

UNOmaha Philosophy and Religion Departmental Dispatch

Vol. 2 No. 1

November 2002

Chair's Report

It has been a difficult semester what with this year's budget cuts and the threat of future budget cuts hanging over our heads. Everyone's mood has been affected. Although I have been to a number of meetings about the budget problems and I have frequently asked Shelton Hendricks, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, how the current state of affairs affects our department, there has been very little new concrete information to report. In fact, I have been delaying writing this report in hopes that things would become clearer.

In September, the administration proposed cutting one permanent line in Religion (Dale Stover's) and eliminating two temporary lines in Religion. None of this was clear from the Chancellor's bulletin and I was left with the job of passing on the details. After protests from the students and faculty (much appreciated by the administration), the Religion Program was given permission to hire someone for a tenure-track position in eastern religions and someone for a tenure-track position in Christianity and African religions. In this way the Religion Program will be restored to its four tenured or tenure-track lines and the religion major will not be eliminated. In September, we were told that the probability of tenure-track lines being filled was very small; and the Philosophy Program was told that it was very unlikely that Lenore Kuo's open line could be filled for next year. But even this appears to have changed and we have been told to get a position justification in as soon as possible.

Part of the budget cuts proposed in September by the administration was the formation of a Cultural Studies Department that would have included Sociology, Religion, Women's Studies, Native American Studies, and Chicano/A-Latino/A Studies. The idea came from President Smith's recommendation (requirement?) that budget cuts should be made by the streamlining of administrative arrangements. As far as I know our administration still wants to do this. However, the proposal is in a state of what could be called suspended animation, and personally I should not think that the chances of its happening were

very high. I presume that consultations will take place later.

Some of the things that had been cut for this academic year have now been partially restored. There is a little extra money for part-time teaching: we have just added two courses to next semester's schedule. The department has been granted \$17,500 for summer teaching, and there may be more available — do not ask me to explain this. There is now \$100 available for research triangle members. I have not heard whether there will be any travel money available or any money for recruiting, but hold onto your receipts. On the other hand, I would not hold your breath about an equipment budget.

This is an appropriate place for the good news that the department has saved enough money from reducing its photocopying bill by making use of Blackboard to give out its own travel money. Because of the way our spending is currently within our budget, it appears that there will be to be no difficulty in making several further grants of \$200 each to enable faculty to go to conferences. (See **Chair** on Page 2)

What's Happening

4 December: 2002-2003 Colloquia Speaker – Patrick Monaghan, "Are Some Things More Real Than Others?" 2:30 p.m. ASH 214

5 December: Holiday Open House will be held from noon to 2 p.m. ASH 205

13 December: Last day of classes for Fall Semester.

20 December: Commencement

23 December – 1 January: University closed.

13 January: Spring Semester Begins

Chair

(Continued from Page 1)

It is not clear what the budget cuts for next academic year will be like. We have been told that the part-time budget will be permanently reduced. In September we were told that full-time temporary faculty would be severely cut for next year, but now there appears to be hope that some temporary lines will be preserved. The details will start trickling out in January, slowly I should imagine.

At the last Arts and Sciences faculty meeting, Shelton Hendricks gave a PowerPoint presentation (with arty pictures of people being cut up - see Budget Information-Dean's Report at <http://www.unomaha.edu/Uno/arts-science.html>) on the current state of the college, focussing mainly on the budget cuts. You can access the presentation on the Arts and Sciences web site. In that presentation he gave the following principles that will govern his attitude to future budget cuts:

- Core mission of college to be preserved.
- All undergraduate majors should be preserved if possible.
- All graduate majors should be preserved if possible.
- Outreach is not a primary mission of the college.

Our first efforts as a department should be to increase the number of students graduating with degrees in Philosophy and degrees in Religion. It is difficult to justify the preservation of a major that does not graduate enough students; and without a major, a program will have difficulty preserving all its lines. We should also try to keep up our good work in lower division credit hours. We are currently doing very well in Student Credit Hour production, which is, of course, mainly lower division, and our current rate of increase of Student Credit Hours is greater than any other department in the college. If you take the total Student Credit Hours and divide it by the number of full-time faculty, you will find that our department is the college's fourth most productive department (our "FTE" = 15.8, which is the administration's idea of the number of full-time faculty). Similarly, if you divide the total Student Credit Hours by the total faculty salaries, again our department is the college's fourth most productive. Although high Student Credit Hours provide some protection against budget cuts and provide some incentive for the administration to fund new positions, they do not provide the protection that would be given by high Student Credit Hours *plus* sufficient majors graduated.

I do not think that we should neglect our efforts at outreach, even though outreach is not a priority. Our most

obvious attempts at outreach are the annual public lectures that we support and the numerous presentations that are aimed at the university community. All efforts of this sort not only serve the community we live in but draw attention to our programs and help us to recruit students. Last semester in the course of giving an account of our department's budget "problems" to the Dean, I had to explain that we had funded fourteen catered events for students during that academic year.

- Dr. Andrew Newman, Department Chair

Fall Lectures and Events

The **Howard and Shirley Goldstein Lecture** was held 25 September. Jo Becker, Children's Rights Division Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch was the speaker. Over 100 people from UNOmaha and the community attended the lecture during which she addressed "Easy Targets: Children and Human Rights."

The **Third World Studies Conference** was held 10-12 October on the UNOmaha campus. This year's Keynote Speaker was O. Faruk Logoglu, Ambassador of Turkey to the US. Anthony Kandiero, Ambassador of Malawi to the US, was this year's conference speaker. Dr. Rory Conces was program chair.

The **Bethsaida Conference** was held 24-26 October under the direction of Dr. Rami Arav. The **Bethsaida Exhibit** opening was held in conjunction with the Conference. The exhibit will be at UNOmaha through spring. Call 402-554-2902 for information about hours and setting up special appointments to visit the exhibit.

The **Anderberg Lecture** was 7 November. Dr. Asma Barlas's lecture was on the "Challenging Patriarchal Interpretations of Islam." Over 200 people from UNOmaha and the community attended that conference. Barlas is an author and scholar.

The **Sidney H. Brooks Lecture** was held 21 November on the UNOmaha campus. Dr. Leonard Greenspoon, Klutznick Chair of Judaic Studies at Creighton University addressed a crowd of about 175 people. His lecture was "Hither, Whither and Thou: Major Jewish Translations of the Bible."

Additional fall lectures were provided through the **2002-2003 Philosophy Colloquia Series**. Speakers included: Dr. William O'Brien - "Subjective Moral Realism;" Dr. Jerry Cederblom - "On Changing Beliefs;" Shin Kim - "Moral Realism & the Explanatory Requirement;" Dr. John Beaudoin - "Miracles and Historiography," and Patrick Monaghan - "Are Some Things More Real Than Others?"

Gentle calmness shines even as professor loses cancer battle

By Kathryn Schwartz

There was always a cheerful smile and soft-spoken “Hello, how are you today” as Dr. Ron Burke ambled in the door



of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. That never faltered as the professor of religion fought his battle with cancer. Even as his energy level decreased during the fall of 2001 because of the treatments he was taking, he never failed to greet people he saw with that impish smile and those soft-spoken words that he sincerely meant. It was as though he knew something the rest of the world did not know and he was ready to share it on a moment's notice.

Burke came to the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1971. During the 30 plus years he served on the faculty at the university he shared his time and talent with the academic community and the greater Omaha community in which he lived.

Dr. Russell Palmer, professor of religion, said after his death, “It was Ron Burke’s idea to add a “Religion 101” course to the curriculum to introduce students to the study of religion. Previously, Old Testament and/or New Testament were the lead-in courses open to freshmen. Ron developed the new introductory course—known for the first few years as “Man and Religion”—and for a long time he was the only one who taught it. With the passing of time (and the name change to “Introduction to World Religions”) all of us took our turn at teaching it, but only Ron was eager to devote 2/3 of his teaching load every semester to that introductory course.” His devotion to the course, which he continued to teach through the fall semester before his death on 5 April 2002, was reflected in the way former students felt about him and the course.

Mary Ann Krzemien, instructor in religion at UNOmaha, said “Over the years I have heard several of his former students say ‘the course I took with Professor Burke changed my life!’”

His sharing was not limited to the students he loved and remembered over the years. Colleagues also drew on his informal mentoring and his willingness to share and

discuss thoughts, knowledge and insights. “What he did was excellent, but how he did it was through his utterly consistent and enduring pleasantness,” said Dr. Nicolae Roddy, assistant professor of theology at Creighton University.

Roddy, who knew him as both professor and colleague also said, “The great religious traditions of the world, which Dr. Ron Burke knew and taught well, hold in common the ideal of balance, sometimes expressed in terms of a Middle Path, the cosmic harmonic interplay of *yin* and *yang*, the synergism of the divine and human wills. I am only guessing here, but perhaps Ron inherited his exquisite sense of balance from his experience of moving toward the sacred center overlapped by these worldviews. As a Religion major at UNO back in the late 1970s, I was impressed with the harmony in Professor Burke’s persona, in his knowledge and vitality, his accessibility and pleasantness. During the twenty years during which I became his colleague, I saw more of all that he was and all that he did in professional, social, and family circles, and that all of these facets held together in a kind of sublime balance, which in any corner of the world is the mark of a truly successful human life.”

Burke’s career at UNOmaha included promotion to associate professor in 1977 and full professor in 1981. He was named a “fellow of the graduate faculty” in 1985.

In 1997, Burke with his friend and philosophy colleague, William L. Blizek, realized the culmination of much discussion about religion and film when they launched the online *Journal of Religion and Film* (<http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/>). The two often made decisions together and Burke helped complete the editing the Spring 2002 Journal before his death. The Journal has met and exceeded the pair’s wishes of being not only a reference source, but also an outlet for insight and opinion on the religious content of film.

He was the recipient of more than one National Endowment for the Humanities grant, spending time at the University of California at Santa Barbara and Berkeley. Following his summer at Berkeley, he edited the book *John Henry Newman: Theology and Reform*. He was also a contributor on Gerard Magill’s interdisciplinary work, *Personality and Belief*.

Ron Burke received his A.B. in 1966 and his M.A. in 1968 from the University of Notre Dame. He received an M.Phil. (See **Burke** on page 4)

“You want us to do our own thinking?”

By Kathryn Schwartz



Dr. Michael Gillespie said he was about two-thirds through the semester in a Critical Reasoning class when the student posed that question as he was picking up papers. Since he arrived at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1971, Gillespie has expected thousands of students to do just that - think. And, he said, generally

students are willing to do so.

Gillespie not only expected his students to do that, but he also did his “own thinking.” He was not content to just teach the traditional philosophy and classes during his 30 years with the university.

His educational vistas were far reaching, but he said he probably is most proud of finding a way to teach that also formed connections between different areas of study on campus, stretching old ideas to encompass new ways to take philosophy beyond its regular constraints. The College of Education, the Fine Arts Department and Philosophy were drawn together through the Philosophy of Art class he taught.

Environmental Students and Philosophy became an Environmental Ethics class. Hollis Glaser and Gary Day worked with Gillespie to design and teach the Power of Images, an interdisciplinary course critically examining the influence of our image culture on contemporary life. Gillespie, Russ Palmer, Harvey Leavitt and Joe Seager worked together on the humanities project.

In the early 1970s, Gillespie, along with John Langan, took a program called “Philosophy for Kids” to three Omaha area school districts. The program, developed by Matt Lippman from Montclair State University, was designed to introduce younger children to critical reasoning skills. The result was that children read, wrote and thought more clearly and it worked, Gillespie said. The kids thrived on it.

Teachers too liked the program, he said. However, some political groups and parents found some of the teaching material offensive. Their attitude, Gillespie said, was that they wanted their children to think and write clearly, but they wanted to tell their children *what* to think and write. Those two ideas simply were not compatible and after several years the project died.

Another of Gillespie’s cooperative projects was Prairie Visions. Along with Gary Day, Frances Thurber, Marty Rosenberg and Joanne Sowell, Gillespie helped reach over 1500 teachers in the state of Nebraska with the program that helps art teachers expand their vision through disciplined art education. Gillespie received recognition from the Nebraska Legislature and the Nebraska Art

(See Gillespie on Page 5)

Burke

Continued from Page 3)

from Yale University in 1970 and his Ph.D. from Yale in 1974.

Burke also founded the Roman Catholic Modernism group in the American Academy of Religion in 1977. He remained on the group’s board of directors until his death.

When he was not working on the Journal or teaching students about World Religions, Burke enjoyed golf. He played on three UNOmaha Faculty/Staff League championship teams and played 63 holes of golf in one day – from 6:05 a.m. until 9:12 p.m. He also enjoyed racquetball, bowling, exercise, computers, bridge and travel. His family, wife Mary and daughters, Katie and Becky were also an important part of his life as a whole.

“Ron Burke had a smile that illuminated all that is good (versus evil) on this earth... I have come to believe that he lived his life in such a way that he role modeled the road to eternal life. In my mind’s eye, I will always see that smile of many meanings. But somewhere deep within me, I will forever carry the “Heart Light” he so freely shared,” said Cheryl D. Conn, assistant to the dean, College of Continuing Studies at University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Dr. Dale Stover said of his colleague, “Ron, was an exceptionally fine teacher. He had the gift of listening—both students and colleagues knew that he gave full attention to what you were saying and, even, to what you were meaning to say. He also had the knack of asking a really good question—showing that you can ask a good question if you have done your listening well.”

Department of Philosophy and Religion Departmental Dispatch

Editor: Kathryn Cox Schwartz

Gillespie

(Continued from Page 4)

Teachers' Association for his contributions to art education through the program. Gillespie said he learned as much, if not more, from the teachers he taught as they did from him. "Teaching teachers made me change the way I taught," he said. "It made me more open, more interested in issues of the philosophy of art."

Gillespie said UNOmaha is "a good place to teach. I was able to teach in a way I could invent for myself. I was not told what or how to teach."

Asked if he had any regrets about his teaching years at UNO, Gillespie said in looking back he didn't feel he was very good in handling assignments and activities in the early years, but he improved. And as faculty senate president (1980-1982), he said he wished he could have fostered better discussion of and by the faculty and the direction for the university to go in. "I didn't fail," he said, "it just didn't happen."

"I have felt pretty free and supported by a lot of colleagues," he said. "The latest dinner (held in his honor 2 December 2001) is an example. I'm not a flashy person, but I've been supported pretty well by people I've worked with. Over the long haul, it's those more lasting relationships that count for someone."

One of those colleagues is Dr. Boyd Littrell. He said recently, "Mike is one of two people I have met at UNO, in almost a quarter of a century, who had an original mind." Littrell co-taught the course, *The End of Knowledge*, with Gillespie in the late 1970s. Within the course, which was

based on a play on words, students and professors both looked at two very different ways of thinking: the first philosophical and the other sociological.

Littrell says that Gillespie's gift to students was that "In his hands the GREAT NAAAAMES of philosophy are ordinary people, as ordinary as some of our friends, and thus are available to students as friends, if nothing else. And good students, who begin with friendly people, can pursue those philosophers' ideas farther, and can learn to 'slow them down' in order to follow them into surprising arguments and ideas."

Gillespie's and his wife, Diane have two children. Gannon lives and works in Omaha. Gemma attends high school in Seattle, Washington where the family moved when Diane took a job there about four years ago.

Since that time, Gillespie has spent one semester in Omaha teaching and the rest of the year in Seattle, where he also teaches at the University of Washington. From Washington originally, Gillespie is looking forward to being able to spend more time with Diane, and with Gemma during her senior year. He also has siblings and parents in the Seattle area so will be able to spend more time with them as well.

Gillespie, the philosopher and teacher, had just a few words of wisdom to share with all interested before he left one last time for Seattle, Washington on 16 December. Those words? "Give yourself away."

Alumni Notes

Douglas Baker - graduated, with a B.A. in Philosophy, in August of 1978. He had earned his last six credit hours during an exchange program with Kabul University in Afghanistan that year - having no idea that that once obscure nation would become so well known nearly 25 years later. "I didn't fully appreciate it at the time," he said, "but I have since realized the truth of the axiom that a degree in philosophy lays a solid foundation for almost anything — though it's hard to convince personnel people of it. I found work in social services and for a weekly newspaper out in far western Nebraska. Then, after about a year, returned to Omaha for about six years in public relations for a couple of non-profit organizations. He then went to law school, at Creighton

University, receiving a J.D. in 1989. That was followed by several years of judicial clerking and law practice.

In 1997 he and his wife, Mei Wang Baker, had a pair of twins, Anna and Daniel; in or about early 2000 Daniel was diagnosed as autistic. The state of Nebraska having chosen not to provide many services for autism, this last March he and Mei sold their home, found new jobs, and moved to Madison, Wisconsin, which has one of the world's best autism programs. Daniel is doing well. Baker is now working as a legal editor for the Books department of the State Bar of Wisconsin.

"Throughout all these years I find I have profited greatly from my undergraduate education," he said .

Palmer retires after nearly four decades devoted to exchange of knowledge

By Kathryn Schwartz

When Dr. Russell Palmer walked into the Department of Philosophy and Religion offices in mid-May after his final spring class, he marked the completion of an academic career that spanned close to four decades at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Palmer came to UN Omaha in 1965 for the same reason many professors arrive at a particular school – “they offered me a job,” he said. He was the only religion professor in the department and there were only two philosophers, Clifford Anderberg and Duane Willard. The department had no religion major, Palmer said, and did not until after Dr. Dale Stover (1968) and Dr. Ron Burke (1971) joined the faculty.



In the years since, the department has grown and he has accomplished some personal landmarks as well. In 1974, he became a full professor. He served as director of the Humanities program in the 1970s. He has served as chair of the department in the 1980s and for the past three years he has served on the Educational Policy Committee. He was named professor emeritus this spring by his colleagues.

Palmer said recently one of his favorite courses in his career was Humanities 101 and 102. It was five credit hour course. “I made my debut in that class in the fall of 1965 with a lecture on Greek Religion,” he said. “I remember how thrilled I was when the late great Professor Ralph Wardle, then the course director, said to me, “That’s the best lecture we’ve ever had on that subject!” For years I would run into people who remembered me from the Humanities course and many said it was the best course they ever had. I was very disappointed when it was discontinued.”

Palmer said that many of the basic courses he taught were already in the catalog when he arrived. However, he added a new course on Christian Ethics which focused on issues of social justice. And, in later teaching years he taught a group of four religion majors a New Testament Greek course. “We began meeting together in the spring of 2000, continued over the summer, and wound up at the end of the fall semester. It was a very good group and I very

much enjoyed helping them learn to read the Greek New Testament,” he said.

For the past several years he has also taught a series of special topics courses for the Philosophy and Religion Department focusing on The Jesus Controversy, the Gospel of John, Paul the Apostle, the Book of Revelation, John Calvin, and, most recently, on Karl Barth.

The Karl Barth course was one he had looked forward to teaching. “I have been a student of the work (of Karl Barth) since graduate school,” Palmer said and his interest in the work of the great Swiss theologian, widely considered to be the greatest Christian thinker of the 20th century, also led him to a position as editor of the *Karl Barth Society Newsletter*.

Palmer said, “I attended the first meeting of the Karl Barth Society of North America in Toronto in 1972. When the Barth Society was reorganized at a meeting of the American Academy of Religion in 1989, it was decided that the society should have a regular newsletter and I offered to undertake that task, using my new Macintosh computer. I have received many expressions of appreciation over the years since then from people who value this means of keeping in touch with developments in Barth scholarship in North America and around the world.”

Palmer has remained faithful to the Macintosh ever since. The only Macintosh devotee in the Department of Philosophy and Religion today, he still uses a Mac to publish the newsletter.

Palmer’s academic pursuits have not been limited to the classroom, however. He has participated in panels, taken stands on issues while holding true to his faith and has been a speaker, lecturer or presented papers at symposiums, conferences and a variety of community groups. In addition to being editor of the *Karl Barth Society Newsletter*, he has also been published in a variety of journals and done numerous reviews.

A daunting task faced Palmer after that final spring class. He had to decide which books to keep and which to hand off to colleagues. And, then there were the file and desk drawers filled with 37 years of learning.

(See **Palmer** on Page 7)

Palmer

(Continued from Page 6)

At a personal level, he remains actively involved in the Presbyterian Church. Currently he is an officer of the local Presbytery. An, ordained minister, Palmer has a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa and a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary. Although he enjoys filling pulpits on an occasional basis, he said, he has always felt better suited to scholarship and teaching than parish ministry.

Although Palmer will not be teaching regularly this fall, He has been a guest lecturer this fall in the new capstone course for religion majors, Phenomenology of Religion. And, he served as chair of the Rabbi Sidney Brooks Lecture committee for this year. He will also still be around, "sharing a corner of an office with our new visiting assistant professor, Dr. Michele Desmarais."

A quiet, private person, those who venture past the sign that says to walk in if the door is open often find him reading to the strains of classical music from KVNO. He hopes to have more time to read books on theology, history and even fiction without always having to prepare for classes.

And, he and his wife, Laurie Nettelmann, will be doing some traveling. They will visit their children and grandchildren and would like to visit various places in Europe. Having started those visits this summer, Palmer said they also took "a trip to San Francisco so as to be somewhere else when the fall semester begins."

"I am grateful for and have appreciated the experiences I have had over the years with students and colleagues," Palmer said. "I am grateful that I have been able to earn a living doing something I enjoyed so much."

Because of his enjoyment of learning, it is hard to imagine that he will be too far away from a thoughtful discussion or that he will not be busy mentoring those who ask for his advice.

Alumni Notes

Stuart Jones – graduated from UNO in 1971 with a B.A. in Philosophy. He is married 23 years and has two children, ages 21 and 19. He did further work in theology, obtaining his M.Div from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1974. He was ordained in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1977 and is currently pastor of a church in Baltimore, Maryland. He is also conducting a distance learning course on church polity for his denomination. Over the years he has published articles in *Kerux* and the *Westminster Theological Journal*.

Returning Faculty Shine

Dr. William Blizek presided over the "Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group" at the American Academy of Religion meeting this November.

Dr. Rory Conces has been chosen to fill a vacant seat on the South Eastern Europe Fulbright Peer Review Committee.

He has had three refereed journal articles published, including "Justifying Coercive and Non-Coercive Intervention: Humanitarian and Strategic Arguments," *Acta Analytica* (Slovenia) 16 (December 2001); "Objedinjeni pluralizam: gajenje pomirenja I okoncanje etnickog nacionalizma" (Unified Pluralism: Fostering Reconciliation and the Demise of Ethnic Nationalism") *Dijalog* (Bosnia and Herzegovina); "Opravdavanje prisilne I neprisilne intervencije I strateski I humanitarni argumenti" ("Justifying Coercive and Non-Coercive Intervention: Humanitarian and Strategic Arguments") *Socijaldemokrat* (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Bosnia and Herzegovina translations were by Jasminka Babic-Avidispahic, who is currently a Fulbright Scholar at Ohio State University. The *Acta Analytica* article has also been accepted as part of an anthology entitled, *Ethnocentrism, Minority Rights and Civil Society in the Balkans*. In addition, he has had two editorials, "Bosnian 'Culture of Dependency'" (27 September 2001) and "Half Empty Half Full?" (18 July 2002) published in the online *Bosnia Daily* paper.

Laura Grams, who received her Ph.D. from Emory in August 2002, has been appointed to a tenure track philosophy position in the Department of Philosophy and Religion. Grams has taught for the department since the spring 2001. She is co-sponsor of the Pre-Law Society with Carson Holloway from the Political Science Department

Dr. Halla Kim is sponsor of the Platonic Society, an undergraduate philosophy club at UNOmaha.

Dr. Andrew Newman authored *The Correspondence Theory of Truth: An Essay on the Metaphysics of Predication*, published July 2002 by Cambridge University Press, in which he presents a version of the correspondence theory of truth based on Wittgenstein's Tractatus and Bertrand Russell's theory of truth, and discusses related metaphysical issues such as predication, facts and propositions. It assumes a realist view of universals and argues that facts as real entities are not needed. He is also the author of *The Physical Basis of Predication* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), a book about universals, causality and the nature of the real. (See **Returning Faculty** on Page 9)

New faculty welcomed

Three new full-time faculty members joined the Department of Philosophy and Religion faculty this fall.

John Beaudoin, visiting assistant professor, comes to the Department of Philosophy and Religion from The University of Iowa, where he received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1997. His dissertation was *The Cumulative Approach to Natural Theology*. His BA was also from University of Iowa.

His area of specialization is the Philosophy of Religion. His areas of competence include Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of History, Metaphysics, Ethics and Modern Philosophy. He taught at the University of Iowa from 1995-2001 and at Muscatine Community College in 1997.

He has presented at the Iowa Philosophical Society and been published in *Religious Studies*, *Philo 2*, and *The Heythrop Journal*. He is a member of the American Philosophical Association and Philosophy of Science Association.

He is teaching Introduction to Philosophy and Contemporary Moral Problems.

Michele Desmarais, visiting assistant professor, received her Ph.D. in Asian Studies from the University of British Columbia in 2001. Her doctoral dissertation was an analysis of mind-body concepts in Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra*. Her M. A. from the University of British Columbia was in Religious Studies and her B.A. from Simon Fraser University was in Psychology, specifically Developmental Psychology.

She taught Introduction to World Religions, Arts 1 and Mysticism: East and West at the University of British Columbia, where she also did Sanskrit Database Development, standardizing the transliterations of Sanskrit texts downloaded from the Internet. She also worked for an Internet computer company in a variety of roles from research and information coordinator to content creation and business development.

Her area of specialization is Sanskrit thought.

She had a paper published in *Quest* and has poetry published in a number of Canadian literary journals and has written two plays. She is a member of the Vancouver Métis Association.

She is teaching Introduction to World Religions for the Department of Philosophy and Religion this fall and will teach a Buddhist Tradition class in the spring.

Shin Kim, instructor, comes to UNOmaha's Department of Philosophy and Religion from Purdue University where he expects to receive his Ph.D. His dissertation is on the *Moral Explanation within a Physicalist Framework*. He has an M.A. from both Purdue University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea. His M.B. was from Hankuk University.

His area of specialization is ethics. His areas of competence include philosophy of science, logic and epistemology. He is also interested in business ethics, animal ethics and information technology ethics.

He has taught at Ethics, Introduction to Philosophy and Critical Thinking at Purdue.

He is a member of the American Philosophical Association.

He is teaching Contemporary Moral Problems and Introduction to Ethics.

Alumni Notes

Steve Lee, a University of Nebraska at Omaha graduate with a philosophy minor, spent the last several years as a golf caddy on the PGA Tour

Jacob Neely, December 2001 graduate with a philosophy major, will be a graduate assistant at Colorado State University for 2002-2003.

Jon Willits, a May 2002 graduate with a philosophy minor, is studying cognitive science/language in the psychology program at the University of California Riverside.

Students get involved

Nick Turner, Angie Robertson and Nikki Strayer were featured in the 10 October edition of the *Omaha World-Herald*. The article focused on a protest by students at UNO regarding recent budget cuts.

Brady DeSanti, religion major and Native American Studies minor, was chosen for *Who's Who in College and University Students* recently.

Check it out

Don't forget to check out our web site to keep up to date on all the special activities and classes we are offering each semester.

The URL is: <http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwphrel>

Returning faculty

(Continued from Page 7)

Dr. Russell Palmer, Dr. Michael Gillespie and Duane Willard were named Professors Emeritus. Palmer and Gillespie retired this past academic year. Willard retired several years ago. Gillespie and Willard were philosophy faculty. Palmer was a religion professor

Dr. Ron Burke was honored with a 25-page article in the Papers of the Nineteenth Century Theology Group at the 2001 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion.

The article highlighted a course Religion. The author of The author of the paper, Elizabeth McKeown, is a graduate student at Georgetown University. In the article she traced the history of the Roman Catholic Modernism Group which Dr. Burke founded in November of 1979 and that he helped to direct for the following 26 years.

Guy Matalon was featured in the 20 September edition of the *Jewish Press*. Matalon teaches at Temple Israel. He also was a scholar-in-residence at Beth Israel Synagogue.

Dr. Pamela Jean Owens presented a paper, "The Politics of the Cherokee Bible Translations of the 19th century," at the Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Omaha this past spring. The presentation was on research results from last summer's receipt of the UCR grant on the same topic. She presented a paper on the "The Political Controversy Surrounding Cherokee Translations of the New Testament" at the AAR Meeting in Toronto in November.

She started a listserv for Cherokee scholars and scholars of Cherokee studies to interact with one another electronically, which has been very well received and now an active list, housed on our university server, with nation-wide membership.

She taught a new course, "Women in/and/of the Bible" to capacity class of 20 in spring semester. She developed and coordinated the first senior seminar for Religion Majors, which is being taught this fall. She also held an Indian taco party for her Native American Religion class, with guests Elder Howard Wolf and Julia Wolf of the Omaha tribe.

She was recently elected to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Nebraska chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, specifically to advise them on religious issues w/re/civil liberties

Since this last went to press, she also spoke to a women's group at the First Christian Church, the Sarpy County Area Kiwanis Club, the Omaha Branch of the National League of American Pen Women, both about her research on the Cherokee Bible and served as a panel member for "Faith to Faith," a radio program on KKAR 1290 AM 15 September, participating as a scholar of religion, particularly as an expert in Native American religions.

She also assisted in editing *Restless Spirit* by S.D. Tooley, which was published October 2002 by Full Moon Publishing LLC and did a rewrite of an Internet Research book, writing it with a religion slant.

Dr. Dale Stover lectured in October for the Cobb Institute of Archaeology at Mississippi State University on the topic "Lakota Sun Dance: One Hundred Years of Resistance." His article "Postcolonial Sun Dancing at Wakpamni Lake" was published in the December 2001 issue of *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

He was featured in a photo in the 10 October edition of the *Omaha World-Herald*. The photo accompanied a story about the fall convocation and a student protest at UNO.

Dr. Paul Williams attended the NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) Summer Institute entitled "Societal Transformation and the Legitimation of Power in the Early Islamic States: Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa," which will be held for six weeks this summer at the University of Chicago. He also gave a lecture at UNOmaha and the American Academy of Religion in Toronto on "Human Rights Atrocities and the Ambiguities of the Missionary Position: The Case of the Disciples of Christ Congo Mission (DCCM) in the Congo Free State."

Environmental ethics issue tackled by students

Members of the environmental ethics class taught by Dr. Rory Conces presented "Omaha: an Environmental Perspective" 25 November. The presentation included photographs of environmental degradation. The environment, human ecology and ethical issues, and ethics and public policy were among the topics addressed in the class.

Students compiled more than 100 photographs of environmental concerns within the Omaha area. The presentation addressed not only the problems and the ethical dilemma surrounding them, but also possible solutions to the problems.

Scholarships Established

The Mike Gillespie and The Ron Burke scholarships were established during the spring 2002 in connection with the Philosophy and Religion Department. Guidelines have been established for the scholarship when the department is ready to award them.

Think of Us

Tax deductible donations may be given to The Anderberg Fund, The Brooks Lecture, The Goldstein Lecture, The Ron Burke Scholarship Fund, The Mike Gillespie Scholarship Fund and the Department of Philosophy and Religion. Simply make your donation out to the University of Nebraska Foundation and note which fund you wish to support. Then send the check to the University of Nebraska Foundation, 6712 W. Dodge Rd, Suite 100, Omaha NE 68114.

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Give us your input

Have something you would like the department to consider - a class, presentation? Send us your ideas!

We'd also appreciate receiving personal updates that we may share with other alumni and friends of the Philosophy and Religion Department. Include your name, address, phone number, year you graduated, major/minor and a little bit about what you are doing now. With your permission, we will include some of that information in our next newsletter. You may also email us at phil-rel@unomaha.edu. Just mark your email as Phil-Rel Idea or Phil-Rel Newsnotes so it gets routed in the correct direction. Our postal address is: Department of Philosophy and Religion, ASH 205 UNOmaha, 6001 Dodge St., Omaha, NE 68182-0265

Don't want to stay in touch via the Philosophy and Religion Department's mailings. Let us know but we'd also appreciate hearing why you wish to be removed from the list.