



Religious Studies at UNO

Steven Reynolds receives scholarship



Stephen Reynolds, a student in the Division of Continuing Studies with an area of concentration in religion, has been awarded an \$1000 scholarship by the Alpha Sigma Lambda Adult Education Foundation.

Alpha Sigma Lambda is a national academic honorary for students in continuing higher education. Stephen is a member of the Eta Beta chapter at UNO. A total of eight scholarships were given from a pool of about one hundred students.

Scholarship benefits from golf outing



The religious studies faculty in conjunction with UNOs Campus Recreation sponsored "The First and Only Ron Burke Memorial Golf Outing" 19 August. The Outing raised over \$9,000 for the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund, bringing the total endowment to more than \$100,000.

The Ron Burke Scholarship Fund will make available one \$2,500 Ron Burke Scholarship each year to a religious studies major and two \$1,000 Ron Burke Memorial Scholarships each year, also to students majoring in religious studies.

Hole Sponsors included Fidelity Investments, Alegent Health, the College of Business Administration, Arnold Weitz & Co., *The Journal of Religion & Film*, N. P. Dodge Realty, Grubb&Ellis/Pacific Realty, Pepsi Bottling Group, Criminal Justice Research Consultants, and Religious Studies Faculty.

Co-sponsors were Academic & Student Affairs, College of Arts & Sciences, University Affairs, The Hawks Foundation, Bill and Monica Blizek, Dave and Linda Hinton, Old Mill Toyota, Holland Basham Architects, Voodoo Golf, First National Bank and Del and Lou Ann Weber.

Donors included Budweiser of Omaha, Alexander Payne, Gateway Community Bank, Dale Stover, Office Depot, Mannheim Steamroller, Brandeis Catering, Pamela Owens, HunTel.net, Marks Calre & Richards, L.L.C., Nicolae Roddy and Woodhouse Auto Family.

Anyone interested in contributing to the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund, is asked to please make their check out to "The University of Nebraska Foundation" and write "Ron Burke Scholarship" on the memo line. Checks

may be sent to Kathy Schwartz, c/o The Department of Philosophy and Religion, UNO ASH 205, 6001 Dodge St., Omaha, NE 68182-0265 and she will get it to the right people.

Todd Dagonaar is scholarship recipient

Todd Dagonaar was the winner of the 2004-2005 Ron Burke Scholarship.

After receiving the award, Dagonaar said, "Religious study appeals to me in a way science and mathematics never could. I also have discovered a new interest in teaching religion. I suppose I had been critical of teaching in the past because I had never been so excited and involved in any topic prior to studying religion.

"I would like to teach religious studies in a secular environment someday, and to try to give students the same opportunity I had."

Spompinato and Licari Recognized

Fred Spompinato was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus by the Religious Studies Program in the spring. Spompinato, who graduated from UNO in 1977, owns Fervere where he bakes bread in the manner of the Romans 2000 years ago and the Buddhist monks to this very day.

Rae A. Licari was recognized by the Religious Studies program as a Honors Student for 2003-2004. Licari, a senior, is a religion major and has women's studies and mass communication minors.

Palmer Fund is established

In an effort to create more support for religious studies at UNO, the religious studies faculty has established the Russell W. Palmer Fund. The Palmer Fund is a faculty development fund to be used to promote various activities by religious studies faculty--from travel grants to visiting speakers.

The Palmer Fund began with an endowment of more than \$10,000 and we hope to grow the endowment eventually to more than \$100,000, Bill Blizek said this week. It was named for Dr. Russell W. Palmer, religion professor at UNO, who taught from 1965-2002 at which time he



retired and was named professor emeritus. His primary fields of interest were and continue to be Biblical studies (especially the New Testament), the history of Christian thought, and Christian ethics (especially the interrelations of religion, ethics, and public policy).

If you would like to contribute to the Palmer Fund, please make your check out to the University of Nebraska Alumni Foundation and mark your check for the Russell W. Palmer Fund. Checks may be sent to Kathy Schwartz, c/o The Department of Philosophy and Religion, UNO ASH 205, 6001 Dodge St., Omaha, NE 68182-0265 and she will get it to the right people.

Bill Blizek named religious studies chair



The religious studies faculty recently asked Bill Blizek of the philosophy program to serve as the Chair of Religious Studies for the 2004-2005 academic year. The move came because the only tenured religious studies faculty member, Dale Stover, is on half time retirement and all of the other religious studies faculty are untenured.

Blizek is no stranger to religious studies. He edits *The Journal of Religion & Film* and teaches a course on that same topic. He has been active in fundraising for the Rabbi Sidney H. Brooks Lecture for Interfaith Dialogue, the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights and the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund.

He also serves as associate dean for development for the College of Arts & Sciences.

Richard Freund recovering from cancer

Early in 2004, Dr. Richard Freund, former professor of Religion at UNO (1989-1999) was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML). He had not been feeling well for several weeks and was diagnosed in early January. He entered the hospital almost immediately upon diagnosis to begin chemo treatments.

On 1 July, he entered Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston for a bone marrow transplant. They were able to find an exact match. At the end of July, we received the news that the bone marrow transplant was a complete success. Below is an excerpt from a message Wendi Chiabros Jensen received 30 days after the surgery:

"I am amazed how it is as if I just emerged from a long dark corridor. I am now officially back from the successful transplant. I am, on paper, perfect again. It will take time for me to recover physically from the damage caused but on paper I am better than I have ever been--the pain and the treatments were rough even for someone in good shape; but it was all worth it for a cure." Richard also mentioned that his DNA and blood type have changed, resultant of the bone marrow transplant.

Richard was not able to teach in Spring or Fall 2004 but continues to work, sometimes from home and sometimes he sneaks into the office! He is planning to teach again in Spring 2005 and is eager, of course, to go to Israel next Summer with students for archaeology and Hebrew language classes.

Cards and letters may be sent to him at:
Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Ave
West Hartford, CT 06117

To learn more about AML, visit this website:
http://www.leukemia.org/all_page?item_id=8459.

Three to travel to Israel to continue work toward cooperation between universities

Guy Matalon will lead a delegation of UNO faculty to Israel in late December and into early January. The delegation will include Dr. Paul Williams and Dr. Bill Blizek.

The UNO faculty will serve as visiting lecturers at Western Galilee College in the city of Acco. While the UNO delegation is there, they will be discussing ways of creating an exchange program for faculty and students between WGC and UNO.

Belfast is site of UNO professor's seminar



The British Army had erected a surveillance tower bristling with cameras and attached bunker at its Bishops Gate Barracks within the Derry City Walls. The cameras point to the valley below called Bogside, a densely populated Catholic housing estate.

Professor Rory J. Conces conducted a seminar at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland in late July. The seminar was entitled "The Myth of Sisyphus Redux: The Pathology of Ethnic Nationalism and the Pedagogy of Forging Humane Democracies in the Balkans." The seminar was sponsored by the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research at Queen's, as well as a pair of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Democratic Dialogue and The deBorda Institute.

Conces said he was disappointed in the level of progress made following the 1998 signing of the Good

Friday Agreement at Stormont Castle. Although there has been a reduction in violence, signs of conflict were very evident even after all this time. The camera towers and observation posts operated by the British military remain in operation in Derry and Belfast. Many row houses in some of the neighborhoods in Belfast remain vacant because of damage sustained during "the troubles" and the wall separating Republican/Catholic and Unionist/Protestant neighborhoods continues to have its gates closed during the night. While photographing murals, graffiti, and burned-out buildings in some of the Republican neighborhoods, Conces and his two fellow travelers--his son Colin and his nephew Michael Crowley--were the recipients of less than friendly glances, stares, and verbal remarks.

He also spent time with his family and a group of his in-laws visiting his wife's family in Ireland.

Human Rights: Morality versus Power? is topic of Goldstein Human Rights Lecture

Human Rights: Morality versus Power? will be the topic for the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights, to be given by Dr. David Chandler, on Thursday, 21 October.

The lecture will be held at the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center, 67th and Dodge Streets, beginning 7:00 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public.



Educated at the Universities of Manchester, Northumbria, and Leeds Metropolitan, Chandler is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at CSD.

He is the author of *From Kosovo to Kabul: Human Rights and International Intervention* (2002) and *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton* (1999, 2000), and the editor of *Rethinking Human Rights: Critical Approaches to International Politics* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002). He has contributed to many journals, including the *International Journal of Human Rights*, *Radical Philosophy*, *WeltTrends: Zeitschrift für internationale Politik*, *Political Studies*, *Global Dialogue*, *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, *Current History*, *Democratization*, *International Peacekeeping*, and *New Left Review*. He has contributed to edited volumes including *South Eastern Europe: Weak States and Strong International Support* (2003), *Debating Cosmopolitics* (2003), and *Europe in the World: the Future for EU Foreign and Development Policies* (2003).

Dr Chandler's research interests are in post-Cold War transformations of the international sphere at the level of both ideas and institutional practice. He is currently working on a book on the relationship between NGOs and states in international relations and co-editing a book on global civil society.

He is the reviews editor of *International Peacekeeping*. He is module leader of the CSD MA modules 'International Relations I: Theoretical

Perspectives', 'International Relations II: Beyond International Relations?', 'International Security' and the Dissertation.

"Education for Coexistence and Peace – The Israeli Palestinian Case" lecture topic

Education for Coexistence and Peace – The Israeli Palestinian Case" will be the topic of Prof. Yaacov Iram's lecture on 22 September. The lecture will start at 7 p.m. and will be held in the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center, 67th and Dodge Streets. The lecture is free and open to the public.



The United Nations has declared the year 2000 and the decade 2001-2010 as "The Year for the Culture of Peace." A "culture of peace" implies more than a passive and quiescent state due to an absence of war and violence. To attain a "culture of peace," one must actively strive toward positive values which enable different cultures and nations to harmoniously coexist. These values are based on fostering knowledge between peoples, which leads to acceptance of pluralism based on understanding of both shared and unique aspects of different peoples and cultures. Within the Israeli context this entails striving towards fruitful coexistence between Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between people from different socioeconomic strata and political – ideological convictions. During this lecture, he plans to present, analyze and evaluate a unique program which aims at imparting the values of multiculturalism and peace, transcending religious and political boundaries and bridging cultural, ethnic and national differences.

Yaacov Iram is professor of comparative and international education at the School of Education of Bar Ilan University, Israel. Chairman of Graduate Studies (2001-) and president of the Israeli Association for the History of Education and Israel Comparative Education Society, he has been a post doctoral scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, a visiting associate professor at Tufts University (Boston), a visiting scholar at Stanford University, The University of Cincinnati and at Humboldt University (Berlin). Professor Iram received a Fulbright Scholar in Residence Award from the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (U.S.A.); Finland-Israel Exchange grant; The German Academic Exchange service (DAAD) Scholars Grant at Humboldt University - Berlin. He was awarded the Fulbright - Yitzchak Rabin Award, The United States - Israel Educational Foundation (USIEF) for 2000/2001 to advance research and promote activities of peace and tolerance education.

New art on conference room wall

Omaha Artist Jackie Kluver has loaned the Department of Religion and Film one of her paintings for the department's conference room. It is called "House of Cards."

Elder Howard Wolf, friend of religious studies dies in July

Many alums and friends of the UNO Religion Program will remember Howard Wolf, an esteemed elder of the Omaha Native American community, who often spoke to Native American studies classes in our department. Howard died on Sunday evening, July



18, at about 7 p.m. Howard was 79 years old. He had been in the hospital for a short time but had asked on Sunday to go home to die. His dearly loved wife, Danita Esau Wolf, was at his side throughout. For some time, Howard had been becoming increasingly tired and having a harder and harder time getting his breath. The long terms effects of diabetes and other health problems endemic to the contemporary Native American population had taken their toll on his body, but Howard's mind never slipped in the slightest. If anything, in the three years that he had been unable to see with his eyes, Howard's spiritual vision had become more acute.

Over the past year, Howard had realized that no single individual in the community was arising to fill his shoes entirely. Knowing his time was short, he spent the last months of his life carefully preparing a variety of people to step into various parts of his role in the community. We do not know if he felt he had filled all of the needs, but we do know that in his last weeks he was seeing his ancestors coming for him and that he gave many messages to his family and others that he loved. In May, the Native American Studies Program at UNO honored Danita as a community leader, and this event gave Howard immense pleasure. In the week before he passed on, Omaha again honored Howard with a plaque

on the Missouri River in which he is depicted as the epitome of the Native storyteller. Howard was pleased to be told that, although they could not promise the plaque would last forever, it was guaranteed for at least the next hundred years. It was Howard's hope that a century would be enough for the traditions to be once again so firmly implanted in the Indian heart that they would never be lost, even if the physical markers were to disappear.

The Religion Program can never replace Howard, and those students who now take Native American Religion without the opportunity to meet him will be missing a wonderful experience. His spirit, however, remains with us forever.

Honoring her father in her dance, Howard's youngest daughter Julia (age 16) competed in the princess competition at the Omaha Nation Powwow in August and was chosen the Umo^oho^o princess for the coming year. This was once of Howard's dreams for her, now fulfilled.

Anyone who would like to send a note to Danita and their daughter Julia Wolf should feel free to do so. Their address is 5132 Pratt, Omaha, NE 68104. Aho.

Mark Your Calendars:

22 September: 7:00 p.m., Alumni Center - Prof. Yaacov Iram Lecture- Education for Coexistence and Peace – The Israeli Palestinian Case

21 October: 7:00 p.m., Alumni Center – Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights: Dr. David Chandler – Human Rights: Morality versus Power?

14 April, 7:00 p.m. – Rabbi Sidney H. Brooks – TBA

Contact us at: religion@unomaha.edu or by phone at 402-554-2628.

Religious Studies Program
UNO ASH 205
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

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