



# Religious Studies at UNO

January 2007

## Religion and Art focus of Multimedia Lecture



Rachel Has Taken Idols by Barbara Simcoe

**Religion and Art** will be the focus of Dr. Barbara J. Simcoe's multimedia lecture Thursday, 22 February at 2:30 p.m. in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 313.

Simcoe's presentation is entitled "Continuation & Promise: The Case of Jacob and Isaac." It is based on her work for the Yitzhak Project in Acco, Israel.

The presentation is open to the public at no charge.

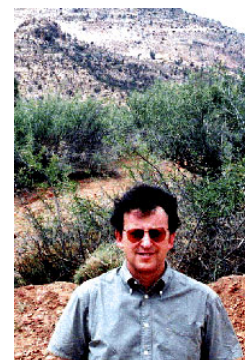
## Religious Studies Honors and Awards Banquet 12 April

Scholarships will be awarded and graduates will be honoured on Thursday, 12 April 2007, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the 2007 Religious Studies Banquet. It will be held in the Chancellor's Room on the second floor in the Milo Bail Student Center on the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus.

Three Ron Burke Scholarships and one Dale Stover Scholarship will be awarded.

## Brooks Lecture to be April 16

Dr. Daniel J. Schroeter, Professor in the History School of Humanities and Teller Family Chair in Jewish History, University of California – Irvine, will be the 2007 Sidney H. Brooks Lecture speaker on Monday, 16 April 2007.



His lecture will be on "The Jewish Experience in the Muslim World."

He is interested in the history of the Muslim world and modern Jewish history, with a particular research focus on the Jews of Morocco. His recent book concerns the Moroccan Jewish community and the Sephardi world in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, examined through the activities of Morocco's most important royal agent in this period, Meir Macnin. This study identifies a break in Sephardi history at the time of Emancipation in Western Europe, marking the decline of the transnational Sephardi Diaspora and the beginning of a demarcation within the Jewish world between "Western" and "Oriental" Jews. It raises new questions about Muslim-Jewish relations and the relationship of Jews to the state in Morocco.

The lecture will be held in Bootstrapper Hall at the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center, 67 and Dodge at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome at no charge.

## Dale Stover to be honoured at May Retirement Reception

Dale Stover will be honoured at a retirement reception on Sunday, 6 May. The reception will be held at the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center, 67 and Dodge Streets from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

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## Deadline approaching to have name on Dale Stover Scholarship Plaque

There is still time to have your name added to the plaque that will recognize the original donors to the Dale Stover Scholarship Fund. The plaque will be given to Dale at his retirement reception on 6 May. We already have raised over \$14,000 for the Stover Scholarship Fund. We would like to reach \$15,000 by the time of Dale's retirement reception.

To make your tax deductible donation to the Dale Stover Scholarship Fund, make your check out to the University of Nebraska Foundation and write Stover SS on the memo line. Send your checks to the Religious Studies Program, ASH 205, 6001 Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68182-0265. Donations are tax deductible.

**Stover** Continued from page 1

Dale Stover has been teaching religious studies at the University of Nebraska since 1968 and he expects to retire in May of 2007.



Born on a farm in Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, in 1935, Dr. Stover received his B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis in 1957, a B.D. and S.T.M. from Andover Newton Theological School in

Boston in 1961 and 1964 respectively and his Ph.D. from The Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University (Montreal, Canada) in 1967.

He was a post-doctoral Fellow in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago (1979) and at the University of California, Berkley (1981). After 1986, he began to focus his research and teaching on the study of Indigenous Religions.

He served as the first coordinator of The Native American Studies program, 1992 – 95. He has been a member of the Women's Studies faculty since 1988. He also has been an adjunct professor with the Department of Preventative and Societal Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center since 1981 and has been a Fellow at the Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska, since 1992.

He served as chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, 1976 – 79, as well as on several college and university committees.

## JR & F Editors at Sundance

Drs. William L. Blizek, *Journal of Religion & Film* founding editor, and Associate Editors Michele Desmarais and Paul Allen Williams were among members of the press who attended the 2007 Sundance Film Festival 18 – 26 January in Park City, Utah. They reviewed films with religious content or other religion related elements.

They were joined by Michael J. Krainak, Dr. Beth Ritter and Kathy Schwartz. Krainak is a member of the *JR & F* editorial board. He also teaches courses on film in the School of Communication. Ritter is in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and is academic chair of the Native American Studies program. She covers Native American films for *JR & F*. Schwartz is managing editor of *JR & F* and staff assistant for the Department of Philosophy and Religion.

The reviews will appear in the *Journal of Religion & Film* shortly after the end of the Sundance Film Festival and will become a part of the April issue of the journal as "Report from Sundance 2007: Religion and Independent Film." *JR & F*, which begins its 11<sup>th</sup> year of online publication this spring, can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf>.

## Batchelder Biblical Archaeology Conference is endowed

The Clifton Batchelder Family Foundation has committed to a giving \$250,000.00 to endow the annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology Conference held at UNO.

"Over the years, the Batchelder Conference for Biblical Archaeology has gained the prestige of a high-quality international conference that attracts scholars and laypeople from around the world," said Rami Arav, director of the Bethsaida Excavations Project at UNO. "It brings to a large audience the most updated discoveries and thoughts."

The conference is co-sponsored by International Studies and Programs at UNO, and the Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford.

## Paul Williams awarded tenure



Dr. Paul Allen Williams has been awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Now that he has tenure, he has been elected by his colleagues as chair of the Religious Studies program. He replaces Dr. William L. Blizek who

served as chair while religious studies faculty worked toward tenure.

## Rory J. Conces is promoted

Dr. Rory J. Conces has been promoted to associate professor by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Conces teaches a course on religion and conflict for the Religious Studies program.

## Goldstein lectures continue focus on human rights

UNO Alumni Magazine, Winter 2006 - Shirley and Leonard Goldstein have devoted more than 30 years



to the cause of human rights around the world. Their interest in human rights began with the strong belief that “it is simply wrong for governments to prevent people from worshipping as they wish” and the awareness that Soviet Jews were prevented from practicing their religion.

In the 1970s, the Goldsteins made several trips to the Soviet Union, where they witnessed first hand the oppression of Soviet Jews. Their experiences in the Soviet Union spurred them to become involved in the cause of human rights.

In 1973, Shirley and her friend, Miriam Simon, founded the Omaha Committee for Soviet Jewry, which sponsored the program, Freedom for Soviet Jews. Recognizing their work on behalf of human

rights, the Jewish Federation of Omaha and the National Conference of Christians and Jews both have honored the Goldsteins. In 1996, Shirley Goldstein was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from UNO for her many contributions to the cause of human rights.

In 1997, Shirley and Leonard Goldstein decided to expand their efforts on behalf of human rights by establishing an annual lecture on the UNO campus. The lecture is designed to keep UNO and the Omaha community as a whole informed about human rights issues and activities.

Previous lecturers include:

- Xiao Qiang, executive director, Human Rights in China;
- Kenneth Roth, executive director, Human Rights Watch;
- LaShawn Jefferson, women’s rights division director, Human Rights Watch;
- Jo Becker, children’s rights advocacy director, Human Rights Watch;
- William Schultz, executive director, Amnesty International;
- David Chandler, senior lecturer, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Univ. of Westminster, London;
- Jerry Fowler, staff director, Committee on Conscience, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

## Development focus of 2006 Goldstein Lecture



UNO Alumni Magazine, Winter 2006 -The eighth annual Shirley and Leonard Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights was held Oct. 19 in the Milo Bail Student Center at UNO. This year’s speaker was Dr. Stephen Marks, Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Health and Human

Rights, Harvard School of Public Health.

Marks addressed about 100 attendees on the subject of “Claims —legitimate and exaggerated — about human rights in development.”

The emphasis of Marks’ work is on the interface of health and human rights, drawing on the disciplines of international law, politics, organizations and economics. Marks’ current interests include integrating human rights into sustainable human development and developing

human rights indicators of relevance to poverty reduction strategies.

Speaking on one popular misconception regarding globalization, Marks says, "The violent conflict is not between the morally indignant voices of the poor versus a band of greedy capitalists meeting in some board room in Washington or London."

Marks proposes that human rights can be part of these development processes:

- Economic development—a historical process that takes place in almost all societies, characterized by economic growth, construction of infrastructure, expansion of industry, increased production and consumption of goods and services; and,

## Faculty Notes

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**Dr. Rami Arav** was quoted in the 29 December *Jewish Press* article on a Biblical Archaeology Mini-Course that Arav has taught this month. The course sessions included "Why Biblical Archaeology? What Biblical Archaeology Can and Cannot Do;"

"Where in the Bible Does History Begin? The Forgotten Kingdom of Geshur" and "The Temple of Herod in Jerusalem: In Context."

He also was quoted in the January/February 2007 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*. The article was "Love at First Site," an article about a couple who married at Bethsaida. Arav gave the bride away.

In addition he presented a paper on the "Evidence for Fresh Water Rituals at Bethsaida" at the eighth annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology Conference in November.

Arav, who officially joined the religious studies faculty this year, has been at UNO since 1994. In recent years, his appointments were in International Studies and Programs and the Department of History. He holds his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Tel Aviv University and received his Ph.D. from New York University.

**Drs. Michele Desmarais** and **Bill Blizek** have had their paper, "What Are We Teaching When We Teach Religion & Film" accepted for inclusion in a volume devoted to teaching religion and film. The volume, *Teaching Religion and Film*, is being edited by Greg Watkins of Stanford University. It will be published by Oxford University Press.

- Human development—a version of the same process that embraces human needs and social goals beyond material wellbeing, such as higher standards of education and healthcare, and wider opportunities for work and leisure, increased capabilities and choices for the individual.

Marks has been consultant to the United Nations Development Program on this topic and expects to collaborate on a new project for UNICEF with Professor Ajay Maha.

UNO's department of philosophy and religion and International Studies and Programs sponsored the lecture.

**Dr. Rory J. Conces** will once again be leaving for the Balkans and Austria in March. He has been invited by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo to give a paper entitled "The Hyperintellectual, Civil Society, and Democratization in the Balkans." In addition, he will lecture to philosophy students at the University of Sarajevo. His topic will be applied ethics. From there he will travel to the University of Rijeka, Croatia, to present a paper entitled "The Moralization of Classical Political Realism and the War on Terrorism." The last leg of his trip will involve two presentations in Graz, Austria. Professor Conces will present a paper on the hyperintellectual in the Balkans to the Philosophical Association of Graz and a paper on civil society building and democratization in the Balkans at the European Research and Training Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. He will also continue his networking with the Nansen Dialogue Centres in Sarajevo and Pristina, Kosovo.

**Julien Fielding** presented workshops on "Screening the Sacred: Understanding Hayao Miyazaki's Films through the Lens of Religion" and "Beyond the Text: Teaching Religion at 24-Frames per Second" at the Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities (Jan. 12 – 15).

Scarecrow Press, an academic publisher out of Boston, has accepted her book proposal on how to learn about religion through film, which is based on the second workshop. The book is tentatively titled the same as one of the workshops she presented in Hawaii, "Beyond the Text: Understanding World Religions at 24-frames per second."

She also started work on her Ph.D. at the University of Wales in January. The topic of her dissertation is guilt and film.

**Dr. Paul Allen Williams** presented a paper entitled “Sean Freynes’s Concept of Galilee in the First Century” at the eighth annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology conference in November.

**Dr. Dale Stover** will present an academic paper on Indigenous Religions at The European Association for the Study of Religion in Stockholm, Sweden on 20 April 2007. He traveled to The Pas, Manitoba in late October for the installation of Dr. Denise Henning, as the first president of the University College of the North. Stover had continued a mentorship connection with Dr. Henning since her first class with him in the fall of 1990.



**Christian Haunton**, who began his second semester teaching for the religious studies program in January, presented a paper on “Life After the Cult: The Patera in Non-Roman Imagery” at the eighth annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology

Conference in November.

## UNO faculty to be at March AAR meeting

Religious Studies faculty will be involved with American Academy of Religion Regional Meeting and the ASOR Rocky Mountain meeting which will be hosted by Creighton University 23-24 March.

**Dr. Dale Stover** will give the AAR Regional Senior Scholar Address, “Searching for Identity as a Post-Colonial ‘Whiteman’” at the AAR Regional Senior Scholar Address and Luncheon on Friday.

**Dr. Rami Arav** will present “In the Name of God”: What Does It Actually Mean and When Did It Come into Use?” at the ASOR Section Friday.

## Alumni News

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**Lance Ferguson** retired from a 25 year career in technology and IT on 5 July 2006 to begin a new career in full time ministry. He assumed his duties as vicar at St Timothy’s Lutheran in Omaha on 9 July, continuing his theological education toward ordination.

## Scholarship Applications being accepted

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Applications are now being accepted for four Scholarships for the 2007 – 2008 academic year. The deadline for submission of an application (which are available in ASH 205) for all scholarships for the coming academic year is 28 February.

**Dr. Michele Desmarais** will be the moderator for the Women and Religion session Friday.

**Dr. Paul Allen Williams** will be the moderator of the Bible: Language and Cognition session on Saturday.

**Dr. Paul Allan Williams** was quoted in the Jan. 20 edition of the *Omaha World-Herald* about the use of real wine in Christian religious rituals. He also was quoted in the Jan. 22 edition of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The article highlighted the public's seemingly increased fascination with "doomsday" and what might be the cause of the appeal.

## Current Students

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**Tammi Owens** will present a paper in the Women and Religion session at the American Academy of Religion Regional meeting at Creighton University on Friday, 23 March 2007. Her paper is entitled “Ritual Power, Ritual Play: Kolam and the Reclamation of Women’s Power in Hinduism.”

**Todd Dagaanaar, Karen Kempkes and Ria L. Ward** were among graduates from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in December.

Dagaanaar graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion. He had been recipient of the Ron Burke Scholarship for two years.

Kempkes received her Bachelor of General Studies in religion Summa Cum Laude. She is employed in the College of Public Affairs and Community Service’s Division of Continuing Studies as a staff assistant.

Ward received her Bachelor of Science with a major in Biology and minor in Religion. She graduated Magna Cum Laude.

**Nicolae Roddy** will be the moderator of the New Testament Interpretation session at the AAR Regional Meeting on 23 March 2007. Roddy graduated from UNO and is an assistant professor at Creighton University in Omaha.

For the Dale Stover Scholarship, candidates must be regularly enrolled as a Religious Studies major in the College of Arts and Sciences or have declared a religious studies area of concentration (major) in the Division of Continuing Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Applicants must have a sophomore class standing (27 hours) or above and at least a 3.0 grade

point average (GPA). Applicants must also submit a 1000-1200 word essay on one of the following topics - Religion and Healing; Religion and Gender; Oral Narrative and Religion; Dreaming and Religious Meaning, or Plant and Animal Kinship and Religion

The Dale Stover Scholarship in Religious Studies is automatically renewable if desired for up to two years for those with sophomore class standing and up to one year for those with junior class standing meeting the criteria. The amount of the scholarship award will be \$500.00.

## Share your milestones

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Please send news about your milestones (new positions, promotions, marriages, births, future education, etc.) by sending it to Religious Studies Program, UNO, ASH 205,

There is one \$2500 Ron Burke Scholar Scholarship and two \$1250 Ron Burke Memorial Scholarships. Those interested in applying for the Ron Burke Scholarships must be a Religious Studies major in the College of Arts and Sciences, University of Nebraska at Omaha, with a junior or senior class standing. Junior standing requires 58 credit hours. They must write an 800 — 1200 word essay expressing deep love and passion towards pursuing a career in religious studies.

Students receiving awards will be notified prior to the Religious Studies Awards Banquet in April.

6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182-0265 or to Kathy Schwartz at [kschwartz@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:kschwartz@mail.unomaha.edu).

## Religious Studies has several NU Foundation options for donating

The Religious Studies Program has two scholarship funds, the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund and the Dale Stover Scholarship Fund.

There UNO Religious Studies Fund for Excellence is a fund benefits and supports the religious studies program. Money donated to that fund can be used to supplement funding for lectures. It can be used to provide special awards for students. For example, the Essay competition awards were given last year from this fund. It can also be used to support special projects of faculty members. This fund is not an endowed fund.

There is also a *Journal of Religion & Film* Fund for Excellence which supports the Religious Studies program's *Journal of Religion & Film* activities and events. Those activities have included co-sponsorship of the Native American Film Panel which brought a native film maker, Gail

Maurice, to UNO in the spring of 2006 to meet with students, faculty and the public and the attendance of editors at various film festivals to study and review new film offerings as they relate to religion.

To make your tax deductible donation to the UNO Religious Studies Fund for Excellence, *Journal of Religion & Film* Fund for Excellence, or either of the scholarship funds, make your check out to the University of Nebraska Foundation and write the fund name on the memo line.

Sending your checks to the Religious Studies Program, ASH 205, 6001 Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68182-0265, allows the program to make certain acknowledgements of gifts are done promptly by the department.



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