When William R. Greiner, UB’s thirteenth president, passed away last December, the Honors College lost a great friend. In remembrance of Bill, on February 2nd, the University at Buffalo community held a memorial and service at the Center for the Arts. This seems especially appropriate since this issue of Honors Today is dedicated to the role that the performing and creative arts play in our lives. The Center for the Arts held special significance for Professor Greiner; his vision and administrative guidance helped build this marvelous performing venue.

Tom Ralabate, Associate Professor of Dance wrote this remembrance:

“With a warm smile, Bill brought humanness to UB. Over the years, it was always a pleasure to see Bill and Carol Greiner grace the Center For the Arts with their presence. Bill was a dancer at heart – from watching him dance with Carol at UB Scholarship Galas in the CFA Atrium to attending Zodiaque Dance Company concerts in the CFA Drama Theatre. He respected the academic pursuits of scholars, athletes, and artists. I am confident that he has found more golden floors beneath his feet.”

This is only one of the many legacies that Professor Greiner and his wife, Carol, leave behind. For 42 years, first as a law professor, then as dean of the Law School, provost, and finally president, he guided UB through good and lean years to be the outstanding university it has become. Comments from across the globe have poured into the university testifying to Professor Greiner’s enormous impact on UB.

He was essential to the growth and development of the Honors Program and its maturation into an Honors College. It is amazing when you think about it: UB’s Honors Program was started back in 1981 and has been in business for 28 plus years. For 21 of those years, Bill Greiner was either provost or president! His influence is incalculable. Over this time the number of Honors students grew from 100 to a 1,000. The Performing and Creative Arts Scholarships of the Honors Program were created. The Honors Study Abroad and Research and Creative Scholarships were established. The Advanced Honors Program was developed to welcome outstanding UB students into the program who had not been admitted as freshmen. Without Bill Greiner’s support, none of this would have happened.

And Bill loved to throw a party. On an annual basis the Greiners hosted an evening at their home for Honors freshmen with elegant hors d’oeuvres, photographers, and the yearly speech praising the Honors students and exhorting them ever onward to greatness. When the Honors students graduated he was there, regularly officiating at the University Honors Convocation at the end of the year with Carol, in the audience cheering on the Honors graduates as well. In between the freshman and senior years, Bill was teaching Honors seminars.

William Thomas, an alumnus, remembers this:

“Dr. Greiner was the professor I had for my first semester Honors seminar. The way he taught about the law was different from anything I had ever encountered. He taught us using actual cases and experiences. He would use Supreme Court opinions and decisions to lead us in a direction of learning how to understand the decisions of the law and how and why they were being made. His skills as an educator put him far above and beyond most of the teachers and professors I have encountered during my schooling. He was also one of the friendliest men you would ever want to meet. Every Thursday he would bring in cookies as long as we promised to discuss the issues at hand. He would always be willing to joke around with his students. He was a great man, and I will miss him greatly.”

Indeed we will.

Kipp Herreid
Academic Director, Honors College
Honors

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A drawing of me (complete with rainbows) by my 4 year old daughter, Makena.

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I knew my identity was changed forever when my name was altered unexpectedly in this, my second year of teaching Elementary School Art. It started when my kindergarteners were having difficulty pronouncing my last name in the first few weeks of school. One class in particular was butchering “Mrs. Ratka”, so I invited them to call me “Mrs. R”. One little boy misinterpreted this and began calling me “Mrs. Art.” As you can imagine this adorable and ironically appropriate misnomer spread like wildfire through the Palm Beach County Elementary school where I teach. Indeed, these days, I find myself feeling more and more like “Mrs. Art.”

I teach visual art to over 1,000 kindergarten through fifth graders at a suburban school in West Palm Beach, Florida. Berkshire Elementary is a Title 1 school that serves a large, culturally diverse, and economically disadvantaged community. The school building was rebuilt two years ago, which affords me the luxury of a state-of-the-art classroom from which I teach between six and eight art lessons each day. My goal in these lessons is to expose my students — many of whom have never been to an art gallery or learned the name of a single influential artist — to the visual nature of the world around them. We learn about the elements of art and the principles of design. We look at the work of important artists, past and present. We experiment with every art medium under the sun. We talk, we read, we look, we question, we model, we practice, we create, we share, and we clean-up…..rinse and repeat! No two days are the same, even though I often teach the same lesson to between eight and ten classes at each grade level. My favorite example of this comes from last year, when I was teaching about Vincent van Gogh’s “Starry Night.” In the same day, one class asked me to turn on classical music and proceeded to work in near silence at creating swirling skies of their own, while another class led an animated twenty minute discussion speculating on the gory details of van Gogh’s ear-slicing debacle. No two artworks the same; no two students the same; no two days the same.

My husband has learned not to even ask about the random
projects that go on in our living room in preparation for a new lesson; earlier this week it was the manual shredding of copious amounts of paper in three value gradations for a fifth grade collage project. Then there are the nights I bolt upright out of a seemingly deep sleep and shout “glue sticks!” or something equally irrelevant at 2:00a.m. on a Wednesday. To say that it’s not a job you leave at work would be an understatement. While at times it would be nice to turn my “teacher brain” off, I love the sense of keen observation it brings to my world. The greatest ideas for meaningful art lessons seem to come from the most random corners of life. And I feel that’s the way it should be - teaching students from the youngest ages that art imitates life; that it’s accessible and real and oh so relevant.

In that vein lies one of the most fulfilling and important elements of my job; the thing that made it seem tailor-made for me. Having previously worked for the Arts in Education Institute of Western New York and having written my Master’s Thesis on the subject of Arts Integration, I found myself picking my jaw up off the floor when my principal told me during my initial interview for this job about a large three-year Arts Integration grant the school was in the midst
Arts Integration is a powerful educational strategy that has come to be a way of life where I work. Our core academic teachers use the arts as a lens through which to actively engage their students in math, science, reading, writing, and social studies learning. We teach the states of matter through George Seurat and Pointillist painting. We teach reading benchmarks like supporting details, inferencing, and main idea through discussions of art prints. We teach about the seven continents by creating wearable dresses made entirely of recycled materials that visually represent each culture. I can tell you that these are the types of learning explorations where I get to witness those metaphorical “light bulbs” beam to life all across a classroom. This kind of teaching and learning is transformative for everyone involved. Now that I’ve been spoiled by this richly layered experience I cannot imagine teaching art in the isolation of a segregated art room or in a place where every classroom doesn’t have its own set of well-loved paintbrushes.

In my somewhat limited experience thus far, one thing that has become clear to me is that just as art imitates life, teaching imitates art, or at least the process of becoming a good artist. Both endeavors require a balance of heart vs. hand; passion vs. practice. As a young artist, I filled sketchbook after sketchbook as I practiced and refined my skills. Now I’ve traded sketchbooks for lesson plans and notebooks that are a continuous progression of trial and error, revision and reflection. Some days I leave school weighed down by the things large or small that didn’t go right in my day: procedures I didn’t explain quite the right way or behaviors I wasn’t able to address and solve. But I never loved every sketch I did as an undergraduate artist at UB, or every theory-based education project I turned in during my Master’s work there either. In the same way I’m learning daily to embrace the process of teaching just as much as the product. And the good news (most mornings!) is that I get to wake up and try it all again. As for any initial hesitations I had of “selling out” as an artist, they’re long gone. While I don’t have nearly as much time for my own work as I’d like, I find myself just as challenged and fulfilled by the process of spreading art as I’ve ever been by creating it. Every day affords me the unique opportunity to pay it all forward.

The greatest ideas for meaningful art lessons seem to come from the most random corners of life. And I feel that’s the way it should be – teaching students from the youngest ages that art imitates life; that it’s accessible and real and oh so relevant.

“A line is a dot that went for a walk” by a kindergartner.
Hi, my name is Aimee Buyea and I run Sugar City. Sugar City is an amalgamation of my career aspirations and artistic ideals, many of which were fostered at the University at Buffalo’s Department of Media Study—an incubator for originality, independence and a “do-it-yourself” ethos. While at UB, I was introduced to experimental media-makers and grassroots cultural programming. Professors Tony Conrad and Caroline Koebel took care to guide my interests and inspired me to make my dream of managing an alternative art and performance space come true.

Located at 19 Wadsworth Street in the Allentown neighborhood of Downtown Buffalo, Sugar City exists to organize all-ages, alcohol-free, alternative community arts and cultural events in the Buffalo area. Our goal is to share and create an art-based participatory culture and a do-it-together attitude. Events and initiatives include: music, films, poetry readings, meals, a zine library, meeting space, art gallery, workshops, and workspaces. We want to break down the barriers of what is and isn’t “art” because in some way everyone is an artist. Sugar City also shuns traditional art funding structures and is completely volunteer run. We have hosted bands from as far as Sweden, independent publishers from the West Coast, and we also provide a center for community meetings and discussions. To really understand what Sugar City is all about you have to attend an event. One of my favorite events occurred last April when we hosted B Be In: Buffalo Baltimore Artist Exchange - a free weekend long series of events co-programmed with UB’s Department of Media Studies graduate students Liz Flyntz and Dietrich Olivier Schulze.

B Be In was an experimental intercity artist exchange program between Buffalo and Baltimore. We hosted 10 Baltimore artists as well as over 15 Buffalo artists for two days and two nights of music, meals, sleepovers, coffee, bike rides, performances, dancing, presentations and talks. This event truly showcased Sugar City’s capabilities. While we may struggle to raise enough money to pay our rent each month, Sugar City has people power. We were able to obtain two rental cars, three locations to house our visiting artists, secured three different venues for our concerts and provided two home-cooked dinners. This event was a huge success with over 150 attendees at our Saturday night concert, a roundtable talk, and 15 bikes borrowed from Buffalo Blue Bike that led to visits to community gardens, thrift stores and the waterfront.

In conclusion, this event, while exhausting was incredible. We are looking forward to completing the exchange program this spring when a number of Buffalo artists will travel to Baltimore. Sugar City continues to bring cultural events and initiatives to Western New York and we celebrated our first anniversary in January 2010. For a closer look at past or upcoming events, or to make a donation, please visit www.buffalosugarcity.org.

To survive as a professional musical theatre actress in New York City, I needed to be a quick study. For example, once at an audition for a new musical about a cowboy I was asked if I could play a country-western instrument. Knowing that this talent would land a call-back audition, I said, “Sure, I can play a country-western instrument.” When pressed for more details, I explained that I played the harmonica. “Great!” exclaimed the musical’s director, “bring your audition music and your harmonica to tomorrow’s call-back.” “OK, no problem,” I assured him. I then ran to the nearest music store, bought a harmonica, and stayed up all night learning, “Oh, Susanna!” The next day at the call back I “rocked out” on my dime-store harmonica and got the role as the musical’s ingénue.

Being a quick study not only helped win performing gigs, but helped me find a job in between shows. Some of these jobs included limo driver, dog walker, nanny, receptionist, web site designer, executive assistant, delivery truck driver, sales representative, accounts payable clerk, and, of course, waitress. But where does a musical theatre performer learn how to be a quick study? I didn’t learn this skill in a monologue class on the West Side of New York City, nor in a sales rep seminar in SoHo. My quick study skills were developed during my career as an Honors Scholar at the University at Buffalo.

As a music and theatre student at UB I took the required courses for my major such as music history and theory, technical theatre and acting, as well as voice, piano, oboe, and dance. However, I was also required to take challenging general education courses designed for Honor Scholars. Therefore, instead of taking Biology 101 I took the Anatomy of Disease, and instead of the History of Philosophy I was able to study Greek Intellectual History and Pre-Socratic Philosophy. Switching between my performance studies and the challenging Honors seminars taught me how to become a quick study as well as develop a thirst for learning.

During my ten years as a professional performer I benefited from my quick
study skills, but my thirst for learning led me to a career in education. The more I learned about performing, the more I wanted to share what I learned. I found myself tutoring my peers in vocal technique and volunteering to be a production’s dance coach. Then one night backstage I found myself sharing my knowledge, time, and love for performing with the young cast of The King and I. Twenty children ranging in age from six to thirteen performed in the show with myself and the rest of the adult cast. While the adult cast thought I was ridiculous for spending my dinner hour with the children, I thought it was exhilarating to learn about the children’s lives and fun to share my theatre experiences with them. Between the matinee and evening performances I found a captive audience backstage!

After the four month run I found myself wanting to teach music. Unfortunately my undergraduate degrees from UB as well as my graduate degree from Westminster Choir College were both in music performance, not in teaching. Going back to school for music education would take years. Fortunately the state of New Jersey offered an Alternate Route Teaching Certificate Program that would allow me to secure a teaching job while taking education coursework. Once again I would have to tap into my quick study skills. While teaching music to over 700 students in a New Jersey elementary school, in true Honors Scholar fashion, I was also attending graduate school and performing in area musicals and concerts!

Five years ago I decided to move back to Western New York. Since moving back home I have not only been able to share my love for music and theatre with my elementary music students at the Pinnacle Charter School, but also on the stages of the Buffalo Theatre District. The musical highlight of my return was the chance to perform for my friends and family on the stage of Kleinhans Music Hall as “Maria” in the Buffalo Philharmonic’s concert performance of West Side Story. Meanwhile, the educational highlight of my return has been the opportunity to mentor teachers through my new job as a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) curriculum coordinator and professional developer. I knew what it was like to learn teaching techniques while teaching. I now could pass this knowledge on to the newly certified UPK teachers that I mentor. However, I soon realized that I needed to learn more about educational administration in order to better support my teachers. Therefore, I am once again a student at the University at Buffalo. As a student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy I have been trying to learn the art of educational administration as quickly as possible while balancing a full time job, an administration internship, performing, and enjoying being recently married! In fact, as I write this I am studying for my oral exam next week. Hopefully the professors presiding on the orals panel won’t ask me to play the harmonica!)

As we try and build a stronger sense of community, the Honors College has found itself immersed in the world of Twitter, a micro blogging tool which lets people publish updates in 140 characters or less. This allows for fast and easy interaction between users.

In order to receive someone’s updates or “tweets”, you have to “follow” them and vice versa. Using symbols such as “@” (placed in front of the username) or the hash-tag “#” (used to group words or phrases) help make Twitter one of the most popular social media tools available.

To help the Honors College stay connected with current and prospective students, alumni and the UB Community, incorporating social media into Honors via Twitter should help facilitate new ideas as well as allow more people to become aware of opportunities and programs available through our office. Follow us at @UBHonors!
On December 19, 2009, the University Honors College lost one of its strongest supporters – William R. Greiner. President Greiner passed away from heart complications at the Cleveland Clinic where he was being treated. In November, President Greiner was honored by the SUNY Board of Trustees with the conferral of the title of president emeritus in recognition of his outstanding leadership.

In 1987, Professor Greiner succeeded Dr. Steven B. Sample as the 13th president of the University at Buffalo. Prior to assuming the role of president, Professor Greiner served as the University’s provost, the chief academic officer for the institution. During his tenure both as provost and president, the Honors Program tripled in size thanks to President Greiner’s generous support. The number and value of the scholarships offered increased several times, allowing the Honors Program to compete with the best colleges and universities in the country for academically talented students.

The Distinguished Honors Scholarship (now the Presidential Scholars) Program began early in President Greiner’s tenure. Later, the Research and Creative Activities Fund was created with his support. Now in its eighth year, at last count 85 students have received funding ranging from $500 to $5,000 for a total of $200,000 to support their research and creative projects. This has proved to be one of the most successful programs offered through the Honors College.

President Greiner was also instrumental in establishing the Jeremy M. Jacobs Study Abroad Scholarship Fund that provided supplement grants to Honors Scholars studying abroad. Over $60,000 was awarded to students, helping them to achieve life-changing experiences in countries all over the world.

Always a teacher at heart, President Greiner taught several Honors seminars while provost and after he retired. They included “Introduction to Law” and “Law and the Legal Processes”. He loved meeting with the students, exchanging ideas with them, challenging their notions of the law and being
Bill Greiner challenged by them in return. It was that give and take that he thrived on in the classroom.

President and Mrs. Greiner held a number of gatherings in their home for freshmen Honors Scholars to welcome them to UB, and for graduating Honors Scholars to wish them well in their future endeavors. As the program grew in size, our numbers outgrew their home on LeBrun Avenue.

President Greiner held the Honors Program in highest regard. Our status as an Honors College was made possible through his unwavering support and his commitment to bringing to UB, the best academically talented students possible. His love for UB and commitment to academic excellence are two of the most important legacies he leaves behind. President Greiner will be fondly remembered as an Honors Scholar in his own right.

“He loved meeting with the students, exchanging ideas with them, challenging their notions of the law and being challenged by them in return. It was that give and take that he thrived on in the classroom.”

Photos courtesy of University Archives.
Starting the Conversation

For me the secret is that I teach things that I really care about, and that I learn from.

Sitting down to chat with SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Diane Christian, I am struck by just how much she embodies the very things she loves about her adopted hometown of Buffalo. Decades ago she and husband Bruce Jackson made the city their home, and she explains that its unique duality—a cultural and artistic richness combined with a down-to-earth, unpretentious character—enormously appealed to them. Similarly, I get the sense that Christian would be just as comfortable and endearing while trading anecdotes over a few beers in a brash South Buffalo bar as she would be analyzing art and literature, glass of wine in hand, in a fancy gallery downtown. It is this combination of accessibility and intellect that has made Christian a favorite professor and mentor of Honors College students for over 30 years.

Christian says that she always wanted to be a teacher. Growing up a Catholic school girl in Rochester, NY, she admired the “life of the mind” of the nuns, and she entered religious life after majoring in English and philosophy as an undergraduate. Christian taught at Nazareth College and then earned her PhD at The Johns Hopkins University in the 1960’s. “At that time they had a famous history of ideas program, which was really terrific and exciting for me,” Christian notes. A year after returning to the religious community she decided to leave the order; soon after she turned down a job offer from Berkeley to come to Buffalo, which was, Christian says, “the most exciting English department in the country.”

The choice also proved fortuitous on a personal level. On her first day at UB, Christian met her future husband, fellow...
SUNY Distinguished Professor Bruce Jackson, at—of all places—the sandwich machine. The two were married three years later, and as part of their union Christian inherited three young step-children from Jackson’s first marriage. The family settled in the beautiful Delaware Park area of North Buffalo, where Christian helped raise the children, “a wonderful experience” Christian says she would “not change at all.”

Earlier in their careers Christian and Jackson also collaborated in making documentary films. This pursuit was born out of inspiring conversations at conferences with the likes of directors King Vidor and Henry King and actors Peter Fonda and Clint Eastwood and then editor of The Nation, Carey McWilliams. Jackson had done work with Texas prisons, and his access to the prison system—along with funding from various grants—allowed them to make their first film, Death Row, in 1979. Christian says, “We were both politically against capital punishment. We saw how absolutely unjust it was in its application. I am utterly and morally against it as a way to solve problems.” Originally Christian, then in “high-feminist mode”, intended to be part of the crew interviewing and filming on death row, but it soon became clear that the presence of a woman on the row would only disrupt the tone of the film. Instead, in tandem with the filming that Jackson was doing, she conducted lengthy hours-long interviews of the death row inmates. These interviews became the basis of their book, released the following year. Christian notes that both the film and the book have enjoyed continued success, particularly in European circulation. She and Jackson went on to produce five other documentaries, including Out of Order, about ex-nuns, and Creely, about the late poet and UB Professor Robert Creely.

One of the first classes Christian taught at UB was “The Bible as Literature” course. While it has become arguably her most popular course, Christian admits to some initial trepidation at being asked to step in and teach it. She worried that she lacked the linguistic background, and laughs now about how in the first semester, fresh out of graduate school, she marched her students straight through the entire Bible, from Genesis through the Apocrypha. She says, “I told the students, we are just going to do this as literature, and it turns out I really had a gift for it. It is hard to teach religious things and to put them in a context where people don’t decompensate because they are having a breakdown about God. But the truth of it is, it is interesting, compelling stuff and it is really good to look at as story because you can look at in a way that you can’t if you are going to be persecuted for contradicting or blaspheming.”

Christian wrote her dissertation on poet and painter William Blake (whom she playfully calls “my guy”). Her Blake expertise meant that she was often the English faculty person who taught courses which incorporated the visual arts. In fact, Christian originally developed her other signature course, “Heaven, Hell and Judgment” with since retired Art History professor Dorothy Glass. Due to its popularity the class is a large one, with typically over 100 students enrolled. Most years Christian offers a smaller companion honors seminar section, an experience she enjoys immensely. She says, “Honors students are great fun partly because they are so bright. Classes with them have a kind of energy, and they are also a chance for me to see a small group of students and therefore a chance to get them more involved, and to get to know them more.

They leaven the class because they are so lively. The ability of these students to look at some of the religious, philosophical, or social issues is just a delight.”

Teaching is one of Christian’s great loves. She takes her responsibility to her students, particularly in an age where they are inundated with readily available information, very seriously. “I think that teaching keeps you honest,” she says, “because you can quickly see if people are bored. Staying alive to the art and to the texts is something you have to do if you are going to be a good teacher. I am always very aware that, nowadays especially, for students to come to a live class you have got to offer something that is alive and fresh.” Even after so many years in the classroom, Christian still finds the atmosphere invigorating. “For me the secret is that I teach things that I really care about, and that I learn from,” she says. She compares the rapport between students and professor to a conversation. “Good students, who ask good questions, who keep framing the conversation for you and who keep making it honest and real are what I love about it,” she says.
Ten years ago Christian merged her affinity for great teaching conversations with her passion for the arts in launching the Buffalo Film Seminars with Jackson. The Film Seminar is a UB English course held at the Market Arcade and Film Center in downtown Buffalo; these Tuesday night film screenings and the accompanying discussions are also open to the ticket-buying public. The series was the brainchild of Joseph Ryan, Buffalo’s Commissioner of Urban Planning, and Michael McCarthy, attorney for the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA), who were aiming to attract more filmgoers into the city. With over 280 films screened since 2000, the seminar has accomplished that and more. Christian says, “We introduce the film, then show it, and then have a short break followed by a discussion. Anyone who wanted to could be a part of it. It truly took off. People would say the nicest things to us.”

Christian and Jackson prepare informational handouts for the students and audience in advance of each screening. Initially the one-page sheets simply listed production credits, but over the years these aptly named Goldenrod Handouts have grown to include stills from the film, as well as quotations and comments from filmmakers and critics. Students in the course are required to keep journals in which they respond to the film, the readings and to the discussion. Christian finds the post-film talks, which include both the students and other film goers, particularly gratifying. “They have a lovely energy to them. Buffalo has a very sophisticated film audience. I believe that films are the mythology of world culture. Everybody feels equal to and capable of talking about them. It is a truly popular medium so that the discussion can very often be at a profound level, and I feel it is a great education.”

Over the years Christian has been an active participant in both the Buffalo arts community and the UB academic community, serving on and chairing countless committees. She also has been a long-standing advocate for the Honors College, as a seminar instructor, mentor, thesis advisor and member of the University Honors Council. Of the College she says, “I always felt that this was an area of energy and excellence within the university. This is a great program, which I watched them build on intellectual energy and smarts, kindness and careful bootstrapping. I have always admired the commitment of it because it really is an intellectual passion to care that much about excellence and about students to be willing to make it happen.”

It is clear in speaking with Christian that she has loved all of the diverse and enriching roles she has taken on her life—from filmmaker, to mother, to teacher, to mentor, to Buffalonian, to arts enthusiast, to researcher—but she truly relishes the moments that underscore what is really important. She recalls a particularly heartfelt email she received from a graduating senior recently. He had taken her class totally by chance and wrote to express his gratitude for the imprint her teaching left on him. “Every once in awhile,” Christian says, “somebody comes out of the blue and says, ‘I took your course and it was so wonderful,’ and that is always nice to hear. The sense of actually connecting with somebody is very sweet in the ideal sense of what teaching can do.”
Lana Stafford came to UB to play the flute. However, during her four years here, she discovered much more: top-notch academics and instructors, camaraderie and collaboration with classmates across disciplines, a university full of possibility, and, along the way, she also found herself.

In the fall of 2006 Stafford arrived on campus as a freshman after being recruited by the late Cheryl Gobbetti Hoffman, former principle flutist of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Hoffman convinced Stafford to take a chance on UB instead of pursuing her education at a more traditional music conservatory. Stafford had been awarded the prestigious Millonzi Honors Scholarship for the Arts, which covered the full cost of attendance for four years, while the Honors College offered Stafford an opportunity to study intensely outside of music, in part through Honors seminars. This combination of financial support, musical possibility, and academic rigor was something Stafford could not turn down. According to Stafford, UB was “a harbor where I could explore my interests in dance, art, literature, and even environmentalism.” Stafford did just that and more during her four years at UB.

Stafford was able to expand her musical talents as she collaborated with another Honors Scholar, Laura Neese (Honors Scholar, Dance BFA, class of 2011). They actually met freshman year, in an Honors seminar entitled “Literary Theory”. Two years later, through a project entitled “Choreographic Flute Performance”, Stafford and Neese performed a unique dance production with Lana’s lead on the flute. Professor of Dance Melanie Neese performed a unique dance production with “Choreographic Flute Performance”, Stafford and Neese performed together. The extended techniques. Ironically, it was this piece that Stafford and Neese performed together. The “lesson” Hoffman taught her had come full circle.

Stafford also had the opportunity to travel to St. Andrews, Scotland to the Scottish International Flute Summer School in July 2008. Encouraged by Hoffman, who sold the summer school as a “life-changing experience”, Stafford participated in intensive study and master classes with Ian Clarke (Guildhall School of Music and Drama) and Wissam Boustany (Trinity College). Not only was this a chance of a lifetime musically, it was also her first trip to Europe. Sadly, Hoffman, Stafford’s mentor and friend, passed away in August 2008. But Stafford considers the trip, “Cheryl’s (Hoffman) gift to me – to remind me to hold onto my pizzazz for playing, no matter what.”

At UB, Stafford has been exposed to experiences that one would not likely find at a conservatory. Attending sporting events and getting involved with student activities have allowed her to venture beyond the comforts of her music and experience college life on a different level. Most recently, Lana has joined the UB Boxing Club. Stafford has found that the combination of body movements and breathing that are required in the art of boxing are transferable to the art of playing music. While she hasn’t been allowed to hit anything (or anyone) yet, she has found that being part of this group is good for her music – and for her soul.

What’s next for Stafford? Well, UB has struck gold again, as she has decided to remain here for her Master’s in Music from which she will be ready to embark on her next adventure.

In fact, the Music Department at UB proved to be just what Stafford was looking for. Stafford credits Hoffman, who became her first mentor, with opening her up to the world of contemporary music. In fact, Hoffman encouraged Stafford by having her learn “Quodlibetudes”, a piece by H. Sollberger designed to introduce a flutist to extended techniques. Ironically, it was this piece that Stafford and Neese performed together. The “lesson” Hoffman taught her had come full circle.

The Millonzi Honors Scholarship for the Arts was generously established by the late Eleanor V. Millonzi, a longtime patron of the arts, community leader and close UB friend. The Millonzi Honors Scholarship for the Arts was the first Honors College endowed scholarship to fully support a student specifically in the performing and creative arts. It is through the generous support and foresight of Mrs. Millonzi that exceptional Honors Scholars such as Lana Stafford have the unique opportunity to pursue an outstanding arts education at UB.

Whether in the arts or sciences, UB’s Honors College provides an environment for advanced intellectual growth and an unmatched foundation for life-long learning. Gifts in support of the Honors College, whether they be endowed funds or annual gifts, create not only student scholarships that recognize outstanding academic merit, but also important programs such as study abroad, research grants, and student funds that allow scholars to participate in professional conferences or distinctive internship opportunities. Please consider a gift to the Honors College today and know that your support will have a direct impact on today’s best and brightest students and tomorrow’s leaders.

For more information how you can play an important role in UB’s Honors College please contact Donald Elick, Director of Development, at (716) 645-1619, or donelick@buffalo.edu. You may send your gift today made payable to “UB Foundation, Inc.” to UB Honors College, 214 Talbert Hall, Buffalo, NY, 14260. You can also give online by visiting www.giving.buffalo.edu and be sure to select “University Honors College.” Thank you in advance for your support.
Eighteen years ago when I received my acceptance to UB, I knew I wanted to perform and teach dance upon graduation. I am currently on faculty in the School of Dance at Arizona State University, where my research areas are choreographic self-portraiture, interdisciplinary collaboration, and effective pedagogical practices for first-year students. My day-to-day duties are varied, but frequently involve teaching and mentoring the school’s first-year undergraduate students.

When I work with first-year students, I am often reminded of myself at that age and what a transformative period my undergraduate years were. As a Creative and Performing Arts Scholar, the Honors Program provided me invaluable opportunities that prepared me for my current career. During my first semester I took an Honors seminar course with Dr. William Barba that dealt with the history of higher education in the United States, mostly because it was the only one that fit into my already demanding dance major schedule. Little did I know I would someday be involved in curricular discussions that would shape the current practice of dance within the evolving history of higher education. I also recall an Honors seminar focused on Shakespeare taught by Dr. Barbara Bono. In this class, I choreographed and performed a dance based on “The Taming of the Shrew”, and analyzed modern dance classics that interpreted Shakespearean texts through dance. While taking this class I was also taking “Creative Movement and Choreography” in the Department of Theatre and Dance and I started to make strong connections between how narrative content is crafted through choreographic choices. As an Honors Scholar, the breadth of my undergraduate education was greatly enhanced when combined with the depth and rigor of the dance program and I felt well prepared to enter the professional world.

During my last semester at UB, I enrolled in an exchange program with The Ailey School in New York City. This was a great opportunity for me. I loved the amount of dancing the program required, being in New York, and seeing new types of dance. While at The Ailey School, I started to realize that dance was not just about physical practice and artistic expression – it was also about intellectual engagement, critical engagement, and a connection to the larger community. All of these were part of my dance major curriculum at UB, but I had not realized how important they were to me until I was in a dance conservatory setting. It was during this time that I became conscious that academia was the place for me to pursue my dance career.

People are often surprised by what my career as an artist-academic entails. Not only do I teach classes, both studio and theory courses, to undergraduate and graduate students, but I am also active as a choreographer and performer regionally, nationally, and internationally. Since graduating from UB, I have performed in India, New York, NY, Alaska, and throughout the US.  I am also active as a dance scholar, meaning I regularly present and disseminate my research into effective pedagogical practices for first-year dance majors to a national audience of dance practitioners, as well as academics from the arts and humanities. Service, both to the field of dance and my local academic community, is also a significant part of my job. I am honored to currently serve on the Board of Directors for the National Dance Education Organization. My career as a faculty member in dance is nothing like I would have pictured it to be 18 years ago when I was a first-year student at UB.
who just knew she wanted to perform and teach dance.

I was fortunate to return to UB this past September, to perform in a fundraiser for the Department of Theatre and Dance and to work as a guest artist with UB’s dance majors. Performing on the Drama Theatre stage and rehearsing in the Center for the Arts studios again was, well, a little emotional. Being back at UB made me realize how much I grew during my time at UB as a dancer, artist and person. The time I spent in that building and on UB’s campus truly set the groundwork for my current practice. Working with UB’s Zodiaque Dance Company reminded me that I have the best career in the world. I get to dance everyday, while also shaping the future the dance, through education, creative practice and research. My hope continues to be that I can provide my current and future students the same richness of experiences that UB provided me. )

Alumni Updates

What they’re doing now...

1987
STEVEN HALL
Steven just returned from sabbatical in Mexico, along with his family, where he was studying mangroves with particular interest in coastal restoration. Professionally, he has assumed a number of responsibilities including local (departmental graduate coordinator, and chair of the Christian Faculty Staff Network at LSU), regional (Chair for state section of ASABE – American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers), and national/international (President, Aquacultural Engineering Society) in the interim. He continues to teach, research, publish articles and is collaborating on a book related to ethical, health and environmental factors in diets.

1989
TODD BAKER
Todd was promoted to full professor (of mathematics and natural sciences) and appointed Chair of the Department of Health Sciences at Villa Maria College. He is engaged in developing a four-year program in biological sciences.

1992
JAMES FEIGENBAUM
Jim is an economics professor at Utah State University and engaged to Delphine Tsinajinnie, an environmental resources manager from Arizona.

ANNETTE HOPKINS
Annette is Director of Client Services for Seevast, Inc.

1993
ROBYN (STEINER) COOPER
Robyn is teaching an online business law course through Geneseo Community College in addition to teaching high school history.

1995
KEITH HERR
Keith is currently a 2nd year resident in radiology at Emory University in Atlanta.

CLARE SEATON
Clare is married to Ikhyun Kim (UB, 1994 & Poetics Master’s, 2001.) They have two daughters, Amelia Sun Hee Kim and Vivian Sung Hee Kim.

If you would like to update your address or personal information please fill out our alumni update form at www.buffalo.edu/honors/alumni. Also, if you would like to send a photo (or one of your children) with your update, please send them to Karyn St. George at kcs9@buffalo.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!
1996
RENEE LNGSLEY
Renee recently joined the humanities faculty at the University of Phoenix. She teaches undergraduate history and sociology courses on the Massachusetts campuses while being a full-time mom to their (Joseph Szustakowski, Honors Scholar, class of 1995) sons, 1yr. and 3yrs.

1997
KATHY BETHIN
Kathy is the Program Director of the Pediatric Endocrinology Fellowship at Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo/ University at Buffalo.

JENNIFER (DICIACIO) HURLEY
Jennifer is an attorney specializing in real estate transactions in Buffalo, NY.

WARREN LEWIS
Warren and his wife are biochemistry researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

1999
MARC FLEMING
Marc is currently a teacher on special assignment, managing the Office of Social Studies for the Greece Central School District. For the past five summers he has been the gameday producer for the Rochester Red Wings, Triple-A affiliate of the Minnesota Twins.

DANA LUKIN
Dana will be starting a fellowship in gastroenterology at Columbia University Medical Center in July 2010.

2000
JESSICA LARUSCH
Jessica recently accepted a Ruth L. Kirschstein fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh to study the genetic causes of pancreatitis and pancreatic cancer.

2001
ELIAS DAKWAR
Elias is currently a 5th year neurosurgical resident at the University of South Florida.

ADAM KONIAK
Adam graduated in May from the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business with an MBA focused in Marketing. He is now a Product Manager at Cisco in Northern California.

ANDREW ROSS
Andrew is a physical therapist at Kenton Physical Therapy in Buffalo, NY.

ANNA THOR
Anna is a teacher at Greece Olympia High School in NY.

2002
SILVANIA DELEON
Silvania is completing her second year of medical school at Howard University School of Medicine in Washington D.C. She is also mom to a set of fraternal twins—Al and Somei (6yrs.).

ATUL JAIN
After completing an Internal Medicine residency in New York City at the NYU School of Medicine, Atul moved to Chicago to start a three-year clinical investigator fellowship specializing in Vascular Medicine at Northwestern University. He is also working on a Master’s Degree.

PASCAL COHEN
In August 2009 Pascal earned the title of A.A.E. (Accredited Airport Executive) with the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). Less than 10% of the AAAE membership earns the distinction, fewer than 450 people in total hold the title. In December, he was promoted to Manager Aviation Business Development for both of the NFTA’s commercial airports (Buffalo Niagara International and Niagara Falls International airports).

PAMELA (MITCHELL) PALLETT
Pamela is starting a post-doc at Dartmouth College studying face perception. Her husband’s first book was just released on paperback (The Little Ranger), and her work on attractiveness has recently received attention world-wide, including USA today and MSNBC.com.

2003
RUTH KLEINMAN
Ruth was promoted to Co-Director of Hillels of Westchester for the 2009-2010 academic year.

YEKATERINA MERKULOVA
Yekaterina is living in Brooklyn, NY and is in her first year in the MD/PhD program at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. She is also the Chair of the Pharmacy Committee for the Brooklyn Free Clinic (a SUNY Downstate student-run free clinic in Bedford-Stuyvesant).

2005
SARAH BURNS
Sarah is performing in “42nd Street” at the Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, Florida this spring!

TYLER CASE
Tyler is working for an accounting firm, The Bonadio Group, in Williamsville, NY.

SAMANTHA (GOSCH) DEMART
Samantha continues to work as a Development Associate at Heritage Christian Services, a local non-profit agency in Buffalo, NY.

COREY SHOOCK
Cory is an Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, NY.

SUKAR SOFAT
Sujata is working at Georgetown University Hospital as a general surgery resident.

SCOTT SOBIERAI
Scott is a Cardiology Fellow at Danbury Hospital in Danbury, CT.

2006
BENJAMIN ROBBY
Ben graduated from Johns Hopkins University with an Master’s in Security Informatics.
2007

JONATHAN LEE
Jonathan is currently a third year medical student at New York Medical College.

LEO POLAK III
Leo recently started working at Carleton Technologies, Inc. in Orchard Park, NY as a PC Support Technician.

2008

ANNIE BISHOP
Annie is a full-time Intensive Care (ICU) Nurse at St. Mary’s Hospital in Troy, NY while taking courses towards a Master’s Degree in Public Health (MPH) at SUNY University at Albany.

WILLIAM CUTHBERT
William works for Advanced Neuro Technology specializing in electrophysiology data acquisition for psychology, neuroscience and neurology clinical research groups worldwide.

KENNETH HEIDLE
Kenneth is a medical student at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Erie, PA, Class of 2013.

MICHAEL SHAFFER
Michael is attending Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine (SUNY).

MATTHEW TARELLO
Matthew is a second year medical student at the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

2009

SARAH AJAEB
Sarah recently started her first year of a PhD program in mechanical engineering at Cornell University.

KELLY BENDER
Kelly started medical school at Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine. She is also working with “Naturopaths without Borders” at a pediatric clinic in Rocky Point, MX.

BRADLEY CHEETHAM
Brad is currently attending the University of Colorado at Boulder as a graduate student in Aerospace Engineering Sciences and running a nationwide outreach/advocacy project at www.WeWantOurFuture.org.

RICHARD NAUMANN
Richard is pursuing a Master’s Degree in structural engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, Switzerland.

KAREN REGULINSKI
Karen is enrolled at UB Medical School, Class of 2013.

EKIR ZAVREL
Erik is attending Cornell University on a Sage Fellowship. He is a first year PhD student in Biomedical Engineering, designing microfluidic systems for cancer cell analysis.

Births

CHRISTOPHER RIEHL (1995) and his wife Janet welcomed their first child, Emily Abigail, on Oct 5, 2009.


MARC FLEMING (1999) and his wife Lisa welcomed a daughter, Josephine Anna Fleming on June 22, 2009.

DANA LUKIN (1999) – Dana and his wife welcomed a daughter, Hannah, on August 8, 2008!

ANDREW ROSS (2001) and his wife Nicole welcomed their first child on April 7, 2009.

Marriages

ROBYN STEINER (1993) married Scott Cooper on September 13, 2009!

SAMANTHA GOSCH (2005) was married on October 10, 2009 to Michael DeMart!