The thought of attending a high school or college reunion can generate mixed emotions — from fear to excitement. Our feelings may range from worrying about how we look now compared to then to how successful will we appear in our personal and professional lives.

Last year, we decided it was time to reconnect with our alumni from the Honors Program. We talked with Margaret Phillips, our development officer at the time, and decided to plan a series of honors reunions to be held both in and outside New York State. Our first two get-togethers took place in April and May of this year.

We began on a rainy night in April, traveling to Rochester, New York to the Memorial Art Gallery located at the University of Rochester. We piled into a car with our Power Point slide show (in case some of our alums had not been on campus recently) to begin a journey that would go both backward and forward in time. With plenty of food and drink on hand, Honors alumni began to appear at the designated time. We were able to recognize every alum who came! Some brought their spouses or significant others — some came on their own. All who were parents brought pictures of their children and were eager to share them with us — no surprise here.

As we ate and drank, alums viewed the slide presentation and were amazed to see the new apartments on campus, along with the latest buildings that had appeared. Of course, there was the inevitable nostalgia, talking of the “old days,” what UB was like when they were in attendance, what faculty members were still there or had left, and the new programs that had developed over the years. And there were questions about our new president, John Simpson, and what direction they thought UB would take with a new leader at the helm.

Then it was our turn to move the evening forward with a short presentation of where the Honors Program is at the present time. Those who were a part of the Honors Program in its early years were amazed at the size of our entering classes — now 250 strong! We spoke about the changes in the Honors Colloquium; the Advanced Honors Program, which requires a senior thesis; the Research and Creative Activities Fund where Honors Students can receive grants for innovative projects (such as the film that Josh Soloman produced in his senior year that you can read about further on in the magazine) and the new Jeremy M. Jacobs International Scholarships for Study Abroad. Finally four hours later, everyone said goodbye and we returned to Buffalo with feelings of great satisfaction and renewed friendships.

In May, we hosted our second Honors alumni get-together at the Jacobs Educational Center on Delaware Avenue, formerly the Butler Mansion. This time it was a hot sunny evening with more sumptuous food and drink, honors faculty in attendance, plenty of Buffalo alums, spouses or friends, pictures of children and great stories. Again we remembered everyone who came! And there was a special guest, John Simpson, our new UB President. This was his first introduction to the Honors Program and it was notable. He talked with many of our graduates, heard their stories about life at UB and learned about their current roles in life. We can tell you that President Simpson was very impressed with the entire evening and with everyone he met.

More reunions are being planned so we can continue to reconnect and create new memories. We hope to visit folks in Chicago, New York City and Washington, DC before this year is over. Be sure we have your current address so that you receive our invitation — they will be going out soon!

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What They’re Doing Now
When I first came to UB in the fall of 1998, I had some idea of what I wanted to do when I graduated. I liked math and science, and I liked getting my hands dirty. So, following the words of wisdom that most high school guidance counselors give to students in my situation, I pursued engineering.

Why UB? Coming from a small school in the country, I was drawn by UB’s large size, even though in some ways I was still frightened by it. But a large school offered a lot of choices if I wanted to change majors, and the Honors Program made the school’s size a little more manageable for me.

The hands-on, real life experiences I received in UB’s student clubs were key to the start of my career with Lockheed Martin. Although I interviewed against quite a few other students with high GPAs from big name colleges, I was chosen for the job because of my practical engineering experience from UB. So I ended up in Owego, NY, where they work on military aircraft. I quickly grew to love the applications of aerospace engineering and want to continue working in this field.

To sum up what I do at Lockheed Martin, I just tell most of my friends that we are basically a custom hot-rod shop for military aircraft. The government comes in and asks us to put new technology on fighter jets and helicopters that wasn’t there before, and in some cases, probably didn’t even exist when the aircraft were originally built. My job is to figure out how to physically get all those things on board.

One of my first projects was the proposal to build the next presidential helicopter, called “Marine One” when the president is on board. My mentor and I helped design the helicopter’s interior space to meet all the requirements given to us by the U.S. Navy. Through computer modeling, we came up with the seating arrangements, where the luggage would go, and basically decided on how the president’s staff would function and move about in our proposed ‘Oval Office in the Sky.’ We expect to find out whether we get the contract to build this helicopter in December 2004.

My other major project was the installation of new technology on three AO/A-10 Thunderbolt II test jets. I spent six weeks out in Las Vegas working at a U.S. Air Force base to install this design on the jets. The pilots will fly them and evaluate whether they want more done in the coming months. This project was what I always thought engineering would be like. Hands on, getting dirty, and making decisions “on-the-fly” as problems come up.

Looking back, I know that my undergraduate education at UB was what got me to where I am today. The classes that taught me the engineering skills I needed, the student clubs that taught me about the reality of designing and building projects, and the Honors Seminars that taught me to think “outside the box” and challenged me. These are the tools I use everyday in my job.
My job isn’t nearly as glamorous as the TV show CSI would have you believe. I do not carry a badge. I do not get called to crime scenes in the middle of the night. I do not carry a gun. I saw my first dead body today, nine months after starting work.

When I began my studies at UB, I was a biology major and pre-med. But during my junior year, I decided that medical school was not in my future. If I had gone to medical school, I would have specialized in forensic pathology. I was so sure of this fact that my e-mail signature was “Support your local medical examiner; die strangely.” Every time Dr. Capuana introduced me to prospective students, she made a point of mentioning my goal, and how unusual it was. During my sophomore year, she heard that the Chief Medical Examiner from Virginia was going to be on campus speaking with a group of medical students. She made arrangements for me to attend that talk so that I could meet someone in my area of interest and gather some ideas about my future.

When I knew that I was not going to continue on to medical school, I needed to find another option. After several “What am I doing with my life?” meetings with Dr. Capuana, I came to some conclusions. I knew that I did not want to teach, and after spending time in Dr. Monteiro’s lab, I knew that a research laboratory was not the best place for me either. I soon realized that I was more interested in the forensic side of forensic pathology, and began looking into forensic science programs. Currently, I am enrolled in the Forensic Science Master’s Program at The George Washington University. When I was looking into graduate programs in this field, it was the only one that offered a concentration in forensic molecular biology. Most of our faculty members work in the field, and teach classes in the evenings. This means that law classes are taught by U.S. Attorneys and crime scene classes are taught by police officers. One of the benefits of this situation is that classes are taught not only from the textbook; the instructors provide real-world examples of situations. Most courses have scheduled lab time that allows us to practice the techniques we’ve learned before having to use them in our careers.

Currently, I work for the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory in Rockville, Maryland. We provide DNA identification services for all branches of the military. I applied for my position after it was announced in the DNA Profiling class I took last fall – the instructor is now one of my supervisors. I am the evidence custodian for a database project and am responsible for maintaining the chain of custody for all the DNA samples that are submitted for the database. When I am not logging in evidence or preparing it for the laboratory technicians, I help to determine DNA profiles for each sample. To date, we have analyzed over 7,000 pieces of evidence for this project.

Even though I work on this database project, it is not our laboratory’s main focus. Most of what we do is identify remains that have been recovered from Southeast Asia, Korea, and other areas of military conflict. The nuclear DNA section does most of their analysis on samples recovered from recent military casualties. Unfortunately, the staff in the nuclear section is very busy these days analyzing DNA from service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The mitochondrial DNA section works to obtain DNA sequences from service members who were lost in previous conflicts and whose remains have only recently been recovered. These samples are compared to a family reference database in an effort to return the remains to the service members’ families.

Although I do not help apprehend criminals or solve murder investigations, I take great pride in contributing to our organization’s mission – to never have an American service man or woman buried under the inscription: “Here Rests in Honored Glory An American Soldier Known But To God.”

Mara Sommer
Distinguished Honors Scholar, Class of 2002

Mara carefully handles DNA at the lab.
According to Herreid, the “magic” of the case approach is that through role-playing, debates or group presentations, students become directly involved in a controversial, unresolved topic that has a solid, scientific core and deals with important social and policy issues.

Want to make college science faculty really nervous? Tell them to stop lecturing and start telling stories, instead.

That’s the advice that science faculty hear when they participate in one of the “Case Studies in Science” workshops at the University at Buffalo, directed by Clyde (Kipp) Herreid, Ph.D., SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Academic Director of the Honors Program.

“It’s quite a challenge and some of the professors get very nervous,” admits Herreid. “We’ve had professors crying in bathrooms,” he says. “We’ve even had one or two leave the workshop in the middle.” But then an amazing thing happens: the professors get creative, transforming lecture notes on cellular respiration into a vivid crime scene complete with yellow police tape and spilled red paint for blood or turning a class in Newtonian mechanics into the story of a cheerleader chosen as part of a wager with the football team to find a way to lift a 300-pound football player. By the end of the five-day workshop, the professors love case studies. Luckily, so do the students.

Back on campus, nearly 90 percent of workshop participants embrace the method in their own teaching and 92 percent report that their students are “more engaged” as a result, according to a survey conducted by the Survey Research Lab in the Department of Sociology, UB College of Arts and Sciences and educational consultants Ciurzck & Company. Student attendance goes way up, too, even in courses largely made up of nonmajors just trying to satisfy their science requirements.

“...nearly 90% of workshop participants embrace the method in their own teaching and 92% are “more engaged” as a result...

Now, with a prestigious $1.2 million national dissemination grant from the National Science Foundation to UB’s National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science, Herreid
will be instructing more than 2,000 science professors nationwide using the method over the next three years, ultimately reaching nearly half a million undergraduates.

The grant doubles the number of workshops that will be given throughout the year and provides full scholarships for faculty from minority institutions. It provides resources so that the UB center can create a searchable database for its nearly 200 cases, which will allow professors to teach case study “short courses” at scientific conferences in their fields and will provide for quantitative assessment of results. It also provides for the dissemination of cases through the Journal of College Science Teaching.

According to Herreid, the “magic” of the case approach is that through role-playing, debates or group presentations, students become directly involved in a controversial, unresolved topic that has a solid, scientific core and deals with important social and policy issues. In lectures, on the other hand, students swallow information, regurgitate it and go home.

“The information can pass from the teachers’ yellowed lecture notes into the students’ notebooks without going through the brains of either of them,” he says. But cases carry with them an emotional hook that makes students care about what’s going to happen next, according to Herreid. “Human beings love stories,” he said. “We’re storytelling animals.”

“The idea with cases is to let students experience some of the ambiguity that all scientists have to deal with as they explore,” said Nancy Schiller, associate librarian in the Arts and Sciences Libraries at UB and co-director of the UB center. In one case, for example, students read a newspaper story about a fraudulently conducted clinical trial for a cancer drug, and then have to recreate their own clinical trial in which someone manipulates the data to make the drug look more powerful than it really is.

In another, the central character, a museum curator, must decide whether or not to show a painting as a hitherto “undiscovered” Cezanne. The stylistic analysis suggests it is real, but data obtained using different spectroscopic techniques are inconclusive. Students study the data to determine whether the painting is authentic or a fake.

Honors students have been involved with the project at many stages, notably through an Honors Seminar that Herreid teaches each spring, Case Studies in Science. Students write cases and teach them in local elementary and high school classrooms and some even have had their cases published in the Journal of Science Teaching or put on an award-winning website for the National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science at http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/case.html.

Now with a prestigious $1.2 million national dissemination grant...Herreid will be instructing more than 2,000 science professors nationwide...ultimately reaching nearly half a million undergraduates.
Associate Professor of Theatre, Catherine F. Norgren, readily admits that she never wanted to be an actor. In fact, she says of her school days, “I was a hopeless actor and so I never got cast.” Instead she parlayed her love of theater and her knack for sewing into the role of costumer at the age of 15.
As she relates, “My best friend, who wanted to be bossier than I, was the director, and I was the designer, because I knew how to sew.” While sewing costumes initially enabled her “to make theater happen”, Norgren’s passion for literature and art ultimately led her to the field of costume design. She describes her chosen career this way: “As a costume designer, people quite often assume that you make the clothes. But costume designer and costumer are really two different worlds in my vocabulary. Costume design is the only place where I can put together the words and the drawing and the thinking and the people—and somewhere in there, the sewing!”

Her multi-dimensional nature is reflected in Norgren’s numerous professional roles. Now in her 16th year with UB’s Department of Theatre and Dance, she is a professor—teaching 4 courses per semester, academic advisor and mentor to her undergraduate and graduate students in design, committee member (including serving on the Honors Council), and, of course, designer. Since 1983, she has been prominently involved with The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF), a national theater program in Washington, D.C., dedicated to fostering, enriching, and celebrating college theater, as well as to bridging the gap between professional and academic theater. Norgren is currently serving a three-year term as National Chair of this non-profit organization. In addition, she presents lectures and workshops across the country and works as a freelance costume designer. In 2003, she published a contributing chapter in The Dance Experience: 21st Century Edition, edited by Myron Nadel and Marc Strauss; she plans to compile a DVD book in the future. And this past summer, Norgren’s watercolor renderings of costume designs for the Vermont Stage production of Shakespeare’s Othello were included in an exhibit at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center in Buffalo.

Norgren’s many strengths and boundless energy surfaced early in her academic career. As a high school student at Francis Holland School in London, England, she choose to study Biology, English, Art and French for her A levels. This atypical combination meant her instructors had to rearrange the pre-set schedules to accommodate her varied interests. Of the school’s willingness to personally tailor her program Norgren states: “This is one of the reasons that I am so fond of the UB Honors Program —because I recognize it and it feels like the experiences I had in high school and as an undergraduate. I have always been interested in drawing and painting. It seemed silly to do just one thing—I didn’t want to be just an art major or just a theater major.” Norgren traveled to the United States to attend college, evaluating schools based on their theater programs, while deciding to also major in English. Her literature background has influenced her approach to productions. “I have this thing about words and the language. I am sort of old-fashioned and conservative in that sense, that I think the text is the starting place for theater.”

This intersection of text and design engaged Norgren this past summer at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. In a group of 70-80 participants ranging in age, experience and specialty, Norgren taught a design workshop to playwrights. Norgren encouraged them to utilize visual images and to consider design during the writing process. “The thinking is the part that makes [costume design] so much fun—the psychology, the interacting, and the fact that you are a kind of translator, on a multitude of levels. One of the reasons that I like working with the playwrights so much is that it gives me insight into even dead playwrights—what is it that they are trying to do, and where does that come from?”

Her affiliation with the Kennedy program began with Norgren’s first teaching job at the University of Evansville. Participation in the regional and national festivals of the organization was “woven into the fabric” of Evansville’s theater program. A typical annual festival runs 5 days and will have about 1,000 participants, 12-30 workshops, and 3-7 full-length productions that have traveled from their home campus where they were first vetted. On attending the festivals Norgren comments, “There is not a lot of stratification between faculty and students. One of the things that I like most about it is that it is the only organization in which faculty and students function as colleagues talking about theater.”

The core of the festival is the college productions. Each is viewed by an outside professional who travels to the home campus, attends the show, and immediately afterwards provides a talkback to the faculty and
students. Norgren finds this analytical experience professionally rewarding. “You are an objective insider asking ‘How do you make theater better?’ I think part of my motivation is selfish, because in hindsight I can’t really separate what I’ve learned from what I’ve taught. When you talk to people about [a production] it really helps you figure out what your aesthetic is and what you care about.”

Aside from her work with KCACTF, Norgren feels that one of the greatest aspects of being at UB is what she has learned about dance. Prior to coming to Buffalo, she had had no experience with dance or dance productions. “When I started at UB, I was the only faculty costume designer. I was young and hadn’t done that much design, and certainly not for dance, so it was very exciting.” She proudly points out that “now almost every production on the UB stage is almost entirely student designed.” Norgren believes that this type of hands-on experience is invaluable to her students and gives them a definite edge in applying and gaining acceptance to the top graduate schools of design. “[Our students] know how to think, how to take what they have learned conceptually in the classroom and put it towards a production.” Between the department’s level of supervision, its resources, and UB’s superb facilities, she finds that “we can give our students a very sophisticated experience.”

Norgren designs costumes for many productions off campus, most recently for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival and the Kennedy Center’s Youth and Family Programs Imagination Celebration! She describes herself as “a very adjectival designer. Adjectives are the infusion that separates one production or one text from another. I think of clothes as sculptural—I am putting skins on actors so that they can be characters, but it is how they move in it as much as how pretty it is.” Norgren always utilizes what she terms a “visual anchor” for inspiration and continuity during the creative process. She begins each project with this anchor, which can be a painting, a sculpture, a photograph or a montage of images that she pieces together. “For me it is helpful if I can find an image that . . . generates a parallel response. I am convinced that if you talk to people about [a production] it might make you a better business major.”

Much like her own unique career, Norgren encourages her students to cultivate and meld all facets of their intellect. In the honors recitation the students read 5 books over the course of the semester. “My premise is that they forget to read for pleasure.” She tells them, “This is what will inspire you and help make those connections to other things. If you are not letting your mind be opened up and hit by the things outside of what you are doing, [then] what you are doing becomes a narrow tunnel.” For Norgren, fostering this sense of self-discovery is her favorite part of her favorite role. “I love that light bulb—I mean it is really visual—you can see in their eyes that moment when they realize, ‘It’s mine’."

Norgren’s use of a visual anchor stems from an undergraduate assignment where she was asked to connect a piece of fine art to a specific play. Norgren developed the concept further and now teaches this methodology in all of her design classes at UB. Despite her passion for costume design, teaching is her first love. “I would rather give up designing than teaching. My mother was a teacher, and so I think that teaching has always been recognized or important.” Norgren teaches at least 4 courses a semester simply because she doesn’t want to give up...
My favorite part of engineering at Fisher-Price is the access to state-of-the-art tools to help solve any problems. I can get part of a toy scanned in 3-D, import the data into Cad software, modify the part, and create a rapid prototype a day later. Honestly, for most products it is a fun, yet routine process. Sometimes we try to totally rethink a product, and last year I participated in a “deep dive.” A “deep dive” is a week-long cross-discipline meeting where we redraw the box, and then think outside it. We watch children in day care, shop for “interesting” products, brainstorm, build rough models to demonstrate the concepts, and present our findings to each other.

Then there are the trips: “In the spring of 2002, I spent ten weeks in Tijuana, Mexico, cross-training in a Mattel factory. While at the factory, I made sure that several products were successfully launched into production. We ran short trial runs and rigorous tests of our products. These could be overwhelming for a new engineer, and to make things more difficult, most of the factory employees did not speak English. My Spanish courses at UB saved me. I could ask a technician in the testing lab exactly how an assembly failed, or the location of machine I-2. Moreover, I was able to really experience the Mexican spirit from management to the line-worker.”

“The year before, in April of this year, I visited MAPS (Mattel Asia Pacific Sourcing), our offices in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, China. My team had many projects in development over there, and I was sent to answer questions they might have. I traveled across the Chinese border repeatedly to meet at twelve different manufacturing sites. A typical meeting involved a fellow MAPS engineer, me, and several other people from different companies. It always struck me how cordially every person there would take my business card. They would use two hands to receive the card, try to repeat my name and bow slightly. At one meeting we were discussing the cost of a specific toy. I had a list of possible areas where we were being over charged. When I first told the vendor that we needed to remove 20% of the price, they laughed! They would listen to each bullet point on my list, then discuss in Cantonese with the MAPS engineer. After a few minutes, the translator would say to me, “OK, we will let you know.”

I owe many of these experiences to UB, the Honors Program, and public education. Especially being a new graduate, whenever a tough question comes up I only have the experiences of my education to fall back upon. So far, UB has not failed me. UB’s larger class sizes forced me to be assertive and as a young engineer I use this skill every day. During my first semester at UB I took an Honors Seminar entitled The Geography of International Conflict Points. This course analyzed the intermingling of the present cultures of the world, and helped me to understand the small yet important idiosyncrasies as a foreigner in other countries.

My travels in China helped me to understand another important aspect of my education. My Honors Scholarship also helped fund my education at UB, giving me a world-class education. In China, only the rich and lucky can afford an education at all.

Nicholas and his larger-than-life companion.
For years, I had been jotting down ideas both musical and cinematic. Over time I had sculpted a story, written music, and envisioned worlds that would make their way into my film “Apnea” (without breathe). “Apnea” is about a struggling guitar player named Jack who sees death as the only escape from his misery. During an attempt at suicide he meets Angie, a caring young woman who is afraid to die. Although her terminal illness is bringing her closer to death, her passion for living remains strong. The two meet in another realm of consciousness, a dream state between life and death. The essence of the film is the impact they have on each other. Despite the heaviness of Jack’s character and the film’s dark imagery, there is a positive message overall. We get to witness Jack’s transformation into a character with a new appreciation for life as he helps Angie become more at peace with dying. I named the film “Apnea” because the movie explores a kind of existence that is beyond the body and without breathe.

A large part of the story was influenced by the musical motives I had already written. I would come up with some music, then, I would let the music reveal that part of the story to me. The music that drives the film is heartfelt, and has almost a rock opera style to it. The soundtrack was recorded at the University’s Pro-Tools room in the Media Study Department. Filming took place all around the Buffalo area and inside the studios at the Department of Media Study. Casting and shooting in Buffalo really put me in touch with the greater Buffalo community, more than I had been in the three years previous to making my film. I

In November 2003 I applied for and received a grant through the University Honors Program called the “Creative Activities and Research Fund”. It was my last year at the University at Buffalo as an undergraduate in the department of media study. I wanted to make a film of aesthetic and emotional significance and I knew that this funding would allow me to produce the film I had written.
found people in the community to be enthusiastic and happy to lend me an extra hand or some space for locations.

The people in my department were very excited that I received the grant. This gave my project validity and added an aspect of professionalism to the production. Although I put everything I had into making this movie, I could not have done it alone. I worked one on one with Meg Knowles and Professor Brian Henderson, two distinguished instructors from the department of Media Study. Developing a close working relationship with them was a great support to me. So many students from Media Study gave of their time, energy, patience, and incredible talents in order to make this movie happen.

Making an independent film gave me total control of the filmmaking process. I was able to experience the diverse aspects of filmmaking from writing the script, to writing and recording the soundtrack, to directing and producing. Creating a film while in college allowed me learn about myself as an artist. It was very exciting to know that by expressing my ideas on film, I can actually have an impact on its viewers. Making “Apnea” was a test of my physical, emotional, and creative endurance and has been the greatest accomplishment of my life.

Since making “Apnea”, I have grown artistically. Being able to explore this subject matter was very healing for me. I have a rough cut of “Apnea” on DVD. I am continuing to edit it and I hope to have a finished version by the spring of 2005 and plan to submit it to film festivals. In the meantime, I spent a week at the Buffalo Writing and Media Production Seminar, attending UB Alumnus Bob Fisher’s class on commercial production. I was able to work with some of the most talented students in the Department of Media Study to produce two provocative commercials. I am currently working on the television show “Filmfakers”, which airs on AMC in October.

The Research and Creative Activities Fund allows individual students the opportunity to pursue their intellectual interests by providing grants of up to $5,000 to complete a proposed project. Made possible through the generosity of the Provost’s Office, this fund gives students the necessary support to conduct research and complete creative endeavors as undergraduates. Over the past three years, 28 very diverse, student-initiated projects have been completed.
I would venture a guess that “The Road Not Taken,” by Robert Frost, is one of the most often recited poems in modern English. Nearly everyone can remember at least a few lines, and certainly we all remember its message – how a single choice can color a lifetime’s experiences and accomplishments. Despite the simple beauty of this poem, and the universality of its metaphor (it is so often true!), I must admit that I find its implications a little unsettling. My unease most likely owes its beginning to my years at UB, and more specifically to my experiences in the Honors Program. But don’t worry – while it may sound troubling (“The Honors Program made you think a classic work of literature was vaguely disturbing??”), it’s actually a very good thing. Truthfully, I suspect that many Honors Program alumni have reached the same conclusion.

Two roads diverged...

I began my college career in electrical engineering. Fortunately the Honors Program had drawn me to UB, where not only was the engineering program first-rate, but so were a myriad of other fascinating majors. Of course, my initial choice of undergraduate major did not even live out even my freshman year. At the end of my first semester, I doubled back and stood again at the “choice of major” divergence of roads, and chose a new one. I saw my father’s footsteps along the business road (he’s an economics and marketing professor) and decided on that fair road. After all, there are almost as many numbers in accounting as there are in engineering. It was a good choice, but it wasn’t quite that simple.

A very interesting thing happened along my path to a BS/MBA – it was called Science, Literature and Society. An Honors Seminar, it was team-taught by none other than the incomparable Dr. Robert Daly (beloved by all Honors Scholars) and his good friend Dr. Steven Sample, then President of UB. I’ll admit that it was in large part due to Dr. Sample’s obvious academic accomplishments that I initially selected this seminar. I would soon see that my decision was wiser than I ever could have known at registration time. Dr. Daly and Dr. Sample are similar in many ways – I see their paths as reflections of one another. Dr. Daly started his college career in engineering, and ended up an English professor. Dr. Sample is an engineer by trade, but is one of the most well-read individuals I have yet encountered; his thirst for the liberal arts seems insatiable. They are today’s Renaissance men.
What I didn’t yet recognize when I began *Science, Literature and Society* was that I was an awful lot like my teachers. They helped me figure that out. Dr. Daly and Dr. Sample encouraged me in my literary analysis. I learned to look beyond the text and to understand its context. What was happening in society when the author wrote? Was her text informed by science, music, art, politics, philosophy or defining historical events? My inquiries grew broader, encouraged by Dr. Daly’s “Can you say more?” But at first I thought that *Science, Literature and Society* had merely let me sneak an exciting peek through the trees to a road that was temporarily running alongside mine; at the end of the semester it would veer off, as divergent roads do, and that would be that. I will forever be thankful that my teachers chose to become my mentors after that semester (surely a hallmark of the Honors Program at its best). Dr. Daly and Dr. Sample challenged me to find a way to straddle the two roads – and I did.

**To keep the first for another day, and tell this with a sigh ages and ages hence?**

I graduated summa cum laude in 1992 with a BS in management and a BA in English. My MBA in accounting came the following year. Along with my BS and BA came an award from the English department and, in one my proudest achievements ever, a University at Buffalo Medallion for Excellence in Disparate Majors. Dr. Daly penned the inscription on the back of the medallion. It reads “For exemplary dedication to intellectual breadth and liberal knowledge.” But with my MBA graduation came another fork in the road. Standing at the start of either a business career or enrollment in an English graduate program, I could not see at all how I could continue to straddle both roads. With offers from all of the major New York City accounting firms in hand, I chose to keep the liberal arts road for another day. The sighs did not wait ages and ages to arrive, however – I took my first step on my new path with a sigh.

I quickly learned that I couldn’t chase those sighs back into some dusty corner of my mind. What I might look like “ages and ages hence” bothered me; it is very disturbing have to leave behind a road not taken. So, with the zeal for life and learning that Dr. Daly and Dr. Sample and so many of my Honors Program friends had taught me, I started to carve out my own path in the woods. It runs between the business road and the liberal arts road. I am a businesswoman – that is for certain. But I work my craft in environments that satisfy the English major in me, and I believe that I make better business decisions because so many other disciplines shape my perspective. I earned my CPA while working with entertainment industry clients at KPMG in New York City. I then spent two years in New York and Los Angeles managing the financial aspects of Walt Disney Art Classics, which designs fine collectibles, including original animation cel art. Next I spent over six years at NBC News in New York, working directly with the talented writers, producers and correspondents who create the Today show, Nightly News, Meet the Press, Dateline and MSNBC every day. As Director of Finance for NBC News, I oversaw finance and compliance for worldwide newsgathering about the events that shape our society - from the economy to elections, from wildfires to wars. I traveled to some exciting places where, quite literally, history was being made.

**And that has made all the difference**

Along the way I encountered a Renaissance man with whom to share my rough-hewn path. My husband Ted is International Tax Director for GE (NBC’s parent company), and has traveled to even more countries than I have (although never tagging along with a network news crew as far as I know!) I now work in Connecticut for GE Corporate as well, right alongside Ted. As always, I’ve found a way to be a corporate business leader, but in a way that broadens my horizons. I currently work as a Black Belt in GE’s renowned six sigma quality program (yes, there are numbers in that, too!), but in the area of legal compliance. Many days, when I’m not writing articles for UB Honors Today, I’m writing communications and training plans, and designing legal projects. My work spans the globe and I have a chance to deepen my understanding of other cultures every day. I’m hoping that Dr. Daly and Dr. Sample are proud.

Ted has three sons I am happy to call my step-sons, and we are in the process of adopting a baby girl from South Korea. It’s a unique and exciting path we travel together, and it’s all our own. I hope that Ted and I can pass along to our children the notion that it’s a good thing to try to pull together some divergent roads once in a while (or to at least try more than one of them). I was certainly lucky to have the Honors Program to teach me that often we will have to leave a road not taken, but when we *can* carve out our own road, it can make all the difference.)

![Christine at home in her office at GE.](image)

Cruising down the Moscow River alongside the Kremlin.
As the World Turns

LAUREN ADLER
Performing and Creative Arts Honors Scholar
Class of 1998

An advantage of UB was my ability to meet people and take courses outside of the performing arts. As my current acting teacher and mentor Mary Boyer (Director of the MTB Studio in New York City) says, “As actors, we must always be students of human behavior because our job, above all else, is to tell the story, and in order to do that, we have to understand our behavior and the behavior of others very well.” UB encouraged me to engage diverse and intriguing people through courses within and beyond the performing arts. Thus, I emerged from UB’s undergraduate program, as opposed to a conservative setting, per se, with the comprehensive palate of skills needed to survive in today’s competitive industry instead of only focusing on one area.

Living in New York City has provided me with wonderful opportunities to audition and perform while teaching valuable lessons one does not necessarily learn within the bubble of academia. I soon realized that very often the jobs a performer lands are due to factors and forces he or she has little power over. Directors and casting agents have preconceived notions of what they want, while defining you by the mold or “product” you will be most commonly cast in. While this is limiting, learning how others view you is of immeasurable importance when choosing which projects to pursue. Not begrudging the importance of sheer luck and favorable circumstances, many notches on my resume are the result of much more than acting skill alone.

At an audition for an ad campaign for Berkeley College, I overheard someone say that they wanted to cast someone who knew something about finance. Luckily, the actor sitting next to me explained some basic financial jargon in the script, which allowed me to read the audition piece with more confidence. It turned out to be one of my first paying jobs out of school which played throughout the tri-state area and the pictures appeared on billboards from Times Square to New Jersey. Likewise, on a commercial shoot for the new Jane Pauley Show, the director was seeking people who could speak about what they particularly liked about the hostess. I quickly called my sister to “Google” her name and I was able to dazzle the casting people with my intimate knowledge of this woman whom I knew very little about. I also worked on a “10-10-987” commercial starring John Stamos that aired over the past year. One factor that helped me to get cast in that was simply the fact that I fit perfectly into the bridesmaid dress the production team had in mind.

A highlight of my career to date was getting transported to the 1950’s playing an Art History Student in Mona Lisa Smile. The experience of working on a feature film over a period of months provided me with an insight into the film industry and an unforgettable experience. In addition to TV and Film pursuits, I have performed in multiple New York City and Regional Theaters. I am constantly encountering new and exciting things from which my experiences at UB served me well. An inescapable reality of being a working actress is that you cannot anticipate what you’ll be called on to do next. Yet, reliance on your craft and training will enable you to prepare you for whatever comes your way and allows you to steer a few things in your direction.

I am the most unrealistically glamorous waitress that has every pretended to pour an empty cup of coffee. I arrive at the “As the World Turns” studio and change into my waitress costume to await intercom instructions to report to set. A hairstylist miraculously coifs my hair into big, beautiful soap opera perfection and a make-up artist creates striking contour. I’m called to the set where a fast talking director spews fifty directions to me all at once concerning what kind of “waitress activities” to perform during this very dramatic break-up scene. The last thing I hear is “Remember everything isn’t real. Be careful of what you touch. And don’t make any noise because no sound except dialogue should be heard.” The camera rolls and shooting begins without rehearsal as I gingerly creep my way around the set to perform my wait-ress duties, striving to look noiselessly natural. How will all my formal theatre training help me now?

To survive in the entertainment industry, an actor needs more than performance skills honed in a classroom. To that end, attending UB was one of the best decisions I could have made. I was accepted into the Honors Program with a Performing Arts Scholarship for Voice, and I graduated with a Special Major Degree in Music and Theatre, which encompassed my interest in Classical and Broadway Singing, Acting and Dance. My training came to fruition when I directed a Musical Theatre Project that brought together all that I had learned.
Satish Tripathi, Dean of the Bourns College of Engineering at the University of California, Riverside, has been named UB Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs by President John B. Simpson.

Tripathi takes office as UB's chief academic officer on July 1, has been Dean of the engineering college and the William R. Johnson, Jr. Family Distinguished Professor of Engineering at UC Riverside since 1997. He also served as acting executive vice chancellor from March 2002 through June 2002.

“I am very honored and pleased to name Satish Tripathi as UB’s new provost,” said Simpson. “Satish is a man of the highest integrity and personal scholarly distinction. He is very intelligent, analytical and has built a first-rate faculty at Bourns College of Engineering at the University of California, Riverside in a short period of time. Following a strategic plan, he expanded the college from a single department and one research center to four departments and five interdisciplinary research centers. In doing so, he demonstrated commitment to both undergraduate and graduate programs and students.

“The University at Buffalo,” Tripathi added, “has tremendous potential. I am most impressed with its comprehensiveness and the educational opportunities provided to students through its more than 300 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. With its full complement of professional schools and vast array of research centers, it also has the parts in place to be a leading university. UB also is a very important part of the community, with strong relationships with the business and corporate community upon which to build to the benefit of the university and the region.”

A native of India, Tripathi graduated top of his class from Banaras Hindu University in India in 1968. In addition to a doctorate in computer science that he earned from the University of Toronto in 1979, he holds three master’s degrees—one in computer science from the University of Toronto (1976) and two in statistics from the University of Alberta (1974) and Banaras Hindu University (1970).
1985
CATHERINE TUFARIELLO
Her first book of poems, “Keeping My Name”, was published by Texas Tech University Press in April 2004.

1988
JOSEPH ACCURSO
Joseph is currently working for the Austin Medical Center, an affiliate of Mayo Clinic. He and his wife have a 17-month-old son, Matthew, and are expecting twins in February, 2005.

1988
DAPHNE BASCOM
Daphne recently began her new job as a Physician Executive with Cerner Corporation.

1988
RANDI WEINSTEIN
Randi is currently on leave from her job as a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona and will return next year. She has been traveling around the country for the past year with her husband, John, who is on sabbatical and their 18 month-old-son, Johnny.

1990
JOHN NEUMANN
John recently accepted a position as “Senior Process Engineer” at Intel in Hillsboro, Oregon.

1991
DAVID FIORELLA and ANDREA (LAWRENCE) FIORELLA
Dave has just started a job as an attending neurointerventional radiologist at the Cleveland Clinic and they have two children, Jessica 4yrs. and Matthew 2yrs.

1993
STEVEN HELMS
Steve is currently controller of ddmdirect.com and lives in Williamsville, New York with his wife and two children.

1993
JENNIFER (ORTON) LOFTUS
Jennifer lives with her husband, Josh, and their two children in San Jose, California. Meet 3 year old Leah and 17 month old Casey...

1994
ANN MARIE PELLGRINO
Ann Marie recently launched a line of greeting cards (www.spotgirl.net) and exhibited at the National Stationery Show in New York, New York in May 2004. Meet her children, Dora (2 1/2 yrs.) and Theo (10 mos.)

1994
AMY (FRAMENT) JOHNSON
Amy and her husband Wesley live in Portland, Maine with their 10 month old daughter, Molly B. Amy is a Research Analyst in Math and Science Education at the University of Southern Maine.

1994
KATHLEEN (VAN EMMERICK) WEBER
Kathleen recently completed her 7th year as a school counselor and started a new position with the West Genesee Central School District at Camillus Middle School. Meet Colin, Kathleen and her husband Rick’s 1-year-old son...

1995
BRIAN STOUT
Brian is currently in his 3rd and final year of training in a Pediatric Emergency Medicine fellowship at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1996
KRISTIN (COFFMAN) HADDAD
Kristin recently completed a Ph.D. in biochemistry at Tufts University entitled “Histidine Dynamics in Serine Protease Catalysis”.

1996
KAREN SCHUPP
Karen is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Dance at Arizona State University where she teaches technique and theory courses. Along with teaching, she is currently performing and touring with Victoria Marks, Mary Fitzgerald and Fred Darsow and is co-artistic director of Schupp/Shaw, a performance dance company in Phoenix, Arizona. Additionally, she has worked with international digital artist Christian Zeigler in the development of “Dance Dance Revolution,” which premiered at the Zentrum fur Kunst un Mediatechnologies in Karlsruhe, Germany. Karen has received a Lester Horton Small Ensemble Performance Award for her dancing in Victoria Marks’ “Against Ending”, and a Devil’s Advocate Award for outstanding contribution to the ASU community.

1996
RENEE N. (LANSLEY) SZUSTAKOWSKI
Renee and her husband Joe (Honors Scholar ’95) are living and working near Boston, Massachusetts. Renee is completing work on a Ph.D. in women’s history from the Ohio State University. She has also taken a position with Target Corporation in eastern Massachusetts as a human resources executive.

1996
VICTOR ZARAYA
Victor is the Vice President of Finance & Operations at the entertainment company Razor & Tie in New York City.
Meredith Wutz

Meredith was awarded a MONBUKAGAKUSHO (Japanese Ministry of Science and Education) scholarship to study in Japan and is now in her second year of residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Cincinnati. She is teaching English to students majoring in English Education at the Karalpakstan Pedagogical Institute in Nukus.

Dana Goldstein

Dana recently recorded 2 hip-hop/reggae songs for release on Strong Island Records reggae division, Strong Island Massive under the stage name Dana Gold. The songs are featured on a compilation entitled dancehall jump-up volume 1.

Lisa Reaves

Lisa is in her second year of pediatric residency at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, and hoping to follow up with a fellowship in (pediatric) hematology/oncology.

Marian Waldman

Marian recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and is currently employed at the New York Law Offices of Hunton & Williams, LLP.

Matthew Blasczak

Matthew recently moved to Syracuse with his wife, Jill, after being offered a software engineering position by Syracuse Research Corporation.

Lucy Boulatnikov

Lucy is a project engineer working for General Motors Fuel Cell Division. Their motivation at work is to give the world a 100% environmentally friendly energy source.

Christopher J. Miller

Chris recently competed in his second triathlon and placed 35th out of 100 competitors and second in his age group. He is also beginning his second year of law school at UB.

Courtney Weiser

Courtney graduated in May from Teachers College, Columbia University with a Master of Science in Biobehavioral Sciences - Speech Language Pathology.

Rita Ditondo

Rita is in Milan, Italy, where she will be receiving her TEFL certification followed by a year teaching English in an as of yet undisclosed location in Italy.

Monica Karwan

Monica is in the middle of an Expressive Therapies Program/Dance Therapy Concentration at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dena Roncone

After working as Production Manager for Alleyway Theatre in Buffalo for their fall season, Dena directed and produced her 3rd production, The House of Yes in February. This summer she worked as a drama teacher at Summerstage arts camp and moved to Boston this fall to begin her Master’s in Educational Theatre at Emerson College.

Stephanie Hecker

Stephanie is at UB working on her Doctor of Physical Therapy.

Andrew Mason

Andrew is enrolled in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh for physics and astronomy.

Donna Menard

Donna graduated with a B.A. in studio art with a minor in art history this past spring and is returning for a fifth year to pursue a B.A. in psychology.

Brooke Mentkowski

Brooke is working at the M&T Bank headquarters in Buffalo - Management Development Program for Commercial Lending.

Lisa Rubin

Lisa is in her 5th year as a graduate student in the six-year Doctor of Pharmacy Program at UB. She recently returned from spending a month in Australia on an extreme-sport adventure!

Matthew Sweeney

Matthew recently moved to Syracuse with his wife, Jill, after being offered a software engineering position by Syracuse Research Corporation.
The Honors Program is hosting a brunch for our alumni in the metro New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut region on **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30.** Our site is the Midtown Executive Club in Manhattan. If you haven’t received your invitation to join us as our guest, please call the Honors Office at (716) 645-3020 or e-mail Karyn St. George at kcs9@buffalo.edu. Please be sure to RSVP, as it is important for us to know how many guests to expect. We look forward to seeing you!