and 21 percent are the first in their families to attend college.

Other pieces of the infrastructure puzzle, I would submit, involve an explosion in leadership opportunities for students, faculty and staff; a continued emphasis on our Catholic and Jesuit mission and identity; and a high level of engagement in the Omaha community.

I believe our infrastructure, in its many and varied forms, is in place to launch Creighton to new and greater heights.

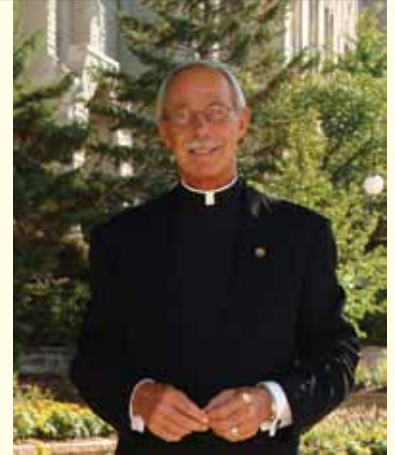
I am optimistic about Creighton's future. We have taken steps through a program prioritization process to assess and streamline our operations, to concentrate on those efforts that are most central to our mission. I received a committee report in January that evaluated some 822 academic and nonacademic programs.

While it is still early in the process, we are moving forward with several actions — from developing a new budget model to realigning certain administrative and support services to giving permanence to the Creighton Office of Online Learning (COOL) in an effort to strengthen our web-based learning initiatives.

As I look ahead to my final May graduation at Creighton, I am truly grateful for your support, for our many shared accomplishments and for the students who allowed us to be a part of their lives and who have gone forth to live out our mission.

Let us be not afraid to look forward, to accept a new call. The Creighton of today must become the Creighton of the future — a future we can serve only if we keep changing and responding to new challenges. A springtime rebirth, if you will.

May God continue to bless Creighton University, and may God bless you and your families during this holy Easter season.



John P. Schlegel, S.J.
President

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE CREIGHTON

Volume 27, Issue 2

Publisher: Creighton University; Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., President. *Creighton University Magazine* staff: Kim Barnes Manning, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Public Relations; Rick Davis, Editor; Sheila Swanson, Associate Editor; Pamela A. Vaughn, Features Editor; Cindy Murphy McMahon, Senior Writer; Rosanne Bachman, Writer.

Creighton University Magazine is published in the spring, summer and fall/winter by Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178-0001. Periodicals postage paid at Omaha, Neb., and additional entry points. Address all mail to Marketing and Public Relations, Omaha, NE 68178. Postmaster: Send change of address to *Creighton University Magazine*, P.O. Box 3266, Omaha, NE 68103-0078.

For more enrollment information, contact the Undergraduate Admissions Office at 800.282.5835, admissions@creighton.edu.

To make a gift to the University, contact the Office of Development at 800.334.8794 or visit www.creighton.edu/development.


For the latest on alumni gatherings, contact the Alumni Relations Office at 800.CU.ALUMS (800.282.5867) or check online at alumni.creighton.edu.

Update your mailing address or send alumni news (births, weddings, promotions, etc.) electronically through alumni.creighton.edu, call 800.334.8794 or mail to Office of Development, Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178.

View the magazine online at
www.creighton.edu/creightonmagazine

www.creighton.edu

Copyright © 2011 by Creighton University

 Recycled and Recyclable

 Printed with Soy Ink

Creighton University Magazine's Purpose

Creighton University Magazine, like the University itself, is committed to excellence and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms. The magazine will be comprehensive in nature. It will support the University's mission of education through thoughtful and compelling feature articles on a variety of topics. It will feature the brightest, the most stimulating, the most inspirational thinking that Creighton offers. The magazine also will promote Creighton, and its Jesuit, Catholic identity, to a broad public and serve as a vital link between the University and its constituents. The magazine will be guided by the core values of Creighton: the inalienable worth of each individual, respect for all of God's creation, a special concern for the poor, and the promotion of justice.

On the Trail of Renegade Ions, Physics Chair Earns National Award

Creighton Physics Chair and Professor Janet Seger, Ph.D., will journey on April 30 to Anaheim, Calif., to accept the American Physical Society's faculty award for her work with undergraduate researchers.

But that journey is nothing compared to the one she makes routinely with her students: to the nether world of quark-gluon physics, where they're on the lookout for ultra-peripheral heavy ion collisions.

If your brow instantly furrows at this thought, you're not alone. But worry not: Seger will translate.

"We are trying to understand the most fundamental building blocks of matter and their interactions," Seger says. "We know that atomic nuclei

are composed of protons and neutrons, and that each proton and neutron can be further decomposed into quarks and the gluons that hold them together."

It is at this point that Seger and her students can glimpse the workings of this nether world, thanks to the RHIC collider at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, N.Y., and the work of STAR, a group studying the formation and characteristics of quark-gluon plasma at Brookhaven.

Here, Seger explains, physicists are "smashing gold ions together at incredible speeds. When they collide we make a tiny (but large on the scale of quarks!) volume of matter that is far hotter than our sun — as hot as the early universe," Seger says.

At this level, Seger explains, she and her students can

"observe a phase of matter called a 'quark-gluon plasma' that has not existed since very shortly after the Big Bang."

But Seger and her students dig still further, looking for the ions that miss each other.

"At these small scales, there's still a lot we don't understand," Seger

said. "I have always loved the way physics helps to answer the 'why' questions and the 'how does this work' questions. Why is the sky blue? Why does the light come on when you flip the switch? I love sharing this with students, and I love when my research helps me reach a point where I suddenly understand something new. The biggest reward is watching students get excited about some of the same things that thrill me."



Photo by Dave Weaver

Seger will receive a national award for research in an undergraduate setting.

Fr. Schlegel, Alumni Named to Business Hall of Fame

Creighton University President the Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., is one of six individuals who will be inducted into the Omaha Business Hall of Fame on April 12 for significant contributions to Omaha's development. The Omaha Chamber of Commerce sponsors the event. Fr. Schlegel has been actively engaged in Omaha's business and civic life during his tenure as president. He has overseen a dramatic eastward expansion of Creighton's campus, which has contributed to Omaha's downtown renaissance.

In addition to Fr. Schlegel, two Creighton alumni will also be inducted: George Haddix, MA'66, Ph.D., a member of Creighton University's Board of Directors, who, along with his late wife, Sally Hansen Haddix, established the John N. Mordeson, Ph.D., Endowed Chair in Mathematics at Creighton; and Lyn Wallin Ziegenbein, JD'77, executive director of the Peter Kiewit Foundation.

Creighton Celebrates Winter Commencement

More than 240 degrees were conferred during Creighton University's winter commencement ceremony Dec. 18. The University also recognized the following for making a positive difference in the Omaha community and around the country.



Photos by Jim Fackler

The Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., with honorary degree recipient George Venteicher, JD'62.

Alumni Achievement Award

A 1962 graduate of Creighton University's School of Law, George Venteicher is a real estate developer widely respected for his business acumen and ethics. The former

assistant attorney general of Nebraska has developed more than 3.5 million square feet of residential and commercial space in Nebraska, Iowa and Arizona.

Support of higher education has long been a priority of Venteicher and his wife, Susan. The brick pathway that links major portions of the Creighton campus are named for the couple who also established a scholarship in the family name in 2004 for academically gifted law students.

As a member of the Creighton President's Council for seven years, Venteicher participated in the Campaign Positioning Study and provided insight and counsel on Creighton's east-campus expansion.

Honorary Degrees

The Most Rev. George Lucas, archbishop of Omaha, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, and Gen. Kevin Chilton, recently retired commander of United States Strategic Command, received an honorary Doctor of Laws.



Lucas



Chilton



Dunlap

As a leader in the Catholic Church for more than 35 years and since his installation in July 2009, Archbishop Lucas has demonstrated faith, godliness and kindness to the more than 220,000 Omaha-area parishioners he serves.

Lucas holds appointments with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Subcommittee on the Catechism and Task Force for the 2010 Special Assembly.

Archbishop Lucas has shown an affinity for Catholic education at all levels, and has created supportive opportunities for dialogue and discussion whenever possible.

Up until his retirement in January, Gen. Chilton commanded one of the most powerful military organizations in the country; yet, he was a staunch advocate of diplomacy and nonproliferation of nuclear weapons as essential first steps to securing international peace. Chilton is one of a number of experts who voiced support for ratification of the New Start Treaty.

Chilton's advocacy for transparency spans a 34-year military career characterized by upward mobility through Wing, Numbered Air Force, Major Command and Unified Combatant Command levels. A member of NASA for 11 years, he flew three missions on space shuttles and was the first astronaut to be promoted to four-star general.

Presidential Medallion

Jay Dunlap, president of the Madonna School, accepted the Presidential Medallion.

For 50 years, Madonna School has served as the only private, Catholic school in Nebraska that provides education to students with developmental delays and other special needs. The school enrolls more than 40 students in grades K through 12 who are taught basic reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as skills necessary to live full and productive lives.

Manresa Medal Awardee Leaves Legacy

Robert Daugherty, 88, the recipient of Creighton's highest nonacademic honor and an Omaha business leader known worldwide, died on Nov. 24.

In 1988, Daugherty received Creighton's Manresa Medal, which is bestowed only rarely upon those who demonstrate inspirational leadership and enduring achievements in the tradition of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, and of Edward and John Creighton, the founders of the University. Creighton has awarded the Manresa Medal only six times.

Founder and chairman *emeritus* of the board of Valmont Industries, Inc., Daugherty served on Creighton's Board of Directors for 17 years, from 1975 to 1992,



Daugherty

and was designated an *emeritus* member of the Board from then on. Daugherty's friends and associates established the Robert B. Daugherty Chair in Managerial Ethics in the College of Business in 1981.

"Bob Daugherty's qualities of leadership, perseverance, civic participation and ethical business acumen have influenced many," said the Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., Creighton president. "His passing leaves a great void and Creighton is indebted to him for his many years of leadership."

Daugherty is credited with changing the landscape of agriculture internationally through his company's development of the revolutionary center-pivot irrigation system in the 1960s, expanding irrigation to land that had not been able to support crops previously. Today, Valmont's equipment irrigates 10 million acres worldwide.

His wife of 54 years, Marjorie Kruse Daugherty, died in 2002, and he is survived by three sons and their families.

Theology, Journalism Merge in Innovative Class

Nine Creighton students earned six core credit-hour requirements last summer in a five-week class — and found their outlook on life may never be the same.

The inaugural interdisciplinary class, Backpack Journalism in the Dominican Republic, featured a faculty-led international experience and two areas of study: theology and journalism.

The theology component explored the Catholic Church in Latin America and the Dominican Republic and the Church's mission to put faith into action. The journalistic component involved learning to write feature stories, blog and shoot and edit a video documentary.

The theology and journalism came together as students experienced the power of using media to make a difference. They used journalistic tools to tell the story of Catholic deacon Pedro Almonte, who is driven by his faith and his belief that the Church has a responsibility to work for and with the poor.

The students shot and edited a documentary on Almonte's 20 years of helping the people of Cien Fuegos — a sprawling slum next to a garbage dump in Santiago, Dominican Republic — better their lives through soup kitchens, education and neighborhood groups that stand up to crime and violence or work to stop environmental degradation.

The class was open to nonjournalism majors, and one of those was exercise science senior Rachel Johnson from Denver.

Something about the flier she saw on the class caught her eye. "I can't even explain it, but I was immediately drawn to everything about this program. Because I was not a journalism major, I was nervous about taking this leap of faith, but I knew this was just what I was looking for in a study-abroad program."

Johnson said the experience "absolutely changed me for the better, hands down."

She said the class opened her eyes to the daily struggles people face and to what one person can accomplish, "with passion, drive and courage." Inspired by the class, Johnson has been volunteering with a Spanish-speaking community in Omaha and has been accepted into an immersion program in Guatemala this fall. She will volunteer there in health promotion



Photo by Peter Freeze

Rachel Belsha and Scott Peak entertain a young girl at a children's soup kitchen in Cien Fuegos, Dominican Republic, while participating in Creighton's Backpack Journalism course.

and plans to apply to graduate school in public health.

"Backpack Journalism was one of the best experiences I've had at Creighton. It was challenging — academically, mentally, physically and emotionally — but so worth it."

Another student, Peter Freeze of Phoenix, Ariz., a junior majoring in graphic design and photojournalism, had studied in the Dominican Republic previously, through Creighton's semester-long *Encuentro Dominicano* program. He said he was eager to return, "to film what I had lived out for four months."

Said Freeze, "I learned that no matter how long you look at something, when you return you will find something new and wonderful.

It reminds me to slow down and never look at something just once. Sometimes the second look can change your life forever."

The faculty team included: John O'Keefe, Ph.D., professor of theology and holder of the A.F. Jacobson Chair in Communications; Carol Zuegner, Ph.D., associate professor of journalism; Tim Guthrie, associate professor in graphic design and digital/new media; and Kyle Woolley, then the campus coordinator for *Encuentro Dominicano*.

The class met for two weeks for intensive preliminary instruction at Creighton. Following the trip, the students worked on editing the video and writing articles for a website. The class also involved time for reflection and service work in the Dominican Republic.

O'Keefe, who originally envisioned the class, said the experience exceeded his expectations. "The students were wonderful and their film has been well-received," he said.

Zuegner concurred: "The students were remarkable. They never complained even though the trip conditions were often more than challenging in climate and accommodations. They rolled with whatever happened."

The documentary, "Esperanza," won two awards at a local film festival. To view the film and read the students' reflections, visit <http://backpack.creighton.edu>.

The next class — Backpack Journalism in Uganda — takes place in May and will tell the stories of four peacemakers.

Bringing Smiles to Others

Gary Westerman, DDS'69, professor and chair of community and preventive dentistry and the Oscar S. Belzer Endowed Chair in Dentistry, and Billy Bluejay instruct a young patient on proper brushing techniques during the Creighton School of Dentistry's 11th annual "Give Kids a Smile Day" in February.

Through the event, held in conjunction with National Children's Dental Health Month, about 75 uninsured Omaha-area children received free dental exams, X-rays, cleaning, fluoride, dental sealants and dental education at the Creighton dental clinic.



Photo by Jim Fackler

Tortillas and Birth Defects?

A Creighton University School of Medicine researcher has been awarded a \$2.7 million grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to investigate a possible link between the ingestion of tortillas and corn-based food products contaminated with a fungal toxin and increased risk for birth defects.

The three-year award is a collaborative effort among investigators at Creighton; the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) in Athens, Ga.; Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C.; and Centro de Investigaciones en Nutricion y Salud (CIENSA) in Guatemala.

Janee Gelineau-van Waes, Ph.D., principal investigator and associate professor in Creighton's Department of Pharmacology, who also holds a doctor of veterinary medicine degree, will use the grant to continue her research studying a potential connection between exposure to fumonisin during early pregnancy and an increased risk for having a baby with a

neural tube defect (NTD).

NTDs are one of the most common congenital malformations (one per 1,000 births) and include defects such as anencephaly and spina bifida. NTDs occur when the embryonic neural tube, which forms the brain and spinal cord, fails to close properly during the first few weeks of pregnancy.



Photo by Jim Fackler

Gelineau-van Waes has received a \$2.7 million NIH grant to study a possible link between tortillas and birth defects.

Fumonisin is a mycotoxin produced by a common fungal contaminant of corn worldwide.

In animals, the toxin disrupts sphingolipid metabolism, causing diseases such as leukoencephalomalacia in horses, pulmonary

edema in pigs and cancer in laboratory rodents. In humans, ingestion of fumonisin-contaminated corn is associated with increased risk for esophageal cancer and having a baby with a NTD. An unusually high incidence of NTDs (six to 10 cases per 1,000 births) has been observed in regions of Guatemala, China and South Africa where corn is a dietary staple and fumonisin contamination is frequent.

Gelineau-van Waes and USDA scientists have shown that early gestational exposure to the toxin disrupts sphingolipid metabolism and induces NTDs in mice.

In the new study, preliminary data obtained from mice will be used to validate biomarkers of exposure in blood and urine samples collected from women in Guatemala. The human samples, collected by CIENSA scientists, will be analyzed by the USDA-ARS Mycotoxin Research Unit. Creighton researchers will use mouse models to investigate underlying signaling mechanisms that result in failure of neural tube closure after fumonisin exposure, and collaborative studies with Duke University will focus on identifying genetic mutations that increase susceptibility.

Surveys Say ...

Creighton University alumni rely on the *Creighton University Magazine* for information about the University and are interested in receiving information specific to their school or college.

Those are two of the major findings from surveys — one online and one printed — conducted this past fall to measure the interests and habits of Creighton alumni in relation to communications from the University.

More than 95 percent of respondents reported getting all, most or some of their information about Creighton from the *Creighton University Magazine*, while 90 percent reported an interest in receiving information specific to their school or college.

Another electronic survey is addressing the interests of Creighton alumni who graduated between 1993 and 2010.

Creighton's Economic Impact on State of Nebraska Tops \$787 Million

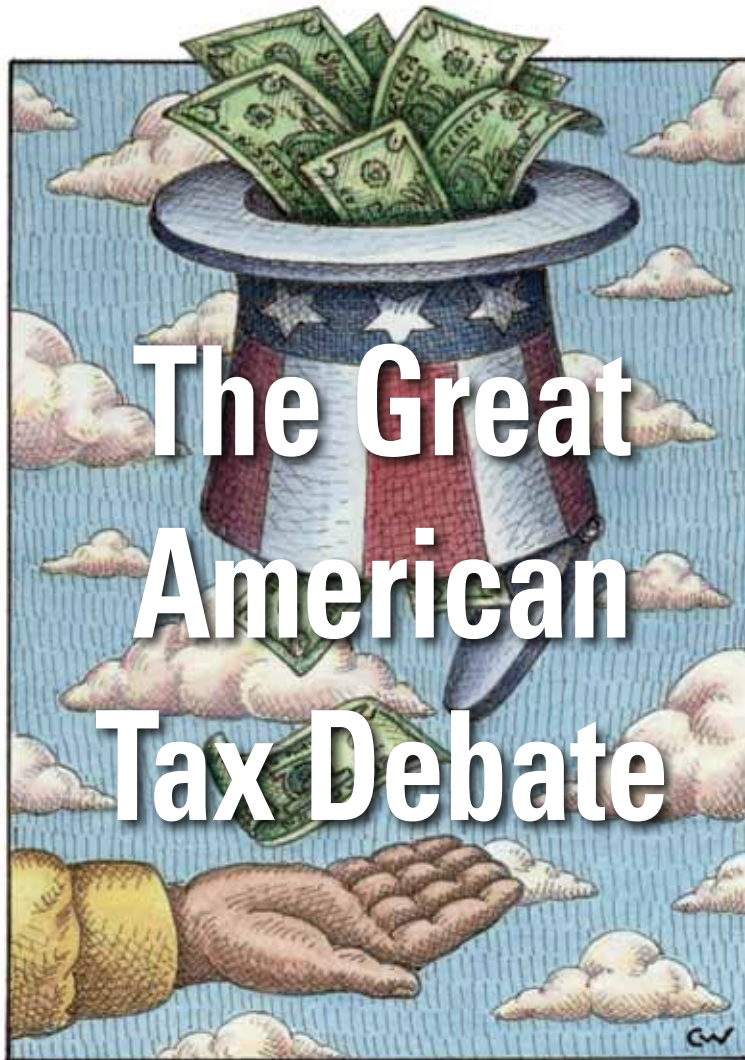
Creighton University's annual impact on Nebraska's economy is estimated at \$787.5 million, according to a recent study by Ernie Goss, Ph.D., the University's Jack A. MacAllister Chair in Regional Economics. That figure includes spending on salaries, benefits, goods and services, and construction — and the resulting effect of stimulating other economic activity.

Creighton's job force of 3,395 makes it one of the 25 largest private employers in the state and one of the 13 largest Omaha employers. It is estimated that Creighton spending also supports another 4,536 full-time equivalent jobs in Nebraska.

During 2009-2010, Creighton's operating budget totaled approximately \$400 million, and the University generated \$38.2 million in state and local taxes. Creighton's more than 7,600 students spent approximately \$106 million in Nebraska on products and services.

Creighton also adds to Nebraska's "brain gain." In 2009-10, 62 percent of Creighton's students came from other states and countries. Many alumni stay in Nebraska after graduation, becoming teachers, health professionals, business and civic leaders and more. In the Omaha area, currently 27 percent of physicians, 69 percent of dentists, 59 percent of pharmacists, 72 percent of occupational therapists and 16 percent of registered nurses are Creighton graduates. Approximately one-half of Creighton's 2009 law graduates are employed in Nebraska.

A synopsis of the study's key findings can be found on the *Creighton Magazine* website, www.creighton.edu/creightonmagazine.



By Eugene Curtin

It is an argument as old as the Republic and as fresh as talk radio; a debate once enjoined by genteel men in powdered wigs, carried on by the barrel-chested and pugnaciously opinionated icon of the Progressive Era, Teddy Roosevelt, and kept very much alive today by partisans of the right and the left: How should Americans be taxed? What is fair? What works? Should the rich pay more than others? If so, how much? And what is “rich?” Should even the poor pay something as testimony to common citizenship?

Political affiliation, in the long sweep of things, can be a fickle guide. President Teddy Roosevelt, once the epitome of Republican rugged individualism, embraced a third-party radical tax agenda in the election of 1912, advocating not just an income tax on the rich but also an inheritance tax.

Fifty years later, the iconic Democratic President John F. Kennedy, faced with an ailing economy, proposed tax cuts together with reforms designed to broaden the taxpaying base. And his Democratic successor, Lyndon Johnson, shepherded those tax cuts into law even while laying the foundations of a costly, revenue-devouring welfare state.

So which is it? Is the federal government's fiscal hunger best satiated by lower tax rates that spur economic activity (and thus tax revenue) or by a dependable and predictable flow of income drawn from as broad a base as possible?

To settle this nagging historical dispute once and for all, we turned to five Creighton professors who promptly warned us to expect no such resolution.

They, too, see things in different ways.

The debate over the so-called "Bush tax cuts" is a useful illustration. A package of tax cuts passed by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001 and 2003 contained an expiration date of Dec. 31, 2010, at which point they would revert to their former, higher levels. Had Congress, in December, not

approved extending the tax cuts through 2012, the reduced levels of 10 percent, 15 percent, 25 percent, 28 percent, 33 percent and 35 percent would have reverted to their former (higher) levels of 15 percent, 28 percent, 31 percent, 36 percent and 39.6 percent.

Thomas Purcell, Ph.D., BSBA'72, JD'77, professor of accounting and professor of law at Creighton, said he would have voted to let the tax cuts expire. Purcell is widely published on matters of tax policy and testified before Congress on various tax issues as chair of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Tax Executive Committee from 2004 to 2006.

On the other side of the aisle is Ernie Goss, Ph.D., professor of economics. Goss holds the Jack A. MacAllister Chair in Regional Economics at Creighton and served as a visiting scholar with the Congressional Budget Office from 2003 to 2004. Results from his monthly business conditions index are cited by news media outlets locally, regionally and nationally, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Investor's Business Daily*.

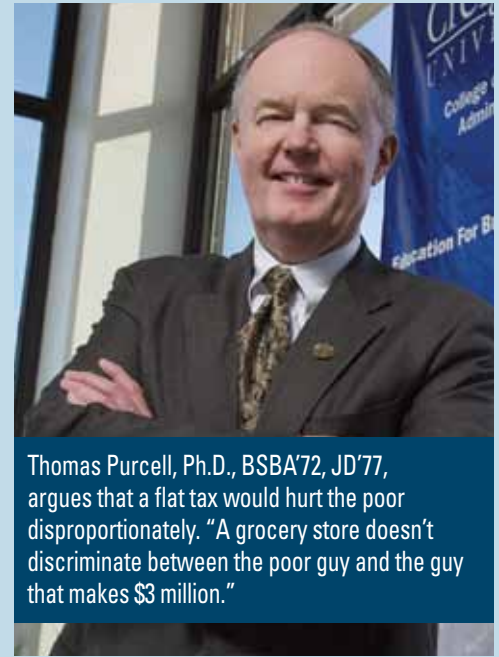
Goss said he would make the tax cuts permanent. "Is it fair — is it equitable — to be grinding down those people who are most productive?"

While President Barack Obama lobbied Congress to pass the tax cut deal — calling it "an essential ingredient in spurring economic growth over the short

run" — Purcell believes that reverting to the pre-Bush tax rates would not have caused a significant downturn in economic activity.

"Take an entrepreneur who has an opportunity to make a million dollars this year by making an investment," Purcell said. "The tax rate today is 35 (percent). If it had gone up to 39 (percent), the additional cost of the taxes would have been \$40,000.

"Do you think that entrepreneur will sit there and not make the investment because



Thomas Purcell, Ph.D., BSBA'72, JD'77, argues that a flat tax would hurt the poor disproportionately. "A grocery store doesn't discriminate between the poor guy and the guy that makes \$3 million."

Photos by Jim Fackler

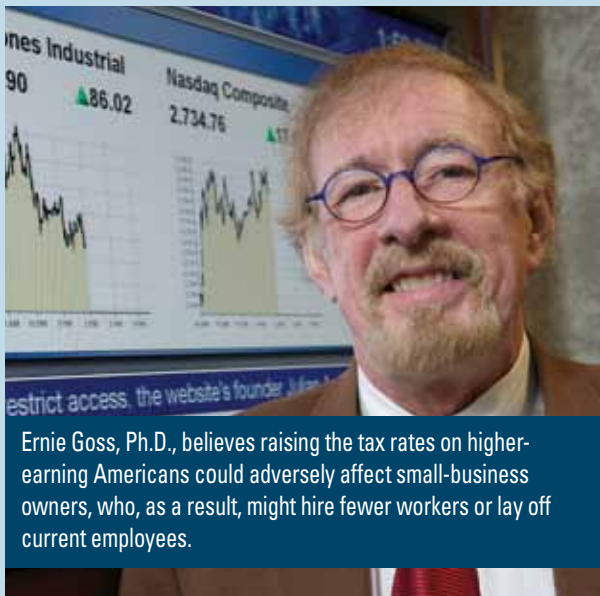
instead of getting \$650,000 after tax he gets \$610,000? He's not going to make that investment to get \$610,000? I don't buy that logic at all."

Goss counters that the kinds of people who make these sorts of investments are typically cost-conscious small-business owners. Increasing their tax costs may not kill the initial investment, but they are likely to cut corners to make up for the bigger tax bite — like perhaps hiring fewer people.

"Higher taxes affect their willingness to hire new workers," Goss said. "That's first. And secondly, the evidence indicates that raising taxes on high-income individuals increases their strategies of tax avoidance."

Like Purcell, John Deskins, Ph.D., assistant professor of economics, is skeptical that the higher rates would have depressed economic activity. Deskins, who joined Creighton's faculty in 2005, has focused his research on the interplay between state tax policy and entrepreneurial activity.

Deskins points out that even the post-Bush higher rates would have been far lower than rates the United States has seen in its history and the Republic has always muddled through, managing along the way to become the envy of the world. Raising the marginal rate on the highest earners by four percentage points would have been unlikely to reverse that trend, he said.



Ernie Goss, Ph.D., believes raising the tax rates on higher-earning Americans could adversely affect small-business owners, who, as a result, might hire fewer workers or lay off current employees.



John Deskins, Ph.D., says any meaningful reform to America's tax system must include broadening the tax base. "Base broadening is so much more important" than adjusting the tax rates.

Besides, he said, the "grave concern" of the federal deficit would have been impacted only modestly by the higher rates.

"More than half of what's necessary to get rid of the deficit will have to come from spending cuts," he said. "Raising the top marginal rate to 39 percent would not have done it. That's just a small chunk of the economy. It would have raised \$700 billion over a 10-year period. That's nothing. It's a drop in the bucket."

Broad Base, Narrow Base

Indeed, Deskins wishes to bark up a different tree.

Whether rates climb or fall is a smaller concern than how widely and reliably tax rates are applied, he said. In other words, it's a matter of the tax base. The current tax code, Deskins said, is far too riddled with intricate exemptions, deductions and credits. It leaves too much taxable income, capital and property on the table, thus forcing higher rates to be applied to that which is left.

"A broad tax base is a tax that taxes everything," he said. "In contrast, we have a narrow tax base. There are a lot of exemptions, deductions and tax credits that narrow the base."

And Deskins is not picking on just "the rich."

He's talking about 401K contributions, which are not currently taxed. Or

employer-provided health insurance. Or home mortgage interest. All of these popular exemptions remove taxable opportunities. And these are just some of the best known, he said. The U.S. tax code is riddled with clauses put there by politicians beholden to lobbyists and big-money contributors. Many of these provisions exempt specific businesses created in certain states on specific dates. And they go on for dozens of pages, granting favored treatment to the influential while sticking it to Joe and Jane Citizen.

"The people who benefit from those exemptions, deductions and credits are small in number — they can get together and lobby," he said. "The people who are harmed are just the masses — the silent majority, which is not organized. It's just everybody."

"We need fundamental reform in which we drastically broaden the base and lower rates. Base broadening is so much more important than whether we go to 39 percent."

That, and "certainty," chimes in Ed Morse, professor of law at Creighton. Morse holds the McGrath, North, Mullin and Kratz Endowed Chair in Business Law, and his scholarship focuses on taxation, trade, technology and regulation.

That Congress failed to expediently extend, make permanent or scrap the "Bush" tax cuts became an issue in the 2010 Congressional elections. And Morse said it deserved to be an issue since legal certainty is a basic requirement for business, which cannot plan growth without knowing its obligations.

But even beyond the need for business certainty, Morse said, Americans have a fundamental decision to make. Whether they pay more or less in taxes, whether they are subjected to a flat tax or a progressive tax, whether they are taxed narrowly or broadly, keep or lose their exemptions, they have a fundamental decision to make about how much government they want.

"The question that has to be answered first is what do you want government to do?" he said. "Then you say, 'How are we going to finance this?' Then we have to think about designing a tax system that will be perceived as fair by the public

but also will permit economic activity to thrive."

Like Deskins, Morse urges a broader tax base, but he is less sanguine about the effect of marginal tax hikes on economic activity.

"I think this talk of 'taxing the rich' is demagoguery," he said. "Who really gets hit? Say you raise taxes on a physician's income and he decides to work one day a week less because it's just not worth his while. Who gets hit?"

"The patients lose because they're not getting the opportunity to get their treatment. But what about the cleaning crew, the secretarial staff, all these job losses that go way beyond just the person you're taxing? You're not just taxing the idle rich; you're ultimately harming the goal of creating a growing economic base."



"The question that has to be answered first is what do you want government to do?" says law professor Ed Morse. "Then you say, 'How are we going to finance this?'"

The Flat Tax

Like virtually all developed nations, the United States levies a progressive tax on its citizens, which is to say the more Jane Taxpayer earns, the higher percentage of her income she pays to the government. The most serious challenger to a federal progressive income tax is a flat tax under which everyone pays the same percentage of their income, no matter how much they earn.

Morse is a supporter of the flat tax. "I believe a single tax rate is both efficient and morally superior to graduated tax rates," he said.

Goss is less of a fan. "I think there needs to be some progressivity," he said. "I would like to have a slight progressivity with no deductions.

"I have an education because the taxpayer paid a good deal of my education. I went to public school. So it would be pretty disingenuous of me to think that I don't have a bit of an obligation to pay back some of that. But the current progressivity is too great."

Purcell argues that a flat tax would hit the poor far harder than the middle or upper classes. He said a flat tax would have to be levied at a daunting 25 percent to generate the same revenue generated by a progressive income tax, and would consume so much of poor- and middle-class income that members of those classes could never save.

"A grocery store doesn't discriminate between the poor guy and the guy that makes \$3 million," he said. "It charges the same prices. The utility company isn't going to differentially price their product."

And beware, Purcell said, of introducing a small flat tax on consumption in an effort to capture lower income people, who often are exempt from paying federal income taxes. Quite apart from the fact that even poor people do pay federal taxes in the form of Social Security withholding, he said, a small consumption tax would almost certainly grow into a behemoth.

"Let's just put in a 3 percent consumption tax on certain things, they'll say. Well, now you've got the nose of the camel inside the tent and before you know it you've got a 20 percent consumption tax and a 25 percent income tax."

Deskins, continuing to emphasize a broad tax base as free as possible from exemptions, deductions and credits, said the debate over a flat tax or a progressive/ graduated tax is largely a matter of philosophy — of what is "fair" — and that the science of economics is ill-equipped to deal with such political matters.

He said a flat tax proposed by former Republican presidential hopeful Steve Forbes in the campaigns of 1996 and 2000 would have been broad based and therefore efficient, but its tendency to redistribute income more narrowly spurred opposition from the left.

"The flat tax proponents want a broad

base," he said. "I don't know of anyone who doesn't want a broad base. The flat tax proponents just don't want to be as redistributive. They think it's fair that everyone pays the same tax rate."

Deskins said it is indisputable that higher tax rates slow economic activity and reduce the size of the economic pie. But those effects are small enough to allow for argument.

"The Democrats would probably argue that a pie that's a little bit smaller but more equally divided is preferable," he said. "Republicans would probably argue the reverse. But that pits economic efficiency versus fairness, and the fairness part is not anything a scientist can speak to."

Manipulating Behavior?

There is one aspect of a true flat tax that Goss covets: It removes from government the ability to manipulate human behavior, something he believes is among the greatest sins of progressive tax codes with all their subjective exemptions. It is not the business of government to urge citizens to do this or that based on tax breaks, he said, and such efforts almost always backfire.

Take the Car Allowance Rebate System signed into law on June 24, 2009, by President Obama. Dubbed "Cash for Clunkers," the law granted buyers a generous government rebate when they traded in old, gas-guzzling vehicles for newer, more fuel-efficient models. The \$1 billion that was initially provided to fund the program quickly expanded to \$3 billion. The program was seen as increasing fuel efficiency and stimulating car sales in a slumping economy.

Goss sees it as meddling.

"Used-car prices were up about 17 percent last year because of Cash for Clunkers," he said. "It stimulated demand but it also ground up and destroyed automobiles and so reduced the supply for low-income individuals.

"All these programs have been — to be kind — failures. If you need new windows, buy new windows — not because the government is going to give you a \$1,500 tax credit. Buy windows because you need windows."

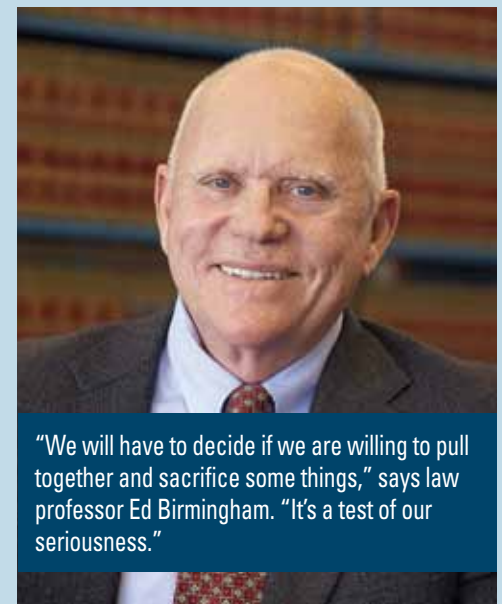
This sort of governmental manipulation is endemic in progressive

tax codes, Goss said, which is why he would like to see progressivity maintained at minimum levels.

"Our current progressivity is just too great," he said.

Ed Birmingham, a professor of law and associate dean for administration and finance in the School of Law, carries with him some Washington perspective, having worked for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, D.C., from 1964 to 1967. He now teaches a course in federal income taxation. Birmingham believes the American people are at a crossroads.

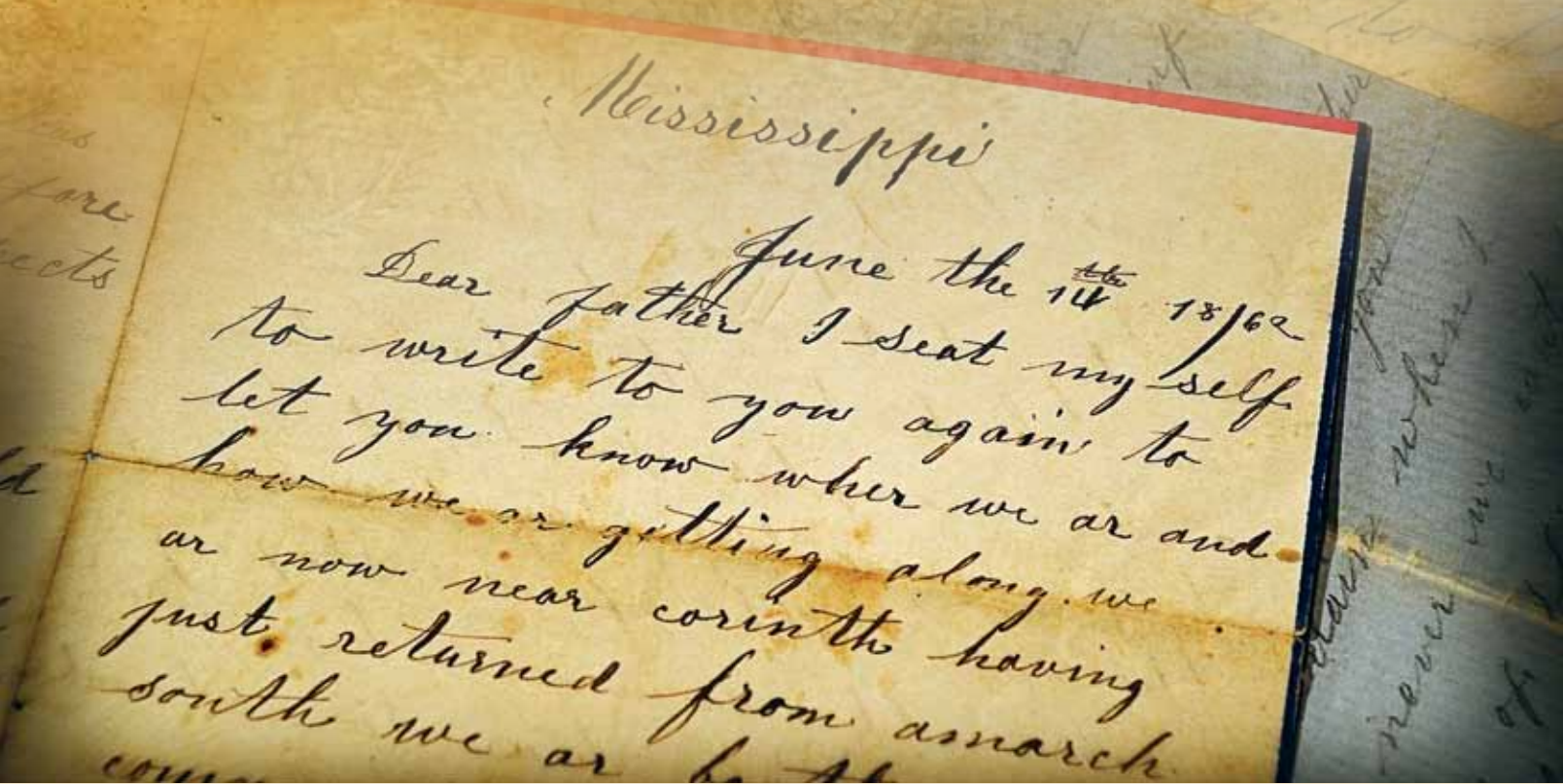
"Change in this country comes at the fringes," he said. "This country is not



going to adopt a flat tax, or any other radical solution. We will have to decide if we are willing to pull together and sacrifice some things. It's a test of our seriousness."

A recent report from the bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform concurs with Birmingham's assessment: The task at hand is great. "Our nation is on an unsustainable fiscal path," the report warns. The solutions, it states, lie with all of us. "We all have a patriotic duty to make America better off tomorrow than it is today. ... Our country's economic and national security depend on us putting our fiscal house in order."

About the author: Curtin is a freelance writer in Omaha.



My Wild Cracked Brains: A Story of Personal and Historical Discovery

By Nathan Tye

You can tell Mrs. Graham that we heard from the boys about three weeks ago. They was all well at that time but they are suffering for clothing and something to eat.



Lurana Graham

Pvt. William Love of Company B, 7th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, included these few words of encouragement for a family friend in a letter to his wife, dated Sept. 13, 1864, during the bloodiest war on American soil — the Civil War.

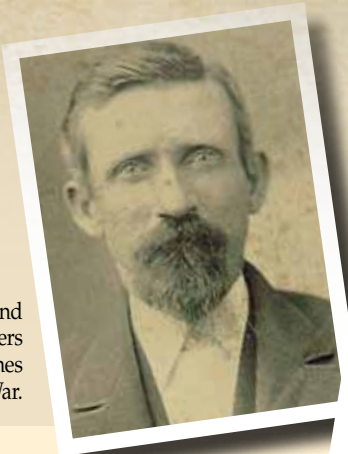
“Mrs. Graham” was Lurana Graham. She was the mother of “the boys” — William and James, fellow members of Company B. And, as I was to discover, she also was my great-great-great-grandmother.

At the time of the letter, William and James were “suffering” in the stockade of Andersonville Prison. For 10 months, they lived in two of the most reviled Confederate

prisons, Andersonville and Florence Stockade. This was a story lost to history and the Grahams’ descendents, until I unearthed their wartime correspondence.

Growing up, it was my grandfather, Thomas W. Tye Sr., who shared a short — but intriguing — bit of familial lore. According to my grandfather, two obscure uncles from his mother’s side — the Grahams — fought in the Civil War and spent time in the notorious Andersonville Prison. Both men, names unknown but understood to be brothers, survived prison, but one died on his way home to Iowa. Letters the men wrote home supported the story. But the cache sat

James Graham ... he and his brother wrote letters home from the front lines of the Civil War.



Photos by Jim Fackler

undisturbed and bound with string in the vault of our family law firm for more than a half century. Forgotten by our family and ignored by history.

Three years ago, my mother found copies of the letters during a move. With the copies in hand, I began sleuthing. What began as a simple inquiry into my genealogy soon shifted into a multi-year research project during which I traveled across the country searching for the tiniest of clues.

Under the guidance of my advisers, Tracy Leavelle, Ph.D., and Heather Fryer, Ph.D., both of the Creighton history department, I began exploring the Grahams' story, their lives, motivations and relationships during the war. A grant from the College of Arts and Sciences supported my research this past summer. Research at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Ill.; the New York Historical Society; and the Cass County History Museum in Griswold, Iowa, helped me fill in the holes in the brothers' story.

I quickly discovered that the men, William and James, were not obscure uncles. In reality, James is my great-great-great grandfather and William was his eldest brother. Both grew up in a family of 12 on a farm just outside Mattoon, Ill.

As the nation descended into war, both men answered President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops to suppress the rebellion. In the fall of 1861, William enlisted in Company B of the 7th Illinois Volunteer Infantry for three years service. James, just 19 at the

time, followed his brother a month later. Members of their family were not happy with the brothers' decision. Jonathan and Lurana Graham, their parents, were both Southerners by birth. William described the sentiments at home, noting that, "Some says it is a silly notion that has got into my wild cracked brains whilst others say it is for some scandalous action why I wander so far from home."

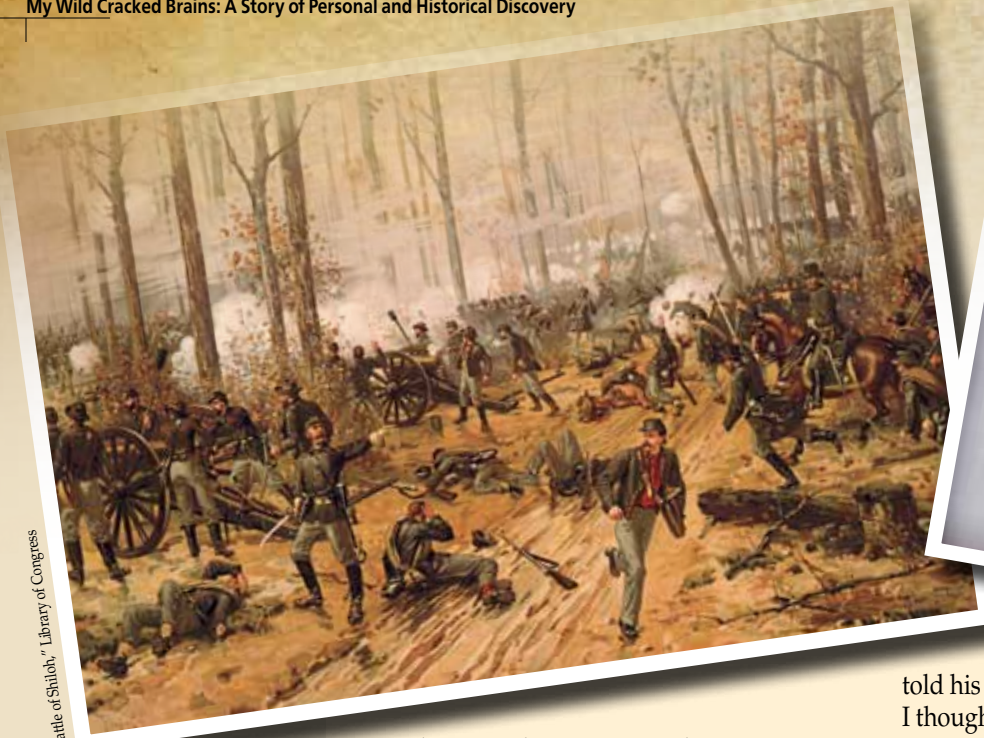
In spite of their family's concern, William and James remained in the 7th Illinois and re-enlisted in 1864. Under the leadership of Ulysses S. Grant, the 7th Illinois fought across the western theater of the war, from early victories at Fort Belmont, the famed Battle of Shiloh and eventually marching to the sea under Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman.

The Civil War claimed the lives of some 620,000 Americans. (Based on current U.S. population figures, that would be the equivalent of 6 million war dead today.)

While the number of troops killed in action reached upwards of 200,000, more than double that figure died from sickness and disease. Constant drilling during the early weeks of their enlistment took its toll on the brothers. William writes, "we would travel till we was ringing wet with sweat ... and then lay down on the ground and sleep with our wet clothes on. That is what made so many sick."

Early in the war, the brothers didn't see

Tye conducts research at the Cass County History Museum in Griswold, Iowa.



"Battle of Shiloh," Library of Congress

The Graham brothers both fought in the Battle of Shiloh (depicted above left) under the direction of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.

Above right: Tye found this medal recognizing James Graham's Civil War service at the Cass County (Iowa) History Museum.



any direct combat. James was home resting after a serious illness protracted in camp and William found himself on the sidelines. At the Battle of Belmont, Gen. Grant's first foray into combat during the war, William was in reserve, but he visited the battlefield afterward and observed an "awful scene, the dead lay four deep." James returned to the 7th Illinois by the end of 1861. And on Feb. 11, 1862, the brothers directly fought in their first battle at Fort Donelson in Stewart County, Tenn. They were the second unit over the fort's walls and played a crucial role in the course of the five-day battle.

After the victory at Fort Donelson, the 7th Illinois traveled down the Tennessee River, aboard the steamboat Fairchild, to Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. On April 6 and 7, 1862, the brothers took part in the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, commonly remembered as the Battle of Shiloh.

William wrote, "Our men attacked them and such volleys of musketry and canon never was heard in the United States."

At that time, Shiloh was the bloodiest battle in U.S. history, with some 19,900 troops either killed or wounded in two days. The brothers survived, and, at the end of April, joined the 7th Illinois as it laid siege to the city of Corinth, Miss.

In October, the Confederates attempted to retake the city and during the course of the battle, William was shot through the shoulder. Writing from his hospital bed he

told his parents, "I thought it would kill me, I thought my head would burst" from the pain. Once healed, he made his way back to the 7th Illinois, after which both he and James re-enlisted for another three years of service as veteran members of the unit.

On May 7, 1864, while out on mounted patrol along the Tennessee River, the Grahams and 28 other members of their unit were captured by Confederate forces. For the rest of the war, the brothers remained in Confederate captivity, first in Andersonville Prison in Georgia and eventually Florence Stockade in South Carolina. They joined approximately 25,000 prisoners in Andersonville, known to be one of the worst prisons during the war. An estimated 13,000 died while in captivity. The brothers survived on cups of corn meal and polluted water for more than six months.

As the Union forces under Gen. Sherman's command, including the rest of the 7th Illinois, marched toward the sea, the prisoners at Andersonville were shipped to other prisons still under Confederate control. William and James were sent to Florence Stockade, which rivaled Andersonville in the suffering it caused. Prisoners were known to slice off diseased fingers and toes in order to survive. The only food was rotten corn meal. Yet again, both brothers survived.

Once it appeared the war was over, the prisoners in Florence Stockade were shipped to Wilmington, N.C., and marched to within three miles of the Union lines. At the end of his life, James reflected on the last days of

captivity in a 1922 interview, “When (I) came out, (I) could not walk. (I was) Helped by (my) brother to our line. There (we) became separated. I never saw him again alive.”

After separating from James, William was admitted to the General Hospital in Grafton, W.Va., on March 8, 1865, with typhoid fever. A little over two weeks later, on March 24, he died. He was 34 years old. William was laid to rest in what became the Grafton National Cemetery. James returned to the family farm in Mattoon, Ill. Making a similar trip across the country were William’s personal belongings. All William had to his name at death was the clothing off his back and a hefty \$73 dollars in back pay.

Their mother signed the receipt for the goods, now in the National Archives, with a simple X. Lurana was illiterate. Following her husband’s death in 1863, other members of the family had to read William and James’ letters aloud. She would hold onto them until her death in 1905.

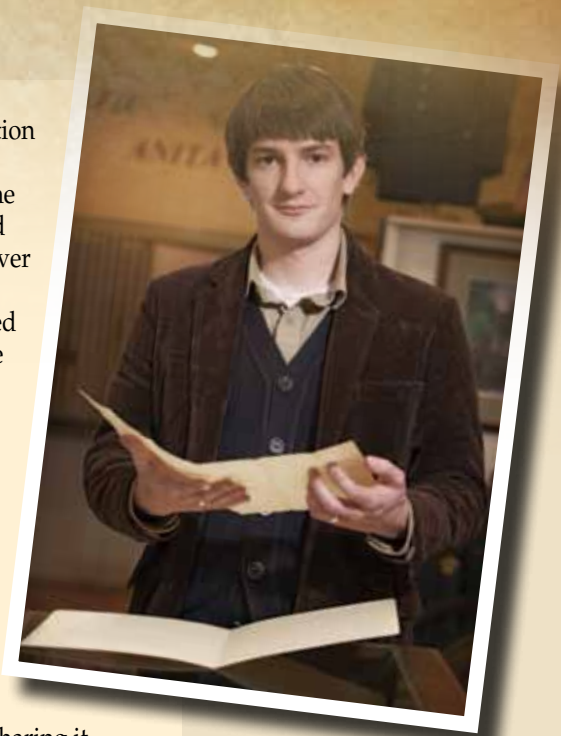
In 1875, James and his young wife, Melvina, moved to Iowa where they started a family, first with Marcella and then Nathan, my namesake. James established a farm just west of Griswold, Iowa, that remained in our family until the late 1990s. James and Melvina are buried in Whipple Cemetery just outside Griswold — only a short drive from the Creighton campus. It’s interesting to note that every Memorial Day our family visited the grave of James’ son, Nathan, to lay flowers, but we never noticed the grave just beside it.

No one ever read the inscription or saw the bronze Civil War veteran star sticking out of the ground. For years we strolled right by James’ grave and never made the connection.

William and James survived the entire war, relying on one another to endure the stress of combat, the boredom of camp life and the horrors of Confederate captivity. They were brothers bonded by more than blood. Having marched across the country to quell the rebellion, they witnessed some of the greatest and darkest moments in our history.

James lived to tell his story, sharing it with other veterans and ensuring that his and William’s letters, preserved by their mother, remained in the family. It was from these letters that I rediscovered their story.

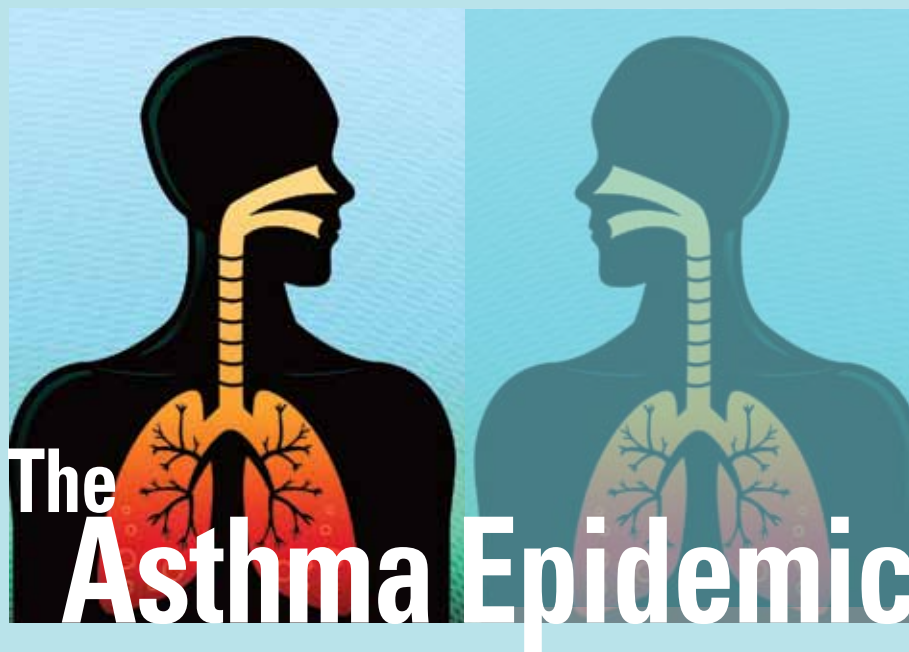
The exploits of William and James are no longer obscured by the fog of time and human memory. As the nation marks the 150th anniversary of the Civil War through 2015, it is important to remember the men and women of “remarkable unremarkableness,” as historian Reid Mitchell describes it, who fought and died on either side of that bloody conflict.



About the author: Tye is from Kearney, Neb., and is a senior majoring in history and theology with a minor in justice and peace studies. He presented his Civil War research on the Graham brothers at the 2009 Conference on Illinois History, where he was the only undergraduate to present original research. He also presented at the Missouri Valley History Conference in early March, where he was awarded Best Undergraduate Paper by the Society for Military History. Tye plans to pursue a doctoral degree in history, specializing in Early American history, especially that of the Southwest, and later teach at the collegiate level.

Tye visits his great-great-great grandfather’s grave near Griswold, Iowa. The bronze star by the grave stone identifies him as a Civil War veteran.





As far as diseases go, asthma is about as ancient as you can get. We've known about it longer than we've known about Jesus Christ, the 365-day calendar, and the concept of zero as a number. But knowing about it doesn't mean knowing what to do about it. Just two generations ago, for instance, asthma treatments included hypnotism, doses of arsenic and cutting a nerve in the throat that stimulates breathing.

No wonder that many saw asthma medicine as "a little bit of witchcraft," says Robert Townley, MD'55, Creighton University professor of medicine and medical microbiology, who's been studying asthma and allergies for half a century. "There wasn't a lot of science at that time."

Asthma science is needed now more than ever, as 24 million Americans — nearly one in every 13 — have asthma. That's about the same as the population of Texas. It's also more than have cancer or coronary heart disease and is the most common serious, chronic, disabling disease among children.

It wreaks havoc. The American Asthma Foundation and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America report that asthma in the United States annually:

- Costs \$20 billion in direct and indirect health care costs;
- Accounts for 25 percent (2 million) of all emergency room visits;
- Causes children to miss 13 million school days and adults to miss 10 million workdays.

"It is a major crisis," says Devendra Agrawal, Ph.D., MBA'04, MS'05, professor of biomedical sciences, who holds the Peekie Nash Carpenter Endowed Chair in Medicine at Creighton and whose research ranges from allergy and asthma to stroke prevention.

There is good news. Treatments are improving. And annual asthma deaths have been on the decline since 1996 to just under 4,000.

Yet more people than ever are being diagnosed with asthma, an upward spike that began around 1980. When Agrawal joined

Creighton's Division of Allergy and Immunology in 1985, about 8.7 million Americans had the disease. That number since has nearly tripled. The increase is especially dramatic among children, about 7.1 million of whom have the disease, with a particularly sharp rise among children 4 and younger.

"This is not a disease that spares anybody," says Creighton Professor Russell Hopp, D.O., BS'70, who specializes in pediatric allergy and immunology. "From 0 to 100 and everybody in between. When it happens in the extremes of young children, it's very dramatic and it's very sad."

Seeking a Cause

We at once know very much and very little about asthma.

A disease of the lungs, it can make breathing difficult or even impossible. Airway muscles squeeze together, blood vessels in them swell, and thick, sticky mucus clogs them, blocking the flow of oxygen. Asthma attacks can be akin to trying to breathe with a bag placed over your head, sealed at the neck.

Triggers include allergens (pollen, mold, etc.), respiratory infections and sinusitis, irritants like perfumes or paint fumes,

some medications, exercise and more. New research, for instance, suggests that the asthma afflicting many firefighters who responded to the 9/11 tragedy was triggered by dust from the World Trade Center collapse.

Some with asthma suffer mildly and need little treatment. In others, it is debilitating, affecting everyday decisions.

Creighton sophomore Marissa Meyers first experienced an asthma attack when she was 10 when a nasty respiratory infection sent her to the hospital. "I could barely breathe," says Meyers, who works in Creighton's allergy and immunology laboratory. "It felt like an elephant was standing on my chest." She's suffered with it ever since, usually having three or four attacks a year.

Townley has been personally impacted, too. He was a physics major in college in the 1950s when his aunt died from asphyxiation brought on by an asthma attack. His grandmother convinced him to change his major to pre-med, and he devoted his life to finding a cure for the disease. In 1966, he founded Creighton's Division of Allergy and Immunology. Hopp, whose studies have focused on the familial and genetic roots of asthma, had three young patients die in the late 1990s after suffering asthma attacks while at school. "To this day, I can tell you their names," Hopp says. "I can tell you who their grandma was."

Strange as it may sound, long ago this shutting down of the airways might have served a protective role. Townley notes that the layer of mucus on the bronchial tubes is like a thin coat of paint that traps pollen, allergy particles, dust, viruses and bacteria. "It's the only thing between you and the outside world, in terms of your lungs," he says. Perhaps, Hopp theorizes, ancient humans needed such mucus and airway constriction as protection against campfire smoke in a cave or noxious chemicals seeping from the ground.

Still, those would just be triggers. But what causes asthma?

"The short answer is we don't know," Townley says. This despite science that "has exploded in terms of the knowledge of immunology," and the mapping of the human genome.

Adds Hopp: "It is an extremely complex disease of which there are probably multiple forms and there's not a single gene that causes this disease."

What we have learned is that it is an inflammatory condition—something known only for about 20 years — and that genetics are in play.

Thomas Casale, M.D., chief of the Division of Allergy and Immunology at Creighton and past president of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, calls inflammation

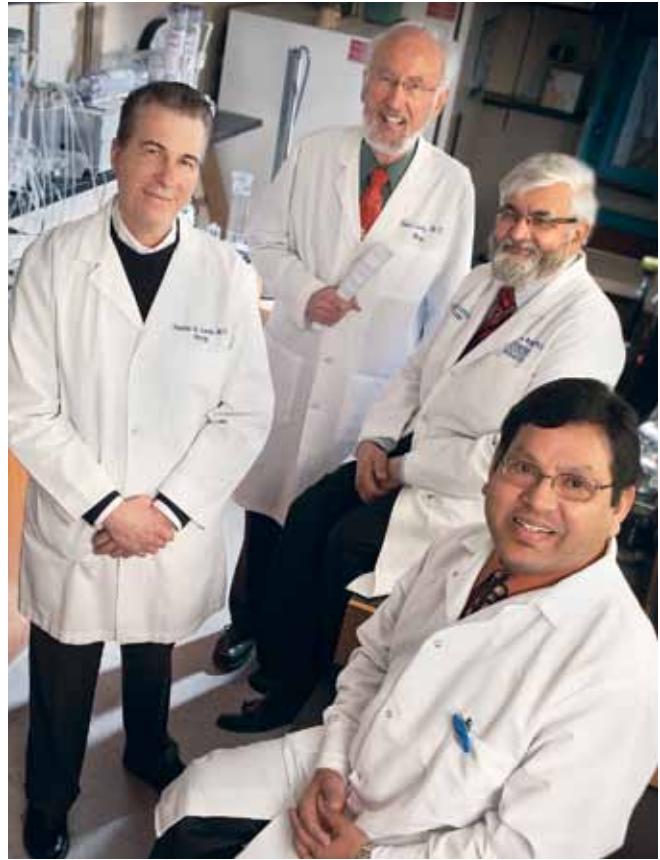


Photo by Mike Kleweter

Creighton's asthma researchers include, clockwise from left, Thomas Casale, M.D., Robert Townley, MD'55, Agandra Bewtra, M.B.B.S., and Devendra Agrawal, Ph.D., MBA'04, MS'05.

key to asthma's step-by-step development. "And every year we learn about new molecules and new pathways that we think are important," he says.

Townley refers to this inflammation as being important for "airway hyper-responsiveness, the exquisite, dramatic response that the airways of people with asthma have to common exposures such as cold air or exercise."

In asthmatics, a protein called Interleukin-13 (IL-13) increases this hyper-responsiveness. Worse, it also decreases the effect of bronchial dilator treatments like cortisone inhalers.

This hyper-responsiveness was made clear through Creighton research. Subjects were exposed to methacholine, a chemical that mimics the effects of histamine, an organic nitrogen compound naturally produced by the body and released during allergic reactions and that restricts airway flow. A subject himself, Hopp could withstand a dose of methacholine 20,000 times stronger than asthmatics could. It became a genetic predictor of having asthma.

"This is, in part, a genetic disease," Hopp says. "It runs in families."

If only one parent has asthma, notes the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, chances are 1 in 3 that offspring will have asthma. If both parents have asthma, the likelihood jumps to 7 in

Asthma science is needed now more than ever, as 24 million Americans — nearly one in every 13 — have asthma. That's about the same as the population of Texas. It's also more than have cancer or coronary heart disease and is the most common serious, chronic, disabling disease among children.

10. Creighton student Meyers' father has asthma, so even before her attack at 10, "it was kind of a waiting game that I was going to be diagnosed" (though her brother is asthma-free).

What we've learned about inflammation, genes and asthma also shows us how far we have to go.

"There's at least 32 genes involved in asthma," Townley points out. "It's not like you can knock out one gene."

On the Rise

Genes, though, don't account for asthma's increasing prevalence. To explain that, researchers look to environment and behaviors.

Among the most interesting explanations?

We're too clean.

"Though if you look at most teenage boys, that's not true," Casale says.

Nevertheless, our propensity toward cleanliness and our

Creighton researchers have played a pivotal role in answering the questions of asthma — from linking vitamin D levels to poor lung function, to developing new techniques to measure airway hyper-responsiveness, to finding underlying cellular and molecular mechanisms, to exploring genetic connections.

protectiveness via antibiotics actually could be exacerbating the rise in asthma. This "hygiene hypothesis" speaks in part to the idea that some people are born with an allergic and asthmatic predisposition that "turns on" if the body doesn't develop immunities.

"If you're an only child and you have a few infections, you're more likely to develop clinical allergies and asthma," Casale says. "Whereas if you have older siblings or you're put in day care, your exposure to a lot of different infections may at some level be protective of asthma because it shifts the immune response toward a different pathway.

"What we've learned is that the DNA molecules in some of those bacterial infections have the ability to skew the immune system. So what we're doing is studying some of those DNA fragments and giving them to humans with asthma to see if we can skew their immune system away from the allergic paradigm."

A lifestyle spent mostly indoors in "clean" houses and workplaces also seems to be at play. Closed-up homes with wall-to-wall carpet can harbor dust, dust mites and other allergens that the body detects as a threat. So, perhaps a little dirt and sickness every now and then can be a good thing.

"It is counterintuitive," Agrawal says, "but at the same time, we have to give our body a chance develop different types of response to fight foreign invaders."

This ever-complex syndrome isn't reacting only to our cleanliness, though. Agrawal points to increased obesity as another possible reason for the rise in asthma. Body weight and increased fat, he says, "are making our body develop more inflammatory types of cells."

Other possible triggers to this asthma explosion could include increased pollution and greater exposure to pets. Even pediatricians might have something to do with the rise in asthma incidence, though not as a cause. Agrawal says that pediatricians are becoming better at recognizing asthma symptoms and diagnosing patients with it, rather than with bronchitis or some other condition.

And if too much (cleanliness, dust, antibiotics, fat, pollution, pets) is a problem, too little also could be at play. How so? Research over the past three decades that has linked vitamin D deficiency to an increased risk of various maladies, including cancer and heart disease, also has tied it to an exacerbation of asthma.

"Low levels of vitamin D correlated with poorer lung function, increased airway reactivity [asthma symptoms] and reduced response to steroid treatment in adult asthmatics," said Cristina Fernandez, M.D., an associate professor of pediatrics at Creighton.

The link is not conclusive, but certainly suggestive. Fernandez points to one study of 54 adult patients with asthma. Those who were vitamin D deficient had twice the airway hyperactivity as those with normal levels of vitamin D. Another study of 600 Costa Rican children indicates that vitamin D levels are inversely linked to several indicators of allergy/asthma severity, including hospitalizations for asthma, use of inhaled steroids and levels of antibodies (IgEs) that attach to allergens and cause asthmatic reactions.

"We suspect that giving vitamin D supplements to asthma patients who are deficient may help with their asthma control," Fernandez said. "Whether vitamin D supplementation can prevent the development of asthma in very young children is a separate question which will be answered by more clinical trials."

On the Map

Creighton researchers have played a pivotal role in answering the questions of asthma and in developing enhanced treatments.

Townley, named a "2008 Great Allergist" by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, helped develop techniques to measure airway hyper-responsiveness, and his seminal work on families with asthma led to many important observations about key genetic aspects of inheritance patterns for asthma and allergens. His research, says Casale, "put Creighton on the map for asthma and allergy research."

The map, though, remains somewhat sparse. Townley notes that less than half of U.S. medical schools have an allergist on faculty. Creighton has the only such department in Nebraska and several surrounding states have none.

Creighton's division, says Casale, "has evolved over time

depending on the faculty who's been here ... but we've always had both a good basic research and clinical research program in asthma and allergies." Adds Hopp: "We have a 40-year track record of being at the forefront of a number of different topics."

The department is a mix of experience and approach. Townley, 82, still researches hyper-responsiveness. Agrawal, Casale and Hopp have a combined 85 years of asthma research experience. Agrawal's research has received national attention and National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for efforts to better understand asthma's underlying cellular and molecular mechanisms and to develop more precise and cost-effective treatments. He and colleague Againdra Bewtra, who holds a medical degree (M.B.B.S.) from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi and is professor of medicine in Creighton's Division of Allergy and Immunology, are studying white blood cells called eosinophils — which are one of the major inflammatory cells in the lungs of chronic asthmatics. Casale's work includes research on Anti-IgE medication that "suck up" antibodies (IgEs) in the body, preventing them from attaching to allergens and causing a reaction. Hopp has explored the familial ties of asthma, looking, for instance, at asthma in twins through NIH-supported research. Fernandez points to Creighton research of 30 asthmatic children to better determine the role vitamin D plays with asthma. "Initial data shows very low levels of vitamin D in more than half of our patients," she says.

There are numerous others at work in the division. Agrawal is assisted by a lab of 11 graduate students and nine post-doctoral fellows. "Everyone is working in a different direction, tackling a different point of view," he says. At the beginning of the spectrum are students like Meyers, who hopes to one day research cancer. She's just finding her way around the lab, starting with simple techniques like isolating white blood cells.

Creighton's pharmacological studies also have been important. "Each year we're improving our knowledge on the safety and efficacy of newer potential medications that could be approved by the Food and Drug Administration in the next two to five years," Hopp says.

Treatments, Cure

The now-game is better treatments; the end-game, a cure.

Treatments were prescribed as far back as 2800 B.C., notes Casale, when a Chinese emperor wrote of herbal and other therapies for asthma. Townley recalls seeing patients who received arsenic as a treatment — and who developed arsenical keratosis, a precancerous condition on the palms of their hands. Others thought they could hypnotize the asthma out of asthmatics or that a "cure" could be found in cutting a neck nerve that stimulated breathing, a treatment that also was used for patients with emphysema. "That turned out to be false," he says.

One treatment that did prove to work was cortisone shots, introduced for asthmatics in the 1960s. "Cortisone worked like a miracle drug," Townley says. Hopp points to the better utilization of corticosteroids as the primary reason for the drop in deaths from asthma since 1998. Its side effects — increased blood



Creighton's Cristina Fernandez, M.D., is looking at the effect of vitamin D on asthma, and Russell Hopp, D.O., BS'70, is exploring the familial ties of asthma.

pressure, edema, worsening of diabetes, possible osteoporosis — were mitigated by limiting the drug's frequency of dose and using an inhaler to expose it directly to the lungs.

Today, medications can provide long-term control or short-term, quick relief. But asthma treatment is not one-size-fits-all. Hopp points to at least six different therapies he can use for individuals. The right mix often comes through trial and error, says Casale, who hopes that one day a blood test can identify a patient's biomarkers, pointing to the most effective drug therapies.

"That's truly needed," he says. "We are learning that individuals may have different mechanisms that trigger their asthma, and different mechanisms require novel approaches to treatment."

Treatments being researched look promising. Townley mentions drugs that might prove to block the harmful effects of Interleukin-13. Agrawal is working on finding the mediator that can modulate immune response — not only to prevent allergic asthma, but also to reverse inflammation in the lung and asthma in the people who have existing conditions.

"We haven't gotten there yet," says Casale. "The pipe dream is to find something that can actually reverse that inflammation and ultimately provide a cure."

It won't be easy. Researchers learned about the mutation responsible for Sickle cell disease in 1979, he notes, yet still don't have a cure for that disease.

Asthma is more complex — and it affects many more people. "I'm working," Agrawal says. "I'm thinking about it all the time. The hope is that maybe we find one day a common factor involved in all asthmatics. And that will be the great cure."

"That is my wish, my ambition, my passion."

For him and 24 million other Americans and counting.

About the author: Flott is a freelance writer in Omaha.



'Building Leaders for the Greater Good'

New Creighton Online Degree
Program Has Jesuit Influence

By Pamela Adams Vaughn
Features Editor

In the board game “Jenga,” players try to remove sections of an assembled tower ... without sending the structure crashing to the floor. Those who keep their towers standing can win.

Creighton’s Isabelle Cherney, Ph.D., likens good leadership to this board game: shaping and adapting the organization in ways to improve it — without damaging, and, even better, while enhancing, the whole.

Cherney, professor of psychology and director of the Honors Program at Creighton, is also director of the new Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) Program in Leadership, which debuted at Creighton this spring.

Cherney is enthusiastic about the new degree and the students it is attracting. And she believes the new doctorate not only will be a good fit with Creighton’s mission, but that it also will break new ground in the field of leadership training.

Probably the program’s greatest strength and, indeed, its distinctiveness, Cherney says, is its tie to the Jesuit mission: preparing graduates to lead wisely for the greater good.

“True leaders do more than just help an organization become successful,” the program overview reads. “They institute and lead changes that benefit society.” Cherney heartily concurs.

It’s a program that she and a team of colleagues have been putting together for the past two years.

Pulling together Creighton faculty and an array of national standouts from the fields of arts and sciences, business, pharmacy and health professions, medicine and law, the new doctorate

has been designed to be strongly interdisciplinary in its teaching of leadership.

And that, Cherney believes, is another strength of the program: Its interdisciplinary nature encourages a broadened, socially aware perspective across the curriculum. In a globalized society facing financial, environmental, and social hardships, farsighted and ethical leaders devise strategies for growth and change that merge with goals for the common good.

Graduates of the new doctoral program have open to them many possibilities across the broad fields of education, business and health care, Cherney points out.

“The Interdisciplinary Ed.D. Program in Leadership was specifically developed as a diverse, generalist degree that can be applied to any occupation. The possibilities are endless,” Cherney says.

In education, for instance, opportunities include but are not limited to careers as school principals or superintendents, deans or vice presidents; in business, directors of human resources, or program managers; in health care, directors of clinical education or clinical residency





programs, department chairs, or program directors.

Covering 60 credit hours, the program is reaching out to an array of people who are “learning from each other,” Cherney adds.

Almost exclusively online (students will come to campus to meet in the summer and again at the close of the program), the new doctorate will allow students to solve problems not only within their own organizations, but outside of their areas of expertise.

“For example,” Cherney says, “if I’m an educator, I’ll have to work with the health care or business part of

Isabelle Cherney, Ph.D., left, is the director of the new Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) Program in Leadership.

Students Come from Varied Backgrounds

Two are assistant principals in middle schools, one in Baltimore, another in Springfield, Ohio.

One is a Jesuit priest from India whose work among the tribal people of the Himalayas will draw him back when his studies are complete.

Still another is head of school at a large Omaha Catholic high school for girls.

Another is creating a forum for dialogue on the issues of privilege and race that are prevalent in her Virginia community.

They all have thrown their hats into the ring of the new Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) Program in Leadership that opened this spring at Creighton.

And whether they hail from down the street, across the country or halfway around the world, all are joined together in the camaraderie that comes with good teaching, openness to learning and the

advantages of going to school online.

“I really do feel connected with the Creighton community, even though I am miles away in York, Pa.,” says Denise Butts.

An assistant principal at an alternative middle/high school in Baltimore, Butts has more than eight years of school leadership experience.

But her teaching career began back in 1993 with the Teach For America AmeriCorps program. Her special area of concern? Urban youth and developing curricula for at-risk young people.

“There are very few administrators and teachers at the K-12 level with a doctorate,” Butts says. “My goal is to set myself apart and become more marketable as a school leader.”

Meanwhile, Susan Toohey is practically down the street from Creighton, yet she credits the leadership program’s flexibility as a major bonus for her.

As head of school at Marian High School, with its more than 700 students, Toohey has to work with flexible options in order to add things to her already packed schedule.

She says her choice of the Creighton program is three-fold:

“One, I love school and learning and have always wanted to work for my doctorate.

“Two, I have never been educated in the Jesuit tradition, and that was a draw for me.

“Finally, the flexibility of the program was a real draw,” she says.

She also says Creighton’s personal attention to students sealed the deal. “I feel connected to the professors and the students — in no small part due to Dr. Cherney!”

Meanwhile, in Ohio, Milton Folson, an assistant principal at a middle school, is responsible for student discipline, conducting staff evaluations, organizing professional development, and leading the day-to-day operations of the building.

In other words, day in and day out, Folson is in the “real world.”

He says he liked the Creighton program because he could “put educational theories to work in the real world” right away.

He also says he was after the doctor of education rather than the doctor of philosophy degree.

“The flexibility an Ed.D. provides,” he believes will “open opportunities at

my organization.”

This is the practicum portion of the program, Cherney explains. “We want the students to reach out of their comfort zones and their backgrounds to work on something that needs changing” for the better.

The leadership program is divided into eight-week modules online. The first seven modules are in sequence, followed by a more open schedule.

From the beginning, students are in touch with each other online, but they’ve also scrutinized themselves.

The first course, Cherney explains, involves finding one’s own strengths. Leaders must know themselves before leading others, she believes.

Only then do you learn how others work best, and that’s where the second

course, Applied Ethics, comes in.

Cherney believes these first two courses already show the indelible stamp of a Jesuit education. “They are reflective and self-scrutinizing, which is very much a part of the Jesuit tradition.”

Because the degree is online, students will be working while they’re taking the courses. This means that their day-to-day experience is also a laboratory to put into practice what they’re learning at Creighton.

Which begs the question: Is a person a born leader or is leadership essentially learned?

Cherney would opt for the latter, and believes that the times are ripe for good leaders.

Today, a successful leader, she asserts, must understand the different social

backgrounds that come together in a given organization.

She also believes that good leaders today must work with limited financial resources and be able to prioritize the lists of needs within strained budgets.

They must also make good employment decisions and understand how new technology can change social relationships at work.

Legal issues and new regulations from government, including those in health care, also are affecting the workplace today, says Cherney, and shaping the decisions leaders make.

For more information on the new Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) Program in Leadership, visit creighton-online.com or call 866.717.6365 to speak with an admissions representative.

the K-12 level, as well as post-secondary (two-year and four-year college) levels.”

Folson was also attracted to the interdisciplinary features of the Creighton program, features that might “open doors in the private sector, specifically in the area of professional development.”

Another student is the Rev. Anand Pereira, MS’10, a Jesuit priest from India.

A graduate of Creighton’s master’s degree program in counseling, Fr. Pereira is an associate pastor at St. Mary Magdalene Church in downtown Omaha and chaplain for both the Magis teachers in Creighton’s education department and the students at Kiewit Residence Hall.

But the work he will return to — among the tribal people in the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains in northeast India — is at the heart of his decision to enroll in the doctorate.

In particular, Fr. Pereira is fascinated — and troubled — by the disconnect between the educated people in his part of India and the plight of the region’s poor.

“From what I have seen, despite the effort of the government of India to provide free and compulsory education up to the age of 14, many are unable

to benefit from this opportunity. As importantly, many of those who have access to a good education utilize it to accumulate wealth by depriving the poor of their rightful share.

“As an educator, I am confused by this paradox. As a Jesuit it pains me. How

“Creighton University’s philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of social justice and incorporates a spiritual approach, closely matches my personal philosophy.”

– Elisabeth Nichols

is it that the educated, who should be the more enlightened, are in fact the oppressors?

“My dream therefore, is to gradually effect a change in the education system in India. I am aware that this is a

gigantic task and, so, would like to begin in a small way by becoming a school administrator who can motivate teachers to imbibe values and transmit them to their students. I hope some day that, along with my colleagues, I will be able to prepare students to become agents of social change.”

Elisabeth Nichols of Virginia is motivated by the same kind of hope.

While drawn to the “interdisciplinary approach and the well-rounded and interesting course schedule,” Nichols says her attraction to the program is more personal.

“Creighton University’s philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of social justice and incorporates a spiritual approach, closely matches my personal philosophy.”

And she looks to Creighton for an educational foundation that will improve her ability to affect social justice issues.

“The Doctor in Educational Leadership program will allow me to reach my goal of creating a forum for dialogue concerning issues of privilege and race that are prevalent in my community.”

Creighton University has established a unique and vibrant relationship with the Catholic Church in China. In December, a key leader in the Church, the 94-year-old bishop of Shanghai, accepted gifts sent on behalf of Creighton President the Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J. He countered with gifts of his own for Creighton's representatives, whom he greeted emotionally as "brother" and "sister."

And he held in awe a CD containing Creighton's Online Retreat — a digital ministry with the transformative power of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* — translated into Chinese.

He would craft his own private retreat with this, the bishop said. And he would share it elatedly. Creighton's Online Retreat has been printed in his diocese's magazine. Additionally, Creighton and Loyola Press have approved the retreat's publication in book form — plans are that it could eventually be distributed throughout China.



Maureen McCann Waldron, BA'75, MA'98, and the Rev. Andy Alexander, S.J., with the bishop of Shanghai, the Rev. Jin Luxian, S.J.

It was an especially joyful meeting. Bishop Jin Luxian, S.J., is one of the leading bishops in China, treading a careful diplomatic line between the Chinese government and Rome.

Bishop Jin persevered through many difficult years and emerged as a much-respected man. He walks a delicate path.

He was visibly moved that a fellow Jesuit had come to see him. That a "sister" from a Jesuit institution had come, too. That the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* would spread throughout China, with the help of Creighton's CD and online retreat in Chinese.

"We felt privileged to carry across this distance a relationship that is unique," said the Rev. Andy Alexander, S.J., vice president for University Ministry and director of the Collaborative Ministry Office at Creighton. "A university and a church in China, connected by a website and a text from St. Ignatius, adapted by Chinese people, now put to use by a local church in China."

The superior general of the Society of Jesus, the Most Rev. Adolfo Nicolas, S.J., hailed Creighton's efforts in engaging the religious order's priorities of higher education, the promotion of the *Spiritual Exercises* and of serving the people of China.

It happened, in part, because the

University was following in the footsteps of famed Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, S.J. (1552-1610). Fr. Ricci was among the first to approach missionary work in a truly Jesuit way. Rather than bringing God to a "god-less" place, he found God there, instead.

In a papal address last June on the anniversary of Fr. Ricci's death, Pope Benedict XVI praised the Jesuit luminary: "... His assumption of the lifestyle and customs of the cultured Chinese classes, the result of study and its patient, far-sighted implementation, ensured that Fr. Ricci was accepted by the Chinese with respect and esteem."

Fr. Ricci was following St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* in the truest sense — finding intimacy with God in all things. That included all things Chinese. Rather than try to change his converts, he would explain how, in some ways, the roots for Christianity already existed within them. It was a radical concept for the 16th century. And it was much appreciated by his host culture.

"He did what no other missionary did in China before," said Maureen McCann Waldron, BA'75, MA'98, associate director of Creighton's Collaborative Ministry Office. "He learned Chinese, he entered into their culture, dressing like a Chinese person, became friends with Chinese people. They still revere Matteo Ricci today in China as a great scholar."

Fr. Alexander and Waldron in December took 200 copies of Creighton's Online Retreat on CD to Hong Kong for a four-day symposium honoring the 400th anniversary of Fr. Ricci's death. At "The Ricci Legacy: Finding God in Cultures — An Ignatian Symposium," the Creighton

Alleluia!

CDs were snatched up as soon as they could be distributed.

"It was very consoling," Fr. Alexander said, "to realize how often these would be copied and shared," to imagine how many people they could eventually reach.

They went to the symposium, in part, to further Creighton's relationship with partners in Hong Kong who had assisted in translating the Online Retreat into Chinese and were partners in ministry.

(One of the first to help with the translation was a Creighton student from Hong Kong.)

The symposium itself was invigorating, Fr. Alexander and Waldron said. They said it was incredible to see Jesuits and lay people from around the world — Canada, France, Australia, India — who were immersing themselves in other cultures in order to spread Christianity, in the spirit of Fr. Ricci.

"We met young people who were on fire, to say the least," Fr. Alexander said.

"The face of the Church in China," Waldron said, "is young, and it is alive, and it is on fire. And it is women."

They described it as a "great gift" to see this, to be with these people, to celebrate the Eucharist in China. They added that it was a privilege to distribute the Online Retreat — in Chinese! — to take, in the smallest of ways, a page from Fr. Ricci's plan.

It was a year ago that Bishop Jin's flock first became aware of Creighton's Online Retreat. Now, it seemed appropriate to establish a deeper relationship, to meet the man himself. Fr. Alexander and Waldron applied for visas to visit mainland China.

Bishop Jin met them alone in a parlor, with a giant picture of Pope Benedict XVI on the wall. The 94-year-old priest is

frail now, unable to travel. But he is still incredibly sharp, without a doubt every bit the bishop of Shanghai. His fellow bishops had recently elected him their honorary president, honoring his style of leading the Church in China. The public co-appointment of Bishop Jin's auxiliary by the pope is an indication that he has the Vatican's blessing as well.

Fr. Alexander and Waldron said they can see Chinese Catholicism blooming today. "It was very surprising, beyond what either of us had expected," Waldron said. "We had not realized the Church in mainland China is so vibrant and so alive."

**"We had not realized
the Church in mainland
China is so vibrant
and so alive."**

— Maureen McCann Waldron, BA'75, MA'98

The Church in China lives in unique and challenging circumstances, but it is learning to thrive and grow, Fr. Alexander said. As he and Waldron met with people, they could see the joy.

They attended Mass Dec. 8 on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at Shanghai's St. Ignatius Cathedral. In Bishop Jin's lifetime he had seen the cathedral as a beautiful place of worship, then vandalized and turned into a warehouse during the Cultural Revolution. Now, it was a glorious cathedral once again, seating as many as 2,500 worshippers.

"It was remarkable to attend Mass in a language we did not know, but we were all there as Catholics," Waldron said.

One woman brought home the power of the situation in an unusual way. As she guided them at a Marian shrine, they spoke of her memories of the Cultural Revolution. She said some asked how the faith survived in a socialist world. Well, of course, it survived, it always does. But the question now, the woman said, is how it will survive in such a capitalist world.

"Because," Fr. Alexander said, "China has rushed headlong into materialism. And you almost have to be there to imagine shopping centers everywhere. Plenty of shopping malls in the subway stations, everywhere. The power of things is very strong there."

"It" — the faith — "remains countercultural," Waldron said.

But Bishop Jin is tending it in the way of his Jesuit ancestor, Fr. Ricci. Under his direction, Mass is conducted in Chinese. He stresses that one doesn't have to stop being Chinese in order to be a Christian. Fr. Ricci said the same thing, centuries ago — he found God everywhere.

When Creighton's emissaries visited him, Bishop Jin was visibly moved. As a Jesuit, he knew of Creighton University. He asked about people within the Society of Jesus.

"He kept saying to Fr. Alexander, 'We are brothers,'" Waldron said.

He called Waldron "my sister."

His parting word to his partners in ministry was "Alleluia."

About the author: Simpson is a freelance writer in Omaha.

Creighton Brings Online Retreat to China

By Kalani Simpson

Barbara Reardon Heaney Chair Inaugurated

Eileen Burke-Sullivan, S.T.D., MChrSp'84, associate professor of theology, director of Creighton's online Master of Arts in Ministry program and associate director of the Master of Christian Spirituality program, was installed as the first holder of the Barbara Reardon Heaney Chair in Pastoral Liturgical Theology in Creighton's College of Arts and Sciences during a campus ceremony on Feb. 23.

The new chair in pastoral liturgical theology reaffirms Creighton's commitment to the importance of public worship in the life of the Church and will allow as many



Photo by Ford Jacobsen

Burke-Sullivan, MChrSp'84, is the Chair's first holder.

students as possible to study the transformative power of liturgy so that they, in turn, can go out and transform the world and become leaders in their communities of worship.

Burke-Sullivan has dedicated her life to serving the Church and society as a pastoral minister, administrator and educator. She has been a full-time faculty member since 2003.

Prior to joining Creighton, Burke-Sullivan served as a pastoral liturgical minister in parishes and dioceses in both Catholic and Protestant churches throughout the United States and Canada. Among her professional ministerial roles, she served as director of music and acting director of liturgy in the Archdiocese of Omaha's Office for Divine Worship for three years. With her brother, the Rev. Kevin Burke, S.J., she is co-author of *The Ignatian Tradition*.

Burke-Sullivan described the liturgy as "the fire that fuels the life of the Church." Her goal as an educator is to tie formal, academic theology to the practices of liturgy and spirituality.

Burke-Sullivan completed her Doctorate of Sacred Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass., (now the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College). She also holds a License in Sacred Theology and master's degrees in theology and music.

The Barbara Reardon Heaney Chair in Pastoral Liturgical Theology is a gift from the family and friends of the late Barbara Reardon Heaney, MD'51. In speaking about establishing

this chair, Robert P. Heaney, BS'47, MD'51, the John A. Creighton University Professor, recalls that his wife's love for liturgy first drew her to his attention.



Heaney

"While we were students in Creighton's School of Medicine, I noticed several pieces of liturgical art — holy cards, bookmarks and such — spilling from

her book bag. I remember thinking, 'Now there's someone who likes the things I think are important,'" Heaney recalls.

They began their marriage during a time when the liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic Church was flourishing and theology that led to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy at Vatican II was taking shape.

The couple worshipped at St. John's Church on the Creighton campus and incorporated liturgical elements into their family life, such as reading the Psalms around the family table where they gathered with their seven children.

Barbara Reardon Heaney, who died in 2006, also was a compassionate psychiatrist, volunteering her services to numerous charitable and religious organizations. Once her children were raised, she opened a private practice in Omaha.

Tax Law Change Benefits Donors, Students

There are many reasons people choose to support Creighton University. Chief among them are to show their appreciation for their own education, to demonstrate their faith in Creighton's mission by helping today's students, and to memorialize loved ones.

A recent tax law change is making it possible for more Creighton alumni and friends to meet these objectives — making a tax-free distribution from an IRA to a qualified charitable organization by individuals 70½ years of age or older was reinstated at the end of 2010 and continues for all of 2011.

Those taking advantage of this provision

will be able to see amazing results come from their gifts to Creighton made from IRAs.

For example, the Barbara Reardon Heaney Chair in Pastoral Liturgical Theology, which was inaugurated on Feb. 23, is being partially funded by this type of gift.



Scholer

Creighton students are the direct beneficiaries of these gifts, as the pastoral liturgical theology chair will allow students to experience

more richly the transformative power of public worship, so that they, in turn, can become leaders in their own communities of worship after they graduate.

Since December, when direct transfers from IRAs by individuals 70½ or older were reinstated, a number of Creighton donors have taken advantage of the tax-free incentive and have received the satisfaction of knowing they are helping today's students become tomorrow's leaders by providing scholarships and other assistance.

To learn about this tax law provision, as well as changes in the estate tax, contact the Office of Estate and Trust Services at 800.334.8794, giftplanning@creighton.edu or visit <http://giftplanning.creighton.edu>. You will be offered confidential, personalized assistance and receive answers to your questions.

*Steve Scholer, JD'79
Senior Philanthropic Adviser
Office of Estate and Trust Services*

Kruse Family Endowment Supports Service

A group of Creighton health sciences students wants to make a difference in a small Iowa town this spring.

Their idea? They'd like to help staff a struggling medical clinic as volunteers over break.

Another group, a pair each of nursing and pharmacy students, will take a similar route, offering their services, gratis, to a nonprofit home health care agency.

Meanwhile, a mixed group of medical, dental and physical therapy students would like to lend some muscle to a local Habitat for Humanity project.

Community service has always been a hallmark of Creighton University, but it can mean a real scramble for funding in delivering services.

Now, thanks to the generosity of Creighton alumnus Michael Kruse, PharmD'99, students will be better able to focus their urge to serve. And, better yet, the community on the receiving end will find it easier to get the help they need.

Kruse's gift, the Kruse Family Endowment for Multidisciplinary Service, is the second gift from this service-oriented alumnus.

Like his first Creighton endowment, the Alumni Endowment for Community Service, the funding goal of this new gift is also \$25,000. And, while the first gift targeted School of Pharmacy and Health Professions

organizations to perform community service, the new fund reaches across health sciences school lines to pull volunteer crews together.

Now a pharmacist at Palomar Medical Center in Escondido, Calif., Kruse knows how important community service has been in his own life.

In fact, his first community service assignment as a Creighton pharmacy student still resonates with him down the years.

The summer after his second year of pharmacy school, Kruse worked for Indian Health Services, which he calls "a model for pharmaceutical care," at the Ft. Hall Not-Tsoo Gah-Nee Health Center near Pocatello, Idaho. "Although years in the past, that experience has been the one thing that draws questions during job interviews," Kruse said.

It also has shaped his philanthropy, as his newest gift attests.

Established last year to honor his parents, Margaret and Wayne Kruse, a nurse and engineer, respectively, the Kruse Family Endowment for Multidisciplinary Service is designed to enable Creighton health sciences students to "live out the mission of the University ... and learn lessons that cannot be taught in the classroom."

If you would like more information about these funds, or wish to support these efforts, please contact Teri Corcoran, Office of Development, at 402.280.3028.

Students Grateful for Your Support

Creighton's students — and alumni — astound me. As you read about them in the pages of *Creighton University Magazine*, I am



Simic

sure you know what I mean. They truly take to heart the University's mission and work to make our world a better place.

And our students and alumni wouldn't

be the people they are without our dedicated faculty. Creighton makes it a priority to recruit faculty who perceive that teaching at Creighton is a higher calling that leads them not only to teach, but to mentor their students in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition.

It is because of you — our generous alumni and friends — that Creighton is able to offer our students these dynamic educational experiences — as well as the financial assistance they need to attend Creighton. Just in the past few months, our wonderful donors have established more than 30 new scholarship funds.

Young people such as honor student Hilary Wething are thankful that those

who have gone before are willing to give back to Creighton and help today's students.

A senior from Connecticut majoring in math and economics, Hilary plans to pursue a career in economics research. She said Creighton has given her opportunities she never imagined.

"I've had such great opportunities in the Honors Program to work with faculty members on their research, as well as start my own research agenda," she said. "Creighton helped me figure out who I am and how I want to change the world. I couldn't be more grateful."

Because of your generosity, students such as Hilary will go on to do landmark research, perform lifesaving medical procedures, teach children about God, lead their communities in service to others, and bring an ethical influence to the corporate workplace.

We thank you for caring about the next generation and giving so generously to show your faith in them. Together, we are furthering Creighton's mission — one student at a time. Through your help, Creighton students go on to impact a world sorely in need of what they have to offer.

Laura C. Simic
Senior Associate Vice President of
Development and Campaign Director

Wanted: Cultural Artwork



Creighton University's Office of Multicultural Affairs is looking for artwork from various ethnic cultures to display in its cultural center. To discuss donating a piece of art, please contact the Office of Development at 800.334.8794.

Alum Items

56 George Blue Spruce, DDS, Surprise, Ariz., assistant dean for American Indian affairs and assistant professor at A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health, received the 2010 Oral Health America Marvin Goldstein Outstanding Volunteer Award for his dedicated volunteer leadership in improving the oral health of the American Indian people and for inspiring American Indians to enter and become leaders in the dental and allied health professions.

73 Jerome M. Mayer, DDS, Wildwood, Mo., was awarded Fellowship in the American College of Dentists on Oct. 8, 2010. Mayer is currently a general family dentist in Clayton, Mo.

74 Rev. James F. Schwertley, BA '51, MDIV, Omaha, is the author of a new book, *5 Minute Talks on Life, Love & Faith*. Fr. Schwertley currently

serves as the senior resident at St. Mary Magdalene Church. He will celebrate 50 years in the priesthood on May 27.

76 Daniel E. Monnat, JD, Wichita, Kan., was inducted as a Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. In addition, Monnat was recognized in the magazine *Missouri and Kansas Super Lawyers 2010 Edition* as one of the two-state area's top 100 lawyers; was named to the *Best Lawyers in America 2011* edition in the areas of criminal defense and white-collar criminal defense; and his law firm, Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered, earned metropolitan first-tier rankings for "criminal defense: non-white-collar" and "white-collar" in the inaugural issue of *Best Law Firms*.
* **Michael J. Schumacher, BSBA,** Cody, Wyo., has been named executive vice president/chief credit officer of Pinnacle Bank-Wyoming.

77 Patrick Costello, JD, Lakefield, Minn., received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award from the American Agriculture Law Association.

78 Michael M. Kagan, BA, Rockford, Ill., was appointed superintendent of schools in the Rockford Diocese on July 1, 2010.

79 Dr. Sheila Overton, BSN, Honolulu, a board certified obstetrician and gynecologist, wrote the book, *Before It's Too Late: What Parents Need to Know About Teen Pregnancy and STD Prevention*.

80 Randy K. Newby, DDS, Wichita, Kan., attained the level of Diplomate, the highest level of achievement, from the American Orthodontic Society at their national meeting in Chicago on Aug. 20, 2009.

82 Christopher J. Chaput, BA, New York, has joined RPK Capital's New York office as part of the senior management team. **Janine J. McArdle, ARTS,** Houston, has been promoted to senior vice president-gas monetization, a new position at Apache Corporation. **Dr. Angela Sharkey, BA,** St. Louis, has been named associate dean of faculty affairs and development at St. Louis University School of Medicine.

83 Dr. Elizabeth Freund Larus, BA, Fredericksburg, Va., has been promoted to professor in the department of political science and international affairs at the University of Mary Washington. **Mark Slowiczek, JD,** Bahrain, has received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award from the Department of the Navy. This award is one of the highest awards and medals provided to civilian employees within agencies of the federal government of the United States.

Edward and Mary Lucretia Creighton Society

The Edward and Mary Lucretia Creighton Society is Creighton University's premier donor recognition club. Donors at the Creighton Society level sustain the University through their unrestricted annual gifts. These generous contributions to the University are crucial to ensuring that Creighton is a leader in providing the highest quality Catholic, Jesuit education to our students. Alumni donors recognized at the Creighton Society level are identified as follows:

- † - Ignatius Circle (\$10,000 and above)
- ☉ - Jesuit Circle (\$5,000 to \$9,999)
- ❖ - Founders' Circle (\$2,500 to \$4,999)
- * - Sustaining Circle (\$1,000 to \$2,500)

85 David Ceci, Esq., BA, Staten Island, N.Y., has earned the Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager designation from the American Bankers Association's Institute of Certified Bankers. Ceci is currently vice president and compliance officer at Northfield Bank. **Paul Gosar, BS '81, DDS,** Flagstaff, Ariz., was elected to the House of Representatives. Gosar represents the 1st District of Arizona.

87 Joseph R. Swift, JD, St. Louis, principal and shareholder with Brown & James, P.C., has been elected for a three-year term to the board of directors of ALFA International, a global legal network of independent law firms.

88 David Andrews, BA, Gurnee, Ill., recently completed his first Iron-distance triathlon, the inaugural Revolution3 Full Rev Cedar Point. The event, held at Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio, consisted of a 2.4 mile swim, followed by a 112 mile bike ride and ending with a 26.2 mile marathon. **Mary Curry Morrow, BA,** Pewaukee, Wis., has been promoted to vice president of Xerox Corporation in Brookfield, Wis. Morrow will lead Xerox's sales and services offices for the state of Wisconsin.

90 Lisa Lodin Peralta, BA, Minneapolis, and her husband, Nelson L. Peralta, through their law firm, Peralta & Peralta, Ltd., successfully represented a number of clients, mostly *pro bono*, in the I-35 bridge collapse in Minnesota in 2007 that killed 13 people and injured 145. The Peraltas handled a number of cases involving low-income Latino children who were on a school bus when the bridge collapsed.

93 Cindi Spence Matt, Esq., BSBA, Minnetrista, Minn., has opened the law firm, Matt Legal Services, LLC, in Buffalo, Minn.

95 Erin Noteboom Bow, BS, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, wrote her first novel, *Plain Kate*.

96 Keith A. Harvat, JD, Omaha, has been named partner of Lieben, Whitted, Houghton, Slowiczek & Cavanagh, P.C., L.L.O.

Harvat practices commercial litigation and construction law. **Keith M. Pieper, BSBA,** Davis, Calif., started Pretarget, an Internet advertising data company. **Dr. Erin D. Underwood, BS,** Centerville, Ohio, became certified as an anesthesiologist by the American Board of Anesthesiology in April 2009 and was named director of education of Anesthesiology Services Network in Dayton, Ohio. Underwood was also elected secretary/treasurer of Anesthesiology Services Network board of directors in January 2010.

97 Dr. Amy E. Cyr, BA, St. Louis, completed a breast surgery fellowship and joined Washington University in St. Louis as an assistant professor of surgery. **Scott Preston, JD,** Indianapolis, has joined Littler Mendelson, P.C., as a shareholder.

98 Chad Bodner, BA, Gretna, Neb., has been named vice president, worksite sales, of Assurity Life Insurance Company in Lincoln, Neb.

00 Erin Schmitz Albers, BA, Elkhorn, Neb., has been selected as a recipient of the *Midlands Business Journal* 2010 "40 under 40 Awards." This award recognizes 40 outstanding entrepreneurs, business owners, managers and professionals under the age of 40. Albers is currently the marketing and public relations manager for Home Instead Senior Care in Omaha. **Carmon M. Harvey, BA,** Arlington, Va., has been named partner of Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, LLP. Harvey practices employment and general commercial litigation. **Maj. Erica Iverson, BA,** Kabul, Afghanistan, completed her master's degree in legislative affairs from George Washington University and a Congressional Fellowship in Washington, D.C. She is currently serving in Afghanistan with the Afghanistan Engineer District-North. **Travis Schmitz, BSBA,** Omaha, has been promoted to partner at the CPA firm, Frankel Zacharia, LLC.

01 John A. Sharp, BA '98, JD, Omaha has been named director and deputy general counsel for Assurity



Interested in bringing local Creighton alumni together in your area?

Get started with an Event in a Box!

You coordinate the details and the Office of Alumni Relations sends you supplies and promotes the event.

This is a great way to reconnect with friends and meet new ones, too!

Visit the Alumni Association website for more information.

www.alumni.creighton.edu/eventinabox

Creighton Artist's Big Displays Often Tackle Big Issues

Matthew Dehaemers, BFA'96, stands in front of 3,300 illuminated bottles of colored water — arranged like pegs in a giant Lite Bright — forming the partial face of a woman drinking bottled water from a green straw.

"Those are my wife's lips," Dehaemers says. That would be Creighton graduate Shayla Sullivant Dehaemers, BA'97; Matthew used her picture to create the wall-length piece — part of his impressive *Watered Down* exhibit at Creighton's Lied Art Gallery.

The exhibit — on display this fall as part of the 45th anniversary of Creighton's Department of Fine and Performing Arts — marked a special homecoming for Dehaemers.

As a senior student, he was the first artist to be featured in the Lied Art Gallery when it opened in 1996. Then, his medium of choice was printmaking and oil painting. Today, he works on grand displays — often with a social justice twist.

His *Watered Down* exhibit is a good example.

The main piece in the display was a pool-shaped structure (roughly 15 feet wide by five feet tall) depicting Midwest farmland and the Ogallala Aquifer that lies beneath it. The aquifer was represented by hundreds of bags of water, connected by drinking straws to the farmland above — painted acoustic tiles made to look like crop circles. Each tile was topped with a little, moving clock-like hand. "Irrigation pivots," he explains. Corn stalks and gas-pump handles, fashioned out of packaging tape and water bottles, rose from the middle of the piece. A water tower provided visitors a bird's-eye view of the fields; a giant molecule of a crop pesticide hung on a nearby wall.

"Water is something you can't go without," Dehaemers says. "We just take it for granted that it's there and will always be there."

Another part of the display featured plastic piping winding from a water fountain outside the gallery to a video on the scarcity of water in Ethiopia inside the gallery.

"It just shows the extreme contrast," Dehaemers explains. "We have to walk a few



Photo by Mike Kleverter

Matthew Dehaemers, BFA'96, who, as a student, was the first artist featured in Creighton's Lied Art Gallery in 1996, returned for the 45th anniversary of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts with his *Watered Down* exhibit.

feet to get a drink of water, where, in some countries, they have to walk miles."

Dehaemers spent nearly six weeks — three or four days a week — constructing the exhibit. He received help from Creighton students and encouragement from his mentor — Creighton art professor John Thein, whose own work has been exhibited and recognized internationally. "He's amazing," Dehaemers says of Thein. "He's always willing to help. He calms me down when I'm freaking out about a project and helps me problem-solve."

Dehaemers is a native of Kansas City, Kan., and has a studio there. He came to Creighton in the footsteps of his brother, David, BSBA'82, and sister, Renee, BSBA'89. After earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Matthew spent a year with the Mercy Volunteer Corps, teaching art to students on the Native American reservation in St. Michaels, Ariz. He then worked as a graphic designer in Kansas City, before earning his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2002. There, he began working with different materials — at one point sharing art space with furniture designers.

His art has included an eclectic use

of materials: 16-foot tall aluminum and steel sculptures with automated gate arms; a phone booth created entirely out of recycled phone books; the front end of a 1978 Cadillac; 1,110 feet of PVC tubing and 200 pounds of rope creating a ghost-like streetcar; and 1,100 foam pool noodles chopped into 80,000 disks for a floating mural. And his work has focused on a variety of social concerns, from race relations (he wrote in chalk along a half-mile of sidewalk outside the Douglas County Courthouse about the 1919 Omaha lynching of William Brown) to caring for those with Alzheimer's. His work can be seen online at matthewdehaemers.com.

Along the way, he has collected numerous awards, including the State of Kansas Fellowship for Artistic Achievement, four Public Art Network recognitions and an NAACP Community Contribution Award. But his greatest reward, he says, is involving others in his work.

"I like to make work that people can relate to," Dehaemers explains. "I like to engage people, including those who may have never had an experience with art, so that they can have their own epiphany."

destination creighton

reunion weekend 2011

Make your plans to return to the nest!

Fall 2011 Destination Creighton Reunion Weekends

School of Medicine Reunion Weekend – Sept. 9 & 10

Reunion celebrations for the classes of
1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991 & 2001

School of Dentistry Reunion Weekend

(in conjunction with the Fall Dental Assembly) – Sept. 15-17

Reunion celebrations for the classes of
1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991 & 2001

School of Law Reunion Weekend – Sept. 22-24

Reunion celebrations for the classes of 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1986, 1991 & 2001
All alumni are invited back to campus for the Annual Dinner on Friday, Sept. 23.

School of Pharmacy and Health Professions Alumni Weekend – Sept. 22-25

Reunion celebrations for all classes with a graduation year ending in “6” or “1.”
Special recognition of respiratory therapy graduates.

College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, Graduate School and School of Nursing Reunion Weekend – Sept. 23 & 24

Reunion celebrations for the classes of 1961, 1971, 1981, 1986, 1991 & 2001



For more details, visit alumni.creighton.edu.

Life Insurance Company’s corporate law and compliance area in Lincoln, Neb.

02 Capt. Bill J. Druffel, JD, Pullman, Wash., served a one-year deployment to FOB Marez in Mosul, Iraq, as a trial counsel and rule of law attorney with the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team of the 3rd Infantry Division. **Lt. Col. Daniel D. Gruber, MS’98, MD,** Potomac, Md., was promoted to his current rank in the United States Air Force.

03 Kathleen A. Atchison, OTD, Kansas City, Mo., became one of only 5,000 certified hand therapists worldwide. **Kristen Freier, MD,** La Crosse, Wis., has joined Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Medicine. Freier specializes in behavioral health and psychiatry. **Ellyn R. Mulcahy, PHD,** Countryside, Kan., associate professor of science at Johnson County Community College, has been named the 2010 Kansas Professor of the Year. **Robert L. Rice, JD,** Maryville, Mo., was elected prosecuting

attorney for Nodaway County in November 2010. Rice also was elected president of the Northwest Missouri State University Booster Club and the first vice president of the Maryville Pride Lions Club. Rice received the 2010 Lions Club Melvin Jones Fellowship Award for exemplary Lionism and service to the community.

04 Dax Anderson, JD, Salt Lake City, has been elected as a shareholder of the law firm of Kirton & McConkie. Anderson is a member of the firm’s Intellectual Property section. **Adam E. Astley, BA’01, JD,** Omaha, has been named partner of Lieben, Whitted, Houghton, Slowiaczek & Cavanagh, P.C., L.L.O.

05 David E. Black, BSBA, Washington, D.C., has been promoted to deputy director-Washington affairs of Union Pacific Corporation. **Casey J. Symonds, JD,** Kansas City, Mo., joined the law firm of Altieri & Kelly, LLC, in Lee’s Summit, Mo., as a

senior associate. Symonds practices in the area of criminal defense and domestic litigation.

07 Joshua Marshall, BA, Seattle, was appointed to a two-year appointment as commissioner for the city of Seattle Human Rights Commission in September 2010 by Mayor Michael McGinn. **Lt. j.g. Jacob E. Meusch, BA,** Atkinson, Neb., completed the Military Justice Legal Officer course at the Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I. **Jennifer L. Murphy, BSN,** Omaha, in honor of her father, participated in the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Rock ‘n Roll Marathon in San Diego on June 6, 2010, as part of Team in Training. **Angela Dillbeck, OTD, BSBS,** Englewood, Colo.; **Patricia Keane, OTD, BSBS,** Sioux City, Iowa; **Sarah Goodwin, OTD’08,** Sioux City, Iowa; and **Lauren Sheehan, OTD, BSBS,** Omaha, traveled to Omaha’s sister city, Artemivsk, Ukraine, to facilitate a group of students from College of St. Mary and Creighton

University in community development projects. This is one of the first joint service-learning experiences between the two local occupational therapy schools.

09 Michael Noonan, BSBA’05, MSAPM, Omaha, became a CFA Charterholder in March 2010 and joined Tenaska Marketing Ventures as a natural gas accountant.

Marriages

97 Jacqueline Travis, PharmD, and Jules Dessibourg, May 1, 2010, living in Chicago.

98 Carolyn Mott, BA, and Ryan Harvey, Jan. 2, 2010, living in San Diego.

99 Margaret E. Teigen, JD, and James H. Steele, Sept. 18, 2010, living in Denver.

01 Kelly J. Johnson, BSBA, and Eric M. Barten, Sept. 25, 2010, living in Beaverton, Ore.

02 Sophia K. Sharma, MD, and Kevin L. Grabenstatter, May 1, 2010, living in Oakland, Calif.

03 Kathleen A. O'Connor, BSN, and **Marc J. Hunley, BS'99, DPT,** Oct. 16, 2010, living in Omaha.

04 Kim Thiss, JD, and Thomas J. Turner, Oct. 23, 2010, living in Anthem, Ariz. **Melissa Unruh, BSN,** and Brett Selk, Oct. 16, 2010, living in Missouri Valley, Iowa. **Jennifer L. Wede, BSBA,** and **Joseph P. Tippins, BSBA,** May 2, 2009, living in Chicago.

05 Joslyn Emerson, PharmD, and Colby Brown, July 2, 2010, living in Arlington, Va. **Kristen Knodel, BS'01, DDS,** and Maj. Clay Nichols, June 12, 2010, living in Colorado Springs, Colo.

06 Alyssa A. Danze, BA, and Kristopher Norman, June 19, 2010, living in Ennis, Mont. **Jill N. Frank, BSN,** and Weston Pease, Sept. 18, 2010, living in Rochester, Minn. **Katherine "Katy" Krebs, BA,** and Matthew Core,

Aug. 7, 2010, living in Papillion, Neb.

07 Jennifer G. Brown and **Brandon C. Brown, BA,** Aug. 1, 2009, living in Oklahoma City. **Catherine Howe, BSBA,** and Nathan Wurtz, Sept. 4, 2010, living in St. Louis. **Katherine Ryan, BA,** and Levi Anderson, June 26, 2010, living in Marion, N.D.

08 Anna Mattia, BS, and **Joseph Rodgers, BSBA,** June 12, 2010, living in Omaha.

Births

91 Neil Robertson and **Jennifer McCue Robertson, BSBA,** Harrison, N.Y., twin daughters, Bridget Eileen and Kathleen Joanne, July 29, 2010.

93 Dan Burtschi and **Michele Davidshofer Burtschi, BA,** Indianapolis, a daughter, Kaitlin Ann, July 1, 2010.

94 David Auw and **Jennifer Burke Auw, BA,** Homer Glen, Ill., a son, Thomas Robert, Aug. 19, 2010.

96 Keith M. Pieper, BSBA, and **Joy Rickman Pieper, BS'00,** Davis, Calif., a son, Edan Keith, Oct. 5, 2010. Roy Potter and **Stephanie Lassek Potter, BSN,** Gilbert, Ariz., a daughter, Amelia Josephine, March 19, 2010. **Dr. Erin D. Underwood, BS,** and Jody Underwood, Centerville, Ohio, a son, Evan Maxwell, Dec. 10, 2009.

97 Matthew Bashara and **Stephanie Anderson Bashara, BSBA'90, MBA,** Omaha, a daughter, Autumn Elise, Jan. 4, 2010. **Jonathan N. Shoemaker, BA,** and Tammy Shoemaker, Haslet, Texas, a daughter, Hannah Marie, Sept. 9, 2010.

98 Paul Beldin and **Leah Breen Beldin, BSBA,** Parker, Colo., a daughter, Sara Anne, May 19, 2010. **Dr. James Waldren** and **Megan K. Waldren, BSOT,** Hampden, Maine, a

daughter, Rorey Amelia, April 7, 2010.

99 Dr. Neil D. Jones, BS, and **Jennifer Rodgers Jones, BS, MED'04,** Erzenhausen, Germany, a son, Colin Ambrose, July 14, 2010. **Joseph A. Quattrocchi Jr., BS'95, DDS,** and **Vickie Allen Quattrocchi, BSN'95,** Omaha, a daughter, Marin Victoria, Oct. 8, 2010.

00 Michael Creager and **Jennifer Roberts Creager, BA'97, JD,** Commerce City, Colo., a daughter, Lauren Olivia, April 6, 2010. **Brandon M. Fitzsimmons, BA,** and Alexandra Fitzsimmons, St. Paul, Minn., a son, Francesco Michael, Aug. 11, 2010. **Ryan L. Fogt, BSATS,** and **Andrea Stirm Fogt, BA'02,** Athens, Ohio, a daughter, Abigail Grace, Sept. 10, 2010. **Christopher M. Gibbs, MD,** and Lori J. Gibbs, Loves Park, Ill., a son, Nathaniel Christopher, Sept. 24, 2010. **Travis J. Schmitz, BSBA,** and **Julie Finken Schmitz, BS'01,** Omaha, a daughter, Claire Isabelle, Dec. 7, 2010.

106-year-old: 'Creighton Gave Me the Life I Could Never Have Had'

Imagine being married to your spouse for almost 77 years and celebrating both of your 100th birthdays — and then some.

Imagine learning to play golf at 52, shooting your age at 75 and enjoying the sport for more than 45 years.

How about deciding to learn to use a computer at 105? Or passing your driver's license test — without glasses — and being approved to drive for five more years, when you will turn 111?

If you think these feats sound implausible, then you haven't met Creighton alumnus Will Miles Clark, DDS'29, who is 106 and has accomplished all of the above. He lives in a retirement community outside of Tucson, Ariz.

Clark retired from dentistry 46 years ago. He initially was in private practice and then used his skills in the Army, retiring as a colonel. He served as a combat medic in World War II and was awarded the Legion of Merit decoration and a commendation on Iwo Jima.

His wife, Lois, was a dental hygienist when they met. Together they navigated more than seven decades, living in numerous cities in the U.S. as well as in Germany and Korea, and enjoying three children, seven grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Lois died last



Will Miles Clark, DDS'29, is still driving at 106.

year at 103.

"Creighton gave me the life I could never have had," Clark said of his Creighton dental training. "I am forever grateful."

Clark said he held various jobs all through his years at Creighton, often working late into the night. "I remember being called into the dean's office once for falling asleep in class. I'm so thankful he didn't kick me out of school."

Clark began his dental practice in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1929, just three months before the Great Depression brought the country to its knees. "In the Depression years, everyone was

poor, but those were some of the best days of our lives. I didn't make any real money, but at least I could eat." He said he paid off his educational debt in 10 years.

Clark's parents were among the first families to settle Winterset, Iowa, in 1846. The city park features Clark Tower, a castle-like limestone tower named in honor of his great-grandparents. The area is home to the famed bridges of Madison County and is also the birthplace of John Wayne.

The family later migrated to South Dakota, where Clark was born in 1904. His father died in his 30s of pneumonia when Clark was only 3, and he still recalls the funeral. His mother went on to live to nearly 98.

Clark has to endure the frequent curiosity of those who ask his secret to such a long, healthy life. He calls himself a fun-loving person, adding, "My wife and I never dieted. We just ate a good ol' Midwestern diet. I never smoked cigarettes, but I had a cigar or chewing tobacco now and then. And I still will occasionally have a drink."

The spry centenarian says he hung up his golf clubs at 99, but he sometimes rides along in the cart. A "bad hip" caused him to curtail the sport and he now uses a walker. But the hip doesn't affect his driving.

"Some people say I have no business driving, but I don't go along with that, as long as I'm a good driver. There are plenty of people who want to drive with me."

From Survival to Success

By Anthony Flott

"Number 30" blew it.

On the first play of his first start in the first game of his first Creighton season, promising freshman Bob Harstad made his first mistake. And hot-headed Tony Barone was too disgusted to even look at the rookie.

All week prior to Creighton's 1987 season-opening tilt against California, Barone had coached the Bluejays to defend an alley-oop pass the Golden Bears liked to run — likely to Matt Beeuwsaert. Right before tipoff, Barone warned his team again: Watch out for the alley-oop.

"Got it, coach," said Harstad.

Cal won the tip and came down court, Harstad guarding Beeuwsaert. Harstad felt an elbow in his back — a screen — then saw Beeuwsaert rise for an alley-oop bucket. Worse, Harstad was whistled for a foul. Cal, a Sweet 16 team that season, went on to whip the Bluejays 70-49.

Nearly a quarter-century later, the memory remains seared in Harstad's memory. "It was the most traumatic moment of my career," he says.

It's doubtful anyone else remembers the play in such vivid detail or with such agony (OK, perhaps Barone). But Harstad provided Bluejay fans with plenty more to remember him by during the next 127 games of his career — all starts. In December, Creighton honored his career by retiring his No. 30 jersey at halftime of the Bluejays' 82-75 win over St. Joseph. Only former Jays Bob Portman, Paul Silas and Bob Gibson have been so honored.

Harstad is one of only four Missouri Valley Conference (MVC) players to top 2,000 career points (2,110) and 1,000 career rebounds (1,126), along with Oscar Robertson, Larry Bird and Xavier McDaniel. He was MVC first-team from 1989 to 1991 and the conference's player of the year in 1990. Along with center Chad Gallagher — his fellow "Dynamic Duo" partner — Harstad led Creighton to two regular-season MVC titles, two MVC tournament titles and

two NCAA appearances (including a 64-56 win over New Mexico State in 1991). With him, Creighton improved every season, posting consecutive records of 16-16, 20-11, 21-12 and 24-8.

Numerous other numbers could define his career. But the hard-nosed, hustling, dive-to-the-floor Harstad always was more about attitude than he was averages. He may not always have been the most talented player on the court, but he squeezed out every last drop of what he did have.

"I felt I owed Creighton every time I went out there to do just the best job I could do," he says. "I really felt privileged to play for

first to Gallagher. That summer the Bluejay big men decided to put their friendship aside during practices and challenge each other to improve. "Our summer games were more competitive than really our practices ever on the team were," Harstad says. The rest of the team followed suit — and so did the wins.

Post-Creighton, Harstad played nine seasons of pro basketball in Spain and one in Portugal. His scrappy play took its toll: Harstad's ankles (one of which now is tattooed with a flaming basketball) are "really bad" and he's had four knee operations. That means no more basketball. When he returned to Omaha for his jersey

retirement, the alumni game he played in was the first time he'd been on the court in a year.

One of Harstad's proudest accomplishments occurred outside the basketball arena, when he completed his Creighton degree in the summer of 1993.

"My wife, Kate, and my academic advisor were instrumental in me returning and completing my last 13 hours," Harstad says. "They were very persistent and I kind of figured out quickly that I was probably not going to be able to retire once I retired. After I did retire from basketball and began to look for a 'real' job, it quickly became apparent how important that diploma was and the many additional doors of opportunity that it opened for me."

After his playing career, Harstad eventually joined

Ackerman McQueen, an ad agency in Oklahoma City. He lives there with his wife, fellow Creighton grad Kate Rooney, BS'91, and their two sons. He is a vice president and account supervisor with Ackerman McQueen, the Oklahoma City Thunder among his clients.

"I love it," he says. "The ad agency is crazy, and you have deadlines every day. I thrive on that stress. It's a lot like basketball."

"I believe I'm a blue-collar worker in a white-collar world. I have to go 100 percent or I'm not effective. I think that carries over to the real world."

Too bad he can't wear No. 30 there, too.



Former Creighton basketball standout Bob Harstad had his jersey retired in December. Pictured with him are his wife, Kate, sons Luke and Jack, and Fr. Schlegel.

Creighton University."

It wasn't always that way, though. One of Harstad's most vivid memories is of a day in his dorm after his freshman season. He was disappointed, tired of being nervous all the time, and tired of being tired all the time.

"I was just surviving my freshman year," he says. "Going forward, I wasn't going to go in with a survival mentality. I was going to go in with a success mentality. To do better every day. It was the mentality of stop trying to get by and being relieved after practice is over to almost being disappointed practice is over."

That attitude spread throughout the team,

Photo by Eric Francis

Dave Wagenknecht and **Heather Miller Wagenknecht, BA**, North Aurora, Ill., a daughter, Halas Nicole, July 30, 2010. **Dave J. Wenthold, BSBA**, and Katie Wenthold, Shakopee, Minn., a daughter, Maggie Sue, Sept. 29, 2010.

01 Chadron S. Araki, DDS, and Sharyn L.K. Araki, Ewa Beach, Hawaii, a daughter, Claire Lorraine Nancy Lai Kwan, Dec. 14, 2010. **Matthew E. Eck, BSBA '99, JD**, and **Brandy Chambers Eck, BS'00, BSN**, Omaha, a son, Owen Thomas, Aug. 19, 2010. **Michael Geraghty and Maureen Baker Geraghty, BA**, Minneapolis, a son, John Philip "Jack," March 15, 2010. Tom Parker and **Nichole Kappenman Parker, PharmD**, Phoenix, a daughter, Karsyn Shaw, April 14, 2010.

02 Justin A. Bond and Lauren E. Chaput-Bond, BA, Council Bluffs, Iowa, a daughter, Harper Collins, June 10, 2010. **Stephen P. McAvoy, BS'98, MD**, and **Heather Sorensen McAvoy, BA '01**, Milwaukee, a son, Rowan Patrick, Sept. 8, 2010. Brian Boerner and **Shannon McCormack Boerner, BS**, Omaha, a son, Benjamin Patrick, Dec. 14, 2009. **James J. Meyer, MD**, and **Sarah Gibson Meyer, BS'97, DDS**, Highlands Ranch, Colo., a daughter, Madeline Clara, Aug. 4, 2009. Ryan J. Reasland and **Tiffany Tarr Reasland, PharmD**, Omaha, a son, Colton Jay, Sept. 10, 2010.

03 Peter Klemin and Jill Detwiller Klemin, BS, Madison, Wis., a son, Logan Jack, Sept. 20, 2010. **Mark T. Larson, BSBA**, and **Rachel Theilmann Larson, BA, JD '06**, Parker, Colo., a daughter, Zoe Grace, Nov. 25, 2010. **Daniel Melski, MBA**, and Linda Melski, Chesterfield, N.J., a son, Caleb Joseph, Oct. 24, 2010.

04 Steven Henderson and Rachel Brodersen Henderson, BA '99, JD, Elkhorn, Neb., adopted a daughter, Alice Diane, May 23, 2010. Dr. Matthew McCormick and **Tracy Slump McCormick, BSBA**, Omaha, a son, Luke Matthew, Aug. 27, 2010. **Thomas Schulte, BSChm '00, MD**, and **Christine Alles Schulte, BA '00**, Omaha, a son, Davis, Sept. 27, 2010.

05 Mathew Beeman and Elizabeth "Izzy" Valenta Beeman, BS, Dayton, Ohio, a son, David Michael, Sept. 14, 2010. **Brian T. Macall, BS'01, DDS**, and Abby Macall, Liberty Lake, Wash., a son, Jacob George, Oct. 15, 2010.

06 Patrick T. DePriest, BA, and **Laura Samson DePriest, BA '05**, Waynesville, Mo., a daughter, Delilah Rose, Oct. 15, 2010. **W. Patrick Kelsey V, BS'02, DDS**, and **Amanda Bauc Kelsey, BA '01, PharmD '05**, Omaha, a daughter, Kara Makaylee, Aug. 25, 2010. Todd Vergil and **Gina Kohout**

Vergil, PharmD, Omaha, a son, Treyton, April 27, 2010.

07 Levi Anderson and Katherine Ryan Anderson, BA, Marion, N.D., a son, Cole Ryan, Sept. 22, 2010. **Brandon C. Brown, BA**, and Jennifer G. Brown, Oklahoma City, a son, Creighton, Aug. 29, 2010. **Samuel A. Dubrow, MD**, and **Kathleen Manion Dubrow, BS'03, MD**, Port Jefferson Station, N.Y., a son, Jason David, June 9, 2010. **Michael D. Lindeman, BSBA '03, MBA '04, JD**, and **Paula Faber Lindeman, BA '03**, New York, a son, Luke Wenlyn, Feb. 14, 2010. **Adam R. White, BS'03, JD**, and **Jennifer Schulte White, BSN'03**, Omaha, a daughter, Jillian Marie, Aug. 23, 2010.

Deaths

39 Kathleen Driscoll Ballbeck, SJN, Kansas City, Mo., Aug. 23, 2010. **Pearl Osoff Gross, ARTS**, Omaha, Jan. 4, 2011.

42 Genevieve McNamara Murphy, PHB, Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 15, 2010.

43 Rev. Andrew M. Augustyn, BusAd, Grand Island, Neb., Nov. 21, 2010. **John C. Gibilisco, BSPHA**, Omaha, Dec. 16, 2010. **Norburt R. Wolke, PHB**, Omaha, Sept. 29, 2010.

44 Mary Phelan Konat, SCN, Clinton, Iowa, Oct. 3, 2010. **Margaret Stover Lamb, BSC**, San Jose, Calif., Sept. 16, 2010. **Melvin S. Newman, ARTS**, San Francisco, March 16, 2010. **Robert N. Rourk, BSPHA**, Lake Benton, Minn., Nov. 26, 2010.

46 Bette Boswell Griffith, ARTS, Shreveport, La., Sept. 4, 2010. **Marvin Simon, BSD '45, DDS**, Omaha, Dec. 20, 2010.

47 Sebastian J. Campagna, DDS, La Quinta, Calif., Aug. 30, 2010. **Joseph L. Vandewalle, BSC**, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Nov. 8, 2010.

48 William P. Higgins, JD, Omaha, Nov. 30, 2010.

50 Robert E. Betterman Sr., BusAd, Omaha, Dec. 30, 2010. **William A. Cutler Jr., BS**, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Nov. 25, 2010. **Charles F. Stratman, BusAd**, Ukiah, Calif., Nov. 6, 2010. **Robert G. Wilson, MD**, Missouri Valley, Iowa, Dec. 9, 2010.

51 Frank J. Duffy, JD, Omaha, Sept. 21, 2010. **Robert J. Konz, BSPHA**, Phoenix, Aug. 25, 2010. **Richard J. Turek, ARTS**, Austin, Texas, Sept. 16, 2010.

52 Sr. Flavia M. Augustine, RSCJ, MA, Atherton, Calif., Nov. 18, 2010. **Lavern A. Johnson,**

Remembrance

At the annual President's Convocation during Founders Week in February, Creighton honors and prays for members of the University community who have died during the previous year. "Each person has blessed our University and its mission," said the Rev. Andy Alexander, S.J., vice president for University Ministry. Find a listing of those dearly departed, along with a special prayer of remembrance, online at the *Creighton Magazine* website, creighton.edu/creightonmagazine/necrology.

DDS, Wadsworth, Ill., June 3, 2010. **Leo J. Lynn, BSPHA**, Quincy, Ill., Dec. 5, 2010. **Arthur B. McGuire, BS**, Omaha, Nov. 18, 2010. **Rosemary Calvert Ridenour, BS**, Omaha, Nov. 17, 2010.

53 Rose Starr Bacon, BS, Denver, Aug. 6, 2010.

55 Arthur F. Gute, BusAd, Carroll, Iowa, Dec. 2, 2010.

56 James D. McGuire, BusAd, Peru, Ill., Nov. 14, 2010.

58 Dr. Edward F. Vitzthum, BS, Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 17, 2010.

60 Elmer E. Kobold Jr., MD, Billings, Mont., Nov. 25, 2010.

61 Robert C. Fulton, BA, Alvaton, Ky., Dec. 13, 2010. **Anthony I. "Reskie" Oreskovich, DDS**, Pueblo, Colo., Dec. 28, 2010.

62 Donald E. Parker, BSBA '60, JD, Hermitage, Mo., Sept. 6, 2010.

63 Marilyn Sobraske Byrne, MA, Kent, Ohio, Nov. 18, 2010. **Jean T. Gerber, SJN'52, BSN**, Columbus, Neb., Sept. 24, 2010. **Sr. M. Angelita Kniewel, OSF**, Manitowoc, Wis., Sept. 9, 2010.

64 Benjamin M. Nachman, DDS, Omaha, Aug. 28, 2010. **Charles H. Truelsen, JD**, Omaha, Oct. 20, 2010.

65 Angelo L. Amato, MBA, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Nov. 19, 2010. **James J. Holtkamp, BS'52, MA**, Iowa Falls, Iowa, March 5, 2010. **Jerome J. "Jerry" Schumacher, BS'59, MBA**, Omaha, Dec. 17, 2010.

66 Titus E. Alston, BS, Omaha, Sept. 26, 2010. **Daniel D. Kelly II, BA**, Omaha, Nov. 24, 2010. **Frederick C. Scott, MD**, Goodyear, Ariz., Aug. 13, 2010.

67 Benson F. Bachus, MBA, Scottsdale, Ariz., Sept. 6, 2010. **Julia Ladesic O'Connell, BA**, Spokane, Wash., Dec. 8, 2010.

70 Sr. Phyllis A. Hayek, ND, MSEdu, Omaha, Dec. 9, 2010.

71 Jean M. Kayser, BA, Camp Hill, Pa., Nov. 17, 2010.

72 Joseph C. "Joe" Breunig Jr., BA, Columbus, Neb., Oct. 19, 2010.

73 John B. Mullin, BSBA, Omaha, Nov. 26, 2010.

74 Evelyn Holley Givens, BS, Sun City, Ariz., Dec. 7, 2010.

Creighton J. Micek Jr., BSBA, Omaha, Sept. 28, 2010.

77 Dan J. Boudro, DDS, Las Cruces, N.M., Oct. 10, 2010. **Mary K. Kratoska, MD**, Omaha, Sept. 25, 2010.

78 Steven J. Giannetto, DDS, Pueblo, Colo., Sept. 12, 2010. **Denis J. Novacek, BSBA**, Omaha, Nov. 12, 2010.

79 Terry M. Guzallis, DDS, Omaha, Oct. 18, 2010.

82 Kala F. Hughes, BSW, Omaha, Nov. 7, 2010. **Gerald J. "Jerry" Stratman, BSBA**, Omaha, Dec. 16, 2010.

86 Gene A. Stagnaro, JD, Cincinnati, Aug. 8, 2010. **William F. Walsh, BA**, Plano, Texas, Dec. 23, 2010.

87 Charles E. Hickman, BA, Missouri Valley, Iowa, Nov. 12, 2010.

91 Carolyn A. Servais, BSPHA, Omaha, Nov. 27, 2010.

95 Brad J. Malesker, BA, Omaha, Dec. 12, 2010.

02 John M. Hurley, BSBA '90, MBA, Des Moines, Iowa, Nov. 17, 2010.

09 Kali R. Mann, BA, St. Louis Park, Minn., Dec. 24, 2010.

Creighton Appoints New NAB Members

Two new members of the National Alumni Board, Patricia Helke of Omaha and Michael Schekall of Wichita, Kan., began their terms of service on the board this past fall. They will represent alumni for the next three years.

Helke, BS'82, MD'86, MBA'00, is a radiologist on staff with Alegent Health, primarily at Bergan Mercy Medical Center and Lakeside Hospital in Omaha. She also assists at the Saunders County Community Hospital in Waterloo, Neb. An assistant professor of radiology at Creighton's School of Medicine, Helke has served on the Medical Alumni Advisory Board since 1996. In addition, she was a class reunion committee member in 2006, and is active with a variety of community organizations. She is a past president of the Nebraska Radiology Society.

Schekall, BS'83, MD'87, also a radiologist, is based at Wichita's Hutchinson Medical Clinic. He is on the staff of Hutchinson Hospital and Great Bend Regional Hospital in Great Bend, Kan., as well. Like Helke, Schekall serves on Creighton's Medical Alumni Advisory Board and has since 2007. He has also served on a reunion committee for the School of Medicine. Schekall is involved with various community and medical organizations, including the American College of Radiology and the Mid-America Interventional Radiology Society.

The National Alumni Board meets twice a year on the Creighton campus to discuss various University issues, alumni concerns and alumni program plans.



Helke



Schekall



Abrahams



Rider



Lukas



Wadas

Alumni Relations Adds Three, Promotes One

Over the last six months, the Office of Alumni Relations has added three new staff members and promoted one.

They are: Elizabeth Wininger Abrahams, BSBA'06, MBA'09; Sarah Rider, MA'10; Sarah Lukas, BA'02, MA'08, and Katie Wadas, BA'04.

Abrahams moved from Creighton's Undergraduate Admissions Office, where she was assistant director from 2006 to 2010. As new assistant director of school and college programs, Abrahams will provide alumni programs and services for the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and School of Nursing.

Rider, who has served most recently as alumni school officer for the School of Dentistry, School of Medicine and the Graduate School, is the new director of school and college programs. She came to Creighton in 2004 as an administrative assistant in Alumni Relations.

Rider's new responsibilities include managing alumni programs and communications across the University's schools and colleges, as well as serving as the alumni liaison to the School of Law and School of Pharmacy and Health Professions.

Lukas rejoined Alumni Relations this fall as the director of regional and outreach programs. She left in 2008 for a stint with an advertising/public relations agency in Omaha. Lukas had worked in Alumni Relations since 2003. In her new role, she oversees the development and implementation of alumni regional and outreach programs, manages the Omaha-area Alumni Advisory Board and coordinates alumni presence and participation at athletic events sponsored by Alumni Relations.

Wadas comes to Alumni Relations as assistant director of regional outreach. She previously worked in Student Services as assistant director of student activities for leadership. Prior to working at Creighton, she earned her master's degree in education at the University of Maryland. Her new responsibilities include working with the regional alumni advisory boards, as well as developing new ways to engage alumni across the country.

Editor's note: This summer, we announced the first *Creighton University Magazine* alumni essay contest, with the theme "Finding God in Daily Life." We received many wonderful entries, and we thank all of the writers for their submissions. A panel of Creighton English professors selected their favorite essays, and noted author and Creighton alumnus Ron Hansen, BA'70, chose the winner — an essay by Marguerite Havlis, BA'87, MA'89, BSN'93, of Tucson, Ariz., which appears below. Hansen called the piece a "tragic, poignant, yet inspiring record of the heartwrenching experiences of a nurse practitioner on the U.S./Mexico border." He added: "Just as Saint Ignatius did some 500 years ago, (Havlis) has found images of God in the faces and sufferings of the poor, and she is doing her best to imitate Christ."

Finding God in Daily Life

By Marguerite Havlis, BA'87, MA'89, BSN'93

As a nurse practitioner working in an underserved community clinic, the poorest zip code in my border town, God is with me every moment. Before entering an exam room, laying hands on a patient, my whispered prayer is always the same: "God in my hands, God on my heart. Thank you, my Lord."

I see bodies ravaged by unchecked disease, untreated ailments, teeth rotting in their sockets, festering and unkempt wounds. In my cobbled-together Spanish, I offer comfort and treatment, medicine samples scavenged and begged from pharmaceutical salespeople — who call on the clinic in their designer suits with \$500 box lunches for the doctors — referrals and maps to the Catholic Charities clinics for emergency tooth extractions and skin cancer removals.

Women wrapped in hijabs have pressed wrinkled scraps of paper into my hands, prayers from the Koran scribbled with the curving, dotted hieroglyphics of their languages; withered, weathered Mexican grandmothers have given me their rosary beads and still-warm tortillas. The little kids tug on my white coat, digging in my pockets for stickers, and place my stethoscope around their necks, giggling and hiding their eyes. I am surrounded by God's grace and solidified by the humble gratitude of my suffering and poor patients. They offer me the constancy of their love. What I have come to know in my 17 years of practice, is that to be a true friend of Jesus is to be a friend to the humble, the suffering, the poor. "Blessed are the poor" ...

It is in my volunteer work, the true work of my heart, that I find God's presence lurking in the shadowy underbrush. Hauling plastic milk jugs of water over a dusty, barren trail in the desert, 107 degrees of searing, blinding desert heat singeing any sliver of my exposed white skin to blistering pink, I often — and so quickly — lose faith, repeating a litany to myself: "Does it even matter, bringing our measly jugs that are tearing my hands apart? I only get here once a week."

Coming upon the water drop-off site is always a merciful relief, and I usually crumple to my knees, and say a quick Lord's Prayer. More than once, thin brown-skinned men, women and children have warily stepped out of the mesquite bushes, their clothes shredded and sweat-stained from days amidst unforgiving cactus and thorny trees, their eyes wary, shy. Mine must reflect unabashed fear, tinged with the ever-present sorrow in my heart.

The migrants I have met in our unforgiving desert truly embody Christ: his humility, his generosity, his suffering. They have knelt with me, ignoring the jugs of icy cold water I've placed at the drop point, and joined in their broken English to finish the Lord's Prayer with me before we part ways.

I wish them "Via con Dios." They offer me sticky fruit candies from plastic bags containing their dearest possessions. More than once, one of the men has followed me the two miles back to my car, and stood silently

as I make my way back down the bumpy gravel ranch road, before raising his hand, then touching his heart. I feel impotent, my offering to slake their thirst out here in the desert reservation land, paltry. I offer them the humble compassion of the Christ I have come to know, through knowing them. "Blessed are the humble" ...

At the Food Bank, where I pack bags of food for our weekly recipients, the silent monotony of my assigned tasks invites God into my heart. As I count "two cans of soup, one of veggies, one bag of rice, two of beans," I scan the familiar faces and wave to the children lining up along the far wall, their punch cards in hand. This is my Thursday ritual.

I think of my overflowing refrigerator, the extra refrigerator in the garage that I sometimes use as my wine cooler for "the really good bottles," and I feel nauseated. I never leave my afternoon at the Food Bank without stomach pain. My heart aches worse. I see God in my customers, their faces passive, their bodies needing basic nourishment, their hearts desiring solace, their situations grim. Their lips whisper "Thank you" and "Bless you."

I am humbled to be blessed by those who have nothing; I have everything. They radiate Christ's selfless love, and they reassure me, in their gazes, their soft touches and pats to my shoulder, that God is caring for them as well. I fast on Thursdays, my day at the Food Bank, my simplistic attempt to offer solidarity to the hungry and needy. I feel Christ's love envelope me more tightly on those days, as my stomach rumbles and complains. "Blessed are the hungry" ...

I do not sleep well. In the blackest night hours, I sit silently, and I pray for every person who has crossed my path that day, whether ill, hungry or leaving his home to potentially never arrive in "the promised land" for a "better job." I am overwhelmed; it steals my rest, the magnitude of all human suffering. I attempt to conjure those moments of God's graceful presence in their generous smiles, the slight lifting of their shoulders, the bit of life blossoming in their eyes.

God is with me in my daily life. He is with me in my dark, wakeful nights; his arms comfort me. His presence challenges me to wake in the morning, allowing him to again work through me to be an instrument of healing, of comfort, of solidarity, in my small ways.

About the author: Havlis holds three degrees from Creighton — a B.A. in creative writing (1987), an M.A. in English (1989) and a B.S.N. from the Accelerated Nursing Program (1993). She has worked as a critical care nurse, served at low-income clinics, operated private practices and taught nursing. Havlis has written articles, poetry and short stories for publication and pleasure. She enjoys participating in local volunteer work and traveling with her husband, Tony. "I am grateful for the Jesuit education I received at Creighton; it instilled in me the models of compassionate service and social justice which guide my daily professional and personal life."



Creighton

UNIVERSITY



Send Your Best Wishes ...

The Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., will be retiring as president of Creighton University in July after 11 highly successful years in the position. Fr. Schlegel has overseen a dramatic transformation of Creighton University and its campus. Do you have a special memory of Fr. Schlegel's tenure as president? Or do you simply want to wish him a fond farewell? *Creighton University Magazine* has established the following blog where you can share your good-byes and well-wishes:
<http://wpmu.creighton.edu/schlegel>