

“Wide horizons lead the soul to broad ideas....”

— Victor Hugo

As Blumkin Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Waitman Beorn broadens the perspective on history for the good of the future.



a newsletter from the College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha





a letter from the Dean

As Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I take great pride in presenting to you the accomplishments of our faculty, staff, and students. The stories in this year's A&S Newsletter embody the real-world, hands-on research and learning opportunities that our faculty and staff provide students and showcase the successes of our students and the world-class scholars who mentor them.

I want to highlight two of the feature stories:

You will no doubt experience a range of emotions when you read about the group of students from UNO who traveled this past summer to Peru to study that country's impending water crisis. This was a truly transformative experience for these students, whose "classroom and lab facilities" included some of the most impoverished places that I've ever seen. Perhaps there is no better way to help students believe in the importance of their work and dreams than to have them interact with people who, while extremely poor, work fever-

ishly to improve their environmental conditions against the greatest odds. Many thanks to the faculty—Drs. Alan Kolok and Paul Davis from Biology, and Dr. Claudia Garcia from Foreign Languages—for leading this team of students. Thanks also to Rita Shelley for writing the story from a student's perspective.

Our cover story features Dr. Waitman Beorn, who serves as the Louis and Frances Blumkin Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Reading the story of Dr. Beorn, you may experience the horror and sadness that often accompanies stories about the Holocaust. But the real story here is one of survival and triumph. The incredible relationship between Sam Fried and Louis Blumkin, a survivor and a liberator, is an incredible testament to how the human spirit survived the most unimaginable tragedy.

I hope you enjoy this year's magazine! Of course, as always, we'd love to hear from our readers and welcome any suggestions for future stories.

David Boocher

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Royce Engstrom honored as Outstanding Alum

At spring commencement, Dean David Boocker presented the annual College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Alum award to Dr. Royce Engstrom, President of the University of Montana.

Engstrom earned a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1975. Four years later, he received his Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and went on to a distinguished career at the University of South Dakota, serving as professor and chair of chemistry, vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School, and provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Before being named President for University of Montana, Engstrom served three years as provost and vice president for academic affairs at that school.

Dr. Engstrom is recognized in particular for his avid support of undergraduate research. He learned the value of undergraduate research through his own experiences as a student and has worked in support of such programs throughout his career, including a term as president of the Council on Undergraduate Research. Engstrom has also been active in the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.

As the Outstanding Alum, Engstrom delivered the *Charge to Graduates* at the Arts and Sciences commencement ceremony.

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Beorn searches for answers in the ordinary lives and geographies of the Holocaust

Six decades later, we are still looking for answers.

Although the Holocaust was the spawn of Nazi elite, people at all levels-- citizens, soldiers, people not so different from you and me-- were the legion arms and legs of the monster.

In *Marching into Darkness: The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belarus*, Waitman Beorn examines the perspective of ordinary German soldiers who played a part in the extermination of 800,000 Jews, or 90% of the Jewish population, in Belarus. The book is based on archival records, survivor testimony, and eyewitness interviews.

The *Wehrmacht* (German Armed forces) were not under orders to murder the Jews;



Waitman Beorn, assistant professor in the UNO history department, was hired to serve as the Louis and Frances Blumkin Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

hired last fall as the Blumkin Professor and appointed as Director of the Fried Holocaust and Genocide Education Fund Board.

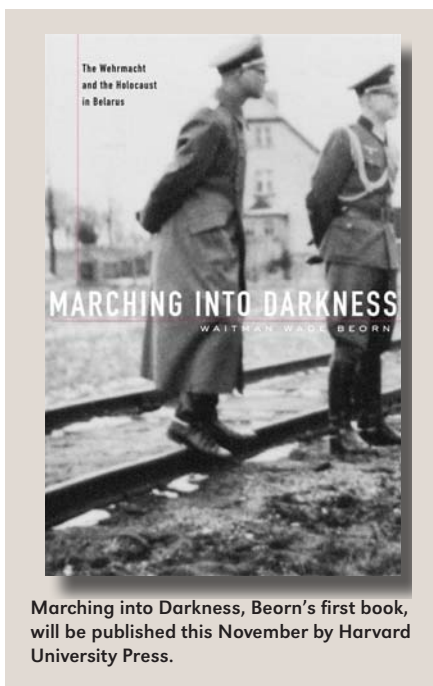
Commenting on the hire of Waitman Beorn in an *Omaha World-Herald* interview, Fried explained, "Some people had asked me, 'Does the person have to be Jewish?' Absolutely not. But I felt it was important that to succeed, he had to have a soul — and I found that this man really has a soul."

Beorn has been charged to seek out additional collaborators among scholars and institutions in the Midwest for the creation of an integrated network of expertise and educational resources for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Beorn will continue to build networks with other colleagues as well, bringing every reasonable perspective to bear on the Holocaust question.

He is currently working with the Geographies of the Holocaust group, scholars from the United Kingdom and New Zealand as well as various regions of the U.S. This group of geographers and historians explores how the tools of their two disciplines can work together to visualize and analyze vast amounts of data for a better understanding of the Holocaust.

Beorn's recent project with the Geographies group is entitled "*A Geography of Complicity: Spaces and Mentalities in*



Marching into Darkness, Beorn's first book, will be published this November by Harvard University Press.

were not "heat of the battle" decisions. Peaceful citizens, men, women, and children, were rounded up and massacred, a few at a time or thousands at a time.

Beorn explains that "the motivations for participation in the Holocaust from the perpetrator's perspective run the gamut from ideological belief to socio-psychological peer pressure to simple careerism and opportunism."

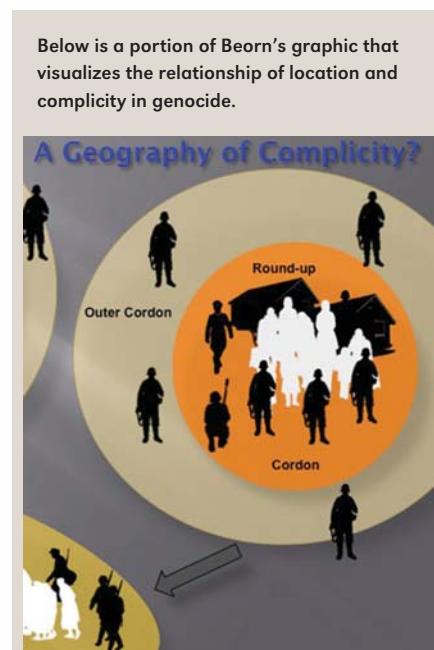
He adds, "There is no simple answer, nor should there be."

Fortunately, Beorn has ardent and generous allies in his pursuit of answers.

Among his allies are the Blumkin family. The Blumkins made a gift to the University of Nebraska at Omaha to create the Louis and Frances Blumkin Professorship in Holocaust and Genocide Studies in honor of Louis Blumkin's service in World War II as one of the liberators of Dachau.

Other critical support comes from Sam and Frances Fried. Sam Fried is a long-time friend of Louis Blumkin and fellow Omaha businessman, a Holocaust survivor who escaped a death march from Auschwitz-Birkenau. Together with wife Frances, he has established The Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Educational fund that supports college-level courses at the University of Nebraska campuses as well as Creighton University.

With the combined support of the Blumkins and the Frieds, Waitman Beorn was



still local commanders, often using the pretense of anti-partisan warfare, deployed their troops to do exactly that.

Beorn, as a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, as a scout platoon leader in Iraq and later Assistant Squadron Operations officer, understands the context of war, but the records show that not only did commanders participate in the Holocaust of their own initiative but also common soldiers chose to be among those pulling the trigger. These choices

Beorn (continued)

Wehrmacht participation in *Einsatzgruppen Killings in the Soviet Union*. “We can speak of a geography of complicity where we can suggest that the more willing soldiers often found themselves closest to the killing, spatially. Temporal and spatial location also changed the soldiers themselves. This project has shown that extended physical contact with the Nazi genocidal project over time led most soldiers to become more deeply complicit,” explains Beorn.

This spring in his Holocaust course, Beorn drew on his experience with the Geographies group. Students were assigned to create original visual representations of the Holocaust based on interviews with survivors and witnesses on file with the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation archive. The students came up with a variety of approaches. One group mapped a survivor’s story from his hometown to Auschwitz to a forced labor camp and a ghetto. Another group built a scale model of the Warsaw Ghetto and a digital presentation combining mortality figures with survivor and witness testimonies.

The image above is from a graphic

This dark graphic novel composed by Patrick Delarosa and Lauren Kundert is punctuated with original artwork done by children of the Holocaust.



novel created by Patrick Delarosa and Lauren Kundert, telling the story of Avigail, a fictional girl from Lodz and her journey through the Holocaust.

Kundert explains, “Instead of the Holocaust being a number, it became about Avigail and her family, struggling and failing to survive. Our goal was to introduce the class to the loss of 6 million stories, all dif-

ferent yet equally important.” DeLaRosa talks about how hard it was to draw the dark scenes, “Early into the project Lauren and I decided to take the subject to it’s darkest conclusion. A part of me wanted Avigail to survive...I really wanted a happy ending. It wasn’t there. When Lauren and I placed her name on the furnace doors it was over. The end of life...but not the end of hope.”

Frieds and Blumkins, friends with a mission, Holocaust and Genocide Education

Sam Fried’s mission to educate people about the Holocaust began in 1978 when he and wife Magda (d. 1985) also a Holocaust survivor, learned that a professor had written a book labeling the Holocaust a hoax. The couple became active in the Society of Survivors, speaking at schools, telling their stories of suffering and survival. Fried’s story began when he was captured and sent to Auschwitz at the age of 15. His parents were sent immediately to the gas chambers, he to the coal mines. His mother had only time enough to tell him, “Save yourself.”

In 1979 Sam Fried (left) organized a dinner at which Holocaust survivors honored liberators, including Louis Blumkin (right). In the years since, says Fried, “the Blumkins have been constant supporters of our efforts to educate — to ensure that we will never forget.”

Upon Louis Blumkin’s passing this spring, Sam Fried told the *The Jewish Press*, “Louis Blumkin epitomizes the word *mensch* and was a true man of valor. In 1945, Louie witnessed firsthand the atrocities of Hitler’s Third Reich as he helped liberate the prisoners at Dachau. . . . The establishment of the Frances and Sam Fried Holocaust and Genocide Education Fund along with the Frances and Louis Blumkin Holocaust and Genocide Professorship at UNO will be a permanent testament to his generosity and kindness.”



Students research Peru water crisis

stories and photos by Rita Shelley

In Lima, Peru, the population has grown from 2 million to 9 million since its municipal water plant was built in the 1960s.

During the 1980s, when Peru might have been addressing its infrastructure challenges, the country was crippled by a brutal civil war and staggering national debt. The country's professional class emigrated. 70,000 people died or disappeared during the war, mostly indigenous people whose villages were destroyed. Survivors relocated to Lima with no support from the government. Their improvised villages operate with no public services.

Furthermore, this city that is larger than New York City relies on melting glaciers that drain from the Andes for its water supply. The ice is melting much faster than its historical rate. The clock is ticking.

Already pushing against environment and infrastructure limits, Peru is running out of water and cannot provide safe supplies for its citizens. Microorganisms in inadequately treated water drastically undermine fetal and childhood health, preventing normal physical and mental development, and, in some cases, causing death.

Thanks to the support of Latin America-UNO (LAUNO) students are exploring the question: Can low-cost diagnostic tools be developed for Peruvians to use in monitoring their own water quality, allowing them to work with public officials for a healthier environment?

LAUNO, a collaboration among the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OL-LAS), the Service Learning Academy, Department of Biology, and Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, received a grant from the University of Nebraska Foundation to support study abroad to South America, integrating service learning and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs.

This year, a biology class, under the direction of Drs. Alan Kolok and Paul Davis, collected water samples from Lima's Rimac River and from homes in outlying districts as well as from remote regions. Documentation of existing conditions is a prerequisite to developing models that Peru's citizens can apply to monitoring their own water quality.

Concrete barriers and seemingly impenetrable fences signal "stay out" of the Rimac River in Lima. Yet its banks are still home to many.



A&S a newsletter from the College of Arts and Sciences

Posts from Peru

".... Another theme of this trip for me is the preciousness of nature. We have seen plenty of trash on our stay in Lima, both in the water and on the land. The problem is complex. Why all of this trash? One reason might be that the city grew very rapidly. Another might be that the people who came here have different customs. How do you convince someone of the importance of taking care of the environment? As the group has discussed, this is not as easy as it might seem. This problem of conserving nature deepens in Cusco where issues also include mining. The state forces extraction, and the culture resists this. This leads to conflicts. The pattern appears to be that conflicts are only discussed after violence."

Senior Elizabeth Hutfless

".....A state owned company, Sedapal, controls the only water treatment facility for Lima. The facility's collection point contains a divert that allows the river to continue flowing while a percentage is pulled out to be treated before being sold to the public. The Rimac pre-plant is a rapidly flowing river but post-plant is a dry river bed. In order to meet the city's water demands, the treatment facility removes nearly 100% of the water in the Rimac."

All of the hotels and shops in the main districts have plenty of water all day long. However, at the outskirts, water is not always available. The unequal distribution became clear on our visit to the water treatment plant. Outside the facility is desert, drought, and poverty. Inside the plant, after passing several security guards, we saw vast green lawns and extensive sprinkler systems and ponds. It was quite contradictory to see the upper portion of the slums overlooking an 'almost paradise.'"

Graduate Caroline Day

On the road in Peru, not your typical classroom



Back on the bus, senior Lauren Dahlquist labels water sample.

A June 2013 trip to Peru sponsored by University of Nebraska at Omaha's Office of Latino and Latin America Studies (OLLAS) blew away any preconceptions about classrooms in brick buildings as the sole setting for learning.

Preparation for Peru began with March and April Friday afternoons in an Allwine Hall biology lab. Students learned how research protocols would apply to identifying seven likely pathogens in water samples from Peru: *Vibrio cholerae*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Giardia intestinalis*, *Leptospira* and *Toxoplasma gondii*. But outside Omaha, students seamlessly moved on to classrooms in the unlikelyst of places.

On impossibly crowded Lima streets, amidst a vehicular cacophony of buses, bicycles, scooters, taxis, cars and ambulances from every direction, students loudly discussed the complex issues at hand: Nothing in the field works quite like it did in the lab. What's Spanish for hardware store? What, no Lowe's or Home Depot? On buses en route to collection sites, they practiced obtaining accurate GPS measurements. In neighborhoods where police expressed dire concerns about students' safety, a Good Samaritan bus driver lent protection and extra arm strength for lobbying sample collection tubes into the Rimac. And in an impromptu lab on a hotel room floor, biology graduate student David Grothen filtered particles of sludge out of the river water samples to bring back for study in Allwine Hall. Grothen must complete a tedious and multiple-step process to determine whether and in how many parts per million the samples contain pathogens.

In one of many outdoor classrooms, a nature preserve along a Pacific beach, guides covered a scenario that could just as well describe the status of Nebraska prairies: The original flora, fauna and landscape cover a fraction of their pre-European settlement expanse; environmental pressures and urbanization threaten rare wildlife species.

The most memorable *en plein air* classrooms were in Andean districts Andahuaylillas, Occongata, and Ccatca, separated from Lima by a two-hour flight and many bumpy hours by bus on mountain paths. Even accustomed to Nebraska winters, students learned they weren't prepared for near-freezing nights at 10,000 feet altitude. Indigenous people generously welcomed weary Nebraskans and supplied dozens of Alpaca blankets.

Residents of these communities shared the important improvements they are making in their lives, including building reservoirs to collect rain water and adopting new crops or breeds of animals for better yields.

During the six hours traveling to and from Cuzco to Machu Picchu, a two-hour plane ride back to Lima, an overnight flight to Atlanta, and the final flight back to blessed Omaha, those who weren't too exhausted to think could recall two observations shared by Juan Dejo S. J., Chief of International Relations at Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya: "Science is always linked with life....Peru's complex culture is different from yours, but we are all human."

Discovering Earth's history at Saints and Sinners Quarry

by George F. Engelmann

Dinosaur National Monument (DINO) in northeastern Utah is world famous for the Carnegie Quarry (CQ) that it was created to protect. Discovered in 1909 by Earl Douglass, the quarry has produced tremendous numbers of dinosaur fossils for the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh and other institutions. Many bones still remain within the rock and can be seen in a portion of the quarry where exposed bones have been left in place. The CQ is in sandstone that was deposited in an ancient river bed during the Late Jurassic, about 140 million years ago. The dinosaurs from the CQ and from the same formation, the Morrison Formation, one of the most prolific dinosaur-bearing formations in the world, elsewhere in DINO include *Allosaurus*, *Apatosaurus* (aka *Brontosaurus*), *Stegosaurus* and other familiar dinosaurs.

I have been doing research at DINO since 1984, mostly in collaboration with Dr. Daniel J. Chure, the Park Paleontologist at DINO. During most of that time I have worked on field projects in Morrison Formation rocks there and elsewhere, finding a complete skeleton of a new species of *Allosaurus* and a fauna of small vertebrates, especially

several kinds of mammals. But other formations of Mesozoic rocks from the age of dinosaurs are exposed within DINO. One in particular intrigued us, the Nugget Sandstone.

The Nugget is a massive sandstone deposited as giant sand dunes over a great sand sea that covered a vast area of western North America during the Late Triassic and Early Jurassic, about 200 million years ago. This is a time early in the history of the dinosaurs, and is a time that has produced few fossil vertebrates worldwide. The scarcity of vertebrate fossils is especially acute within the deposits of the sand dunes, not surprising for an environment we think of as hostile to life. But occasionally, wetlands can develop in the low areas between dunes, and even more rarely, the deposits of these wetlands can be preserved, sandwiched between the thick sands of the dunes themselves. Dan and I had noticed some potential for such elusive environments and the hope for fossil vertebrates they offered, and in 2006 began surveying the Nugget at DINO to see if they were there.

Two field seasons spent walking over many square miles of Nugget exposures in and around DINO turned up many interesting observations and a few surprising discoveries that contributed to our knowledge of the formation, but no bone. But in 2008, while checking out a small exposure of the interdunal deposits at the top of a cliff of the dune sands, we found first the impressions of bones, and then the bones themselves exposed at the surface of the sandstone.

Excavation at the site began in 2009 with the added collaboration of Dr. Brooks Britt, a colleague at Brigham Young University (BYU) where fossils from the quarry are prepared and will be housed in the collections. We have named the quarry, as is a traditional practice among paleontologists, the Saints and Sinners Quarry. The bone bed covers only about 200 square feet and is only a few feet thick, but so far it has produced thousands of bones of a new kind of small, carnivorous dinosaur, hundreds of them extremely well preserved. Although the skeletons are disarticulated, every bone of the skeleton is represented, and duplicates tell us that there are at least 16 individual animals there.

The new dinosaur is exciting enough, but we have also begun to find small vertebrates at Saints and Sinners. Within the last 2 years, 3 articulated skeletons of a very peculiar, small, extinct reptile called a *drepanosaurus* have emerged from the rock, and within the last month we have found complete articulated skeletons of a small distant relative of crocodiles. This site has proven to be the most productive ever found in this formation or its equivalents throughout the western US, and is one of the most important samples of the fossil record of this interval of geologic history in the world. We can't wait to see what other surprises await us.



Saints and Sinners Quarry (continued)



Figure 2 – An upper jaw or maxilla of the small carnivorous dinosaur from the Saints and Sinners Quarry. Two other bones of the skull lie across the upper part of the maxilla, not where they would be in life.

Figure 3 – Two articulated skeletons of drepanosaurs from the Saints and Sinners Quarry. The head (which is missing from the upper specimen) would be to the left in both animals.

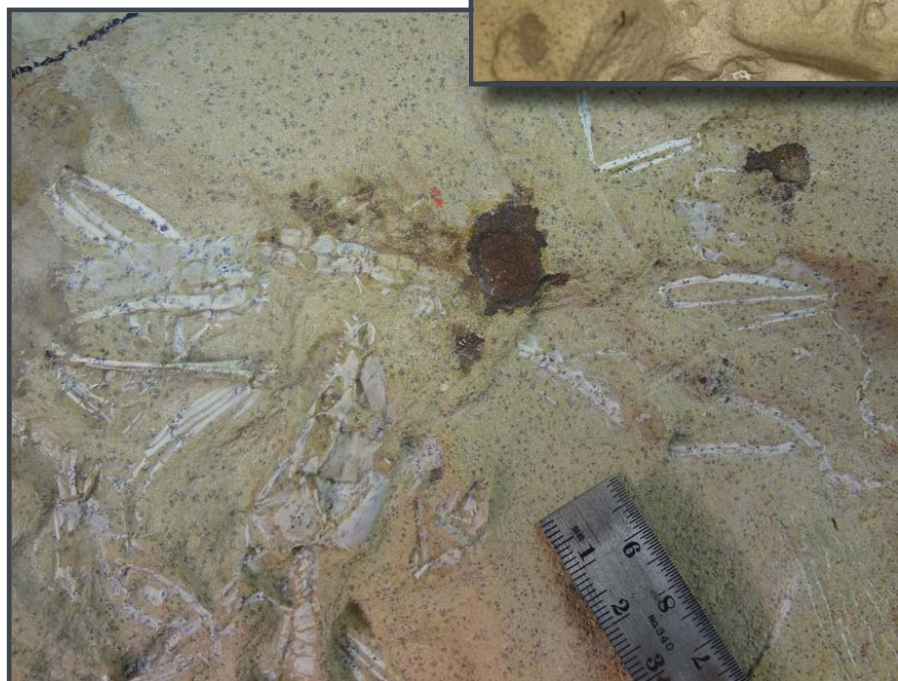
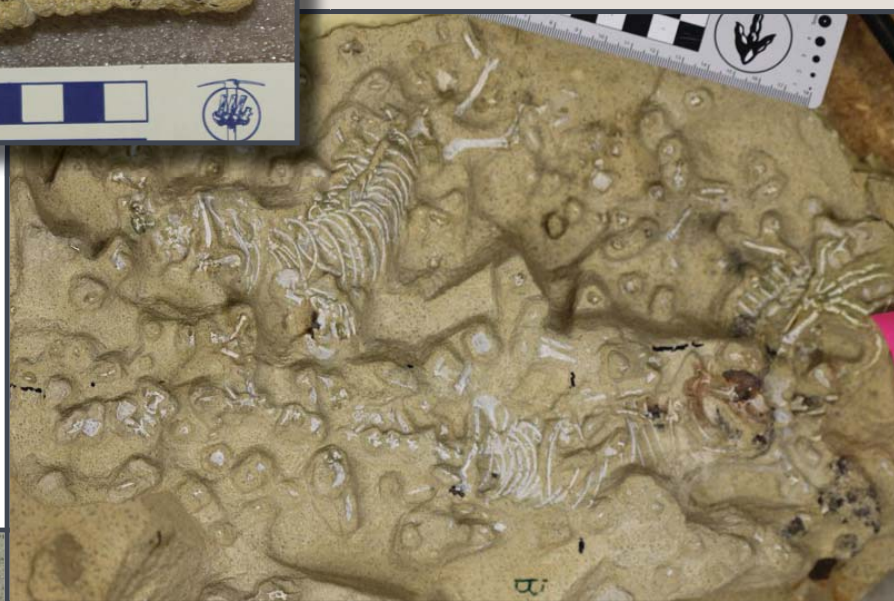


Figure 4 – Parts of three articulated skeletons of small crocodylomorphs (distant relatives to crocodiles) from the Saints and Sinners Quarry. The slightly crushed skull of one to the left of center with the neck and anterior part of the body continuing off the bottom of the picture; the folded up hind limbs of another on the left, with its tail continuing to the right through the middle of the picture; and the limbs of a third in the upper right.

Schwalb Center welcomes Dr. Anat Gilboa



From the left, Director Moshe Gershovich, Founders Hannah and Natan Schwalb, Anat Gilboa, and outgoing Schwalb Center Advisory Board President, Stacey Rockman

“Dr. Gilboa’s expertise in the visual representation of Israeli and Jewish culture will add a new dimension to the curriculum. Going beyond politics, religion, and the headlines that typically shape our perceptions, she will challenge us to “rethink Israel,” says Dr. Moshe Gershovich, Director of the Natan and Hannah Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO).

Gilboa comes to UNO thanks to a generous grant from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the Visiting Israeli Professor (VIP) program implemented by the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE). She is one of about twenty scholars placed this year at universities in the United States by the Schusterman Foundation.

Gershovich adds, “UNO is honored to be included among these elite institutions. It is our hope that hosting our first Schusterman VIP will greatly enhance the visibility of Israel Studies in Omaha.”

Additional support for the professorship has been provided by a gift from Dr. Larry and Silvia Roffman and the Deborah and Arthur M. Greene Trust. The gift was made in memory of Mrs. Roffman’s parents, Deborah and Arthur Greene. In honoring her parents, Mrs. Roffman said, “Both my father and I were graduates of UNO where we received an excellent education. I knew that my parents would be proud to play a role in bringing Dr. Gilboa to UNO for the benefit of our community.”

Gilboa studied art at the University of Haifa and Tel Aviv University and earned her PhD at Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Her dissertation and first book was published in 2003, *Images of the Feminine in Rembrandt’s Work*.

She will teach two interdisciplinary courses at UNO this fall on Jewish and Israeli culture and will offer community classes and activities through the Jewish Federation of Omaha and its Center for Jewish Life.

Established in 2009, the Schwalb Center’s mission is to create, coordinate, and promote an interdisciplinary program focusing on teaching and scholarship in Jewish and Israeli history, politics, culture and society.

Ten faculty members from different departments in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Fine Arts teach classes related to Israel and the Middle East as well as Judaic Studies.

With the continuing support of donors, the Center has been offering a variety of public lectures as well including the annual Phil and Ruth Sokolof Lecture Series.

For current information on lectures, please visit the center’s website at <http://www.unomaha.edu/israelcenter/>

OLLAS turns 10!

by Lourdes Gouveia

By century’s end, it had become clear to a small group of UNO researchers and community partners that the demographic changes triggered a decade earlier would have profound impacts on the region, the Omaha metropolitan area and the university for decades to come. Nebraska was among the top ten states to experience the largest Latino population growth between 1990 and 2000. The state, along with Iowa, was designated by sociologists and demographers as one of this country’s “new immigrant gateways.”

Armed with a carefully crafted vision, and in the midst of a UNO budget crisis, the group set out to convince a somewhat skeptical university administration that it was time to expand the Chicano/Latino Studies minor into a full-fledged center and to introduce a new academic major. Unlike other university departments, the center needed to be nimble, a hybrid whose boundaries between campus and community were fluid and whose purpose was to build knowledge and collective capacities to address the enor-



mity and speed of these changes. Two individuals grasped that vision best and played a critical role in securing the necessary support to make the new center a reality. One was then U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel who at the end of a meeting with interested faculty remarked: “not only were these kinds of efforts important, but Nebraska was a bit behind the curve in making them happen.” The other was the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Shelton Hendricks. In February of 2003, OLLAS, the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, was created with the help of \$1 million in federal funding secured with the crucial assistance of Hagel. By December of the same year, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents had approved a new Bachelor of Arts in Latino/Latin American Studies with the active sup-

Nelson named Politician-in-Residence

port of Dean Hendricks.

Today, OLLAS enjoys the support of, not only the Dean of Arts and Sciences office, but of the entire UNO community, especially our students and affiliate faculty. OLLAS has become known, among other things, for its timely reports and community dialogues about the state of Latino/Latin American populations; for its collaborative work with grass roots and “grass top” partners; and for the unique capacity we help build among students and others interested in working with diverse populations while acquiring a more sophisticated understanding of the hemispheric and local forces conditioning such diversity.

It truly takes “a village” to sustain the work of OLLAS and this celebration and recognition is for the entire village! It is a time to not simply reflect back on the lessons learned, but look forward to the next decade, and to do so with the courage and vision of those who made the last one a success.

*We invite you to attend and support the fifth “**Cumbre of the Great Plains**,” to take place November 8-9 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.*

For more information visit the OLLAS website, www.unomaha.edu/ollas, or call Dr. Lourdes Gouveia, Director, 402-554-3835.

Former Senator Ben Nelson has joined the Political Science Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha as Politician-in-Residence. Each semester, he will provide several lectures as well as host question and discussion times in an upper-division course.

For his first semester this spring, he joined Professor Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado's Foreign Policy class.

“I can hardly imagine a more exciting learning opportunity for UNO students short of taking them to Washington, D.C.” says Benjamin-Alvarado. “Even then I do not think they would have gotten the time and the depth of the insights they received from Senator Nelson that they did here in Omaha. We could have gone on for hours in the Q & A. It really reflected his respect and belief in higher education. We are truly graced to have him working with us!”

This isn't Nelson's first teaching adventure. As a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) he taught a philosophy class. Nelson earned his bachelors and masters as well as juris doctorate from UNL. His life's experience in politics is, of course, well known to Nebraskans. He served as Nebraska's governor from 1991 to 1999 and U.S. senator from 2001 to 2013.

His first lecture this spring was on the effect of bipartisanship on foreign policy and was open to the public. Plans are to continue to involve the community in class lectures and discussions.

This fall semester, Nelson will lecture for the Congress class taught by Dr. Loree Bykerk. “I'm really looking forward to having Senator Nelson in the class on Congress. His years of experience will give the students a more direct perspective than any collection of readings could do. He enjoys working with students, is willing to answer their questions, and is very approachable. Students will also learn that these important decision-makers are real down-to-earth people who appreciate interacting with them.”



Menards attend Hagel ceremony

Professor Emeritus Orville D. Menard and wife Darlene received an invitation from Vice President Joe Biden to attend the ceremonial swearing in of Chuck Hagel as the United States secretary of defense last March. Hagel, a graduate of the history program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, took a political science course from Menard in 1971. Menard became both friend and mentor to him over the years.

In the photo to the left, from left to right, are Lilibet Hagel, Orville Menard, Darlene Menard, and Chuck Hagel.

Cortés-Reyes awarded for hard work and sharing

"I am a Mexican immigrant and my parents have always taught me by word and example that hard work and dedication can lead to the accomplishment of one's dreams," explains Roxana Cortés-Reyes (photo below). Indeed, she took one very important step toward that dream this spring in graduating from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) with majors in Latino/Latin American Studies, Psychology, and Spanish as well as a long list of academic awards.

For 2013, Cortés-Reyes is not only the Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement Award winner for Latino/Latin American Studies but also the recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award and the UNO Senior Vice Chancellor's Award. Dr. Lourdes Gouveia, Director of the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) writes in a letter of nomination, "Without a doubt, Roxana's performance ranks at the top of her class and her focus, high level of motivation and drive to succeed are virtually unmatched."

In addition to academic excellence, the above awards recognize commitment to service. Again Cortés-Reyes credits her parents, "They have taught me to share what I have with everyone around me and that includes not only any services or physical help I can provide, but also knowledge and skills. Volunteering with various groups around Omaha and specifically with my people, the immigrant community, has been the best way I have found to follow the sharing principle taught by my parents."

As a bilingual pre-law student, Cortés-Reyes is a valuable volunteer at our Lady of Guadalupe Legal Clinic and Justice for our Neighbors. She also volunteers with Park Clean-Up, the annual Seven Days of Service, One World Community Health Center Health Fair and the University of Nebraska Medical Center Health Fair.

Naturally, courses with Service Learning components also drew Cortés-Reyes. Her exceptional work in those courses earned her one additional accolade, the 2013 Service Learning Student Award.

Dr. Claudia Garcia writes, "Roxana was a student in my SPAN 4030 Advanced Spanish Conversation class. In partnership with the Joslyn Museum of Art, students developed the first Gallery Conversation in Spanish open to the community. They made it possible for the Spanish-speaking population in our local Latino community to gain informed access to the cultural resources housed at the Joslyn Museum. Roxana gave a remarkable presentation and successfully engaged her audience in conversation, so that the deep objectives of the activity were fulfilled."

For her next step toward her dreams, Roxana Cortés-Reyes has earned a full scholarship to law school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she begins study in August. Roxana adds, "I plan on specializing in an area of law known as 'crimmigration.'" I hope that this specialty can help me gain skills to better serve my community."



Outstanding Undergraduate Awards

Rachel Bailey, Chemistry
 Mitchell Chlopek, Biology
 Alysha Collins, Psychology-B.A.
 Roxana Cortés-Reyes, Latino/Latin American Studies
 Miguel Gonzalez, English-American Literature
 Theresa Halligan, Geology
 Heather Hannaford, English-British/Irish/Anglophone Literature
 Renae Heuermann, Spanish
 Benjamin Hochfelder, Psychology-B.S.
 Niki Holzapfel, English-Creative Nonfiction
 Matthew Judah, Physics
 Brianna Kallman, Mathematics
 Evan Kenkel, English-Language Studies
 Hitomi Maezawa, Geography
 Jennifer Metcalf, French
 Justin Padfield, Sociology
 Jerome Prusa, Biotechnology
 Carol Redwing, Environmental Studies – Geography and Planning
 Kyle Rodenhausen, Physics/Engineering
 Colin Suiter, German
 Kathryn Thurn, Philosophy
 Elizabeth Urrutia, Political Science
 Elijah Whaley, International Studies

Scott Aichinger takes top graduate student honor

Scott Aichinger, (left) the Helen Hansen Outstanding Graduate for 2013, was recognized this spring as “a dedicated graduate student with gifts for teaching, leadership, writing, and theoretical scholarship.”

In addition to teaching first-year composition and being an active member of the English Department and Writing Center, Aichinger has presented at some of the most prestigious conferences in English studies. He presented a paper at the Feminist Workshop at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and recently presented other papers at the 2013 CCCC in Las Vegas and the Native American Literature Symposium in Minneapolis.

In 2012, Aichinger was awarded a Presidential Graduate Fellowship which allowed him to focus on his thesis, a collection of creative non-fiction essays entitled *Sediment: Memory & Forgetting*. Aichinger describes his thesis and his first book as “an experiment in using memory and the body in new ways, resulting in essays that represent the ways in which we use memory to break out of ourselves -- as well as break out of our dependence on fact. The essays cover all sorts of topics (like the myth of my birth, photography, art theory and aesthetics, methamphetamine, nature, and romantic relationships).”

He adds, “I also wanted to create an interactive experience for readers, and I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the incredibly talented Nick Clark, a fine arts-drawing and English-creative nonfiction major at UNO, who contributed custom illustrations for each of the eleven essays.”

This summer Aichinger is writing as an intern for Hear Nebraska, a nonprofit music media company that documents and promotes the state’s music culture. Aichinger also hopes to enroll in a new Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing at Creighton University this fall and to incorporate the writing he does for Hear Nebraska in the creation of his second book, a collection of essays with Omaha as the major theme. The two-year master’s program focuses on preparing a book-length manuscript of original work ready for publication. Aichinger explains, “I’m eager to bring what I’ve learned from UNO’s faculty (particularly my Creative Non-fiction heroes, Tammie Kennedy, Lisa Knopp, and John Price) to this new program.”

Rising stars recognized for promising research

Undergraduates **Lucas Harrison** and **Racine Rangel** (photo below) won 1st and 3rd place in competition with MS and PhD students at the Nebraska Water Center Fall Conference at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

The UNO Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair is another venue for undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students to show case their research and creative activity as oral presentations, performances, exhibits, and posters. Both undergraduates and graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences took honors again this year.

Undergraduate Orals “Outstanding” **Lucas Harrison**, *Agricultural Runoff in the Elkhorn River: Is Fate Bound to Vegetation?* Faculty Mentor: Alan Kolok, Biology

Undergraduate “best” **Angela Burgette**, *Evaluation of Meso-Scale Topographic Effects on Glaciers in the Western Himalaya of Pakistan*, Faculty Mentor: John Shroder, Geography

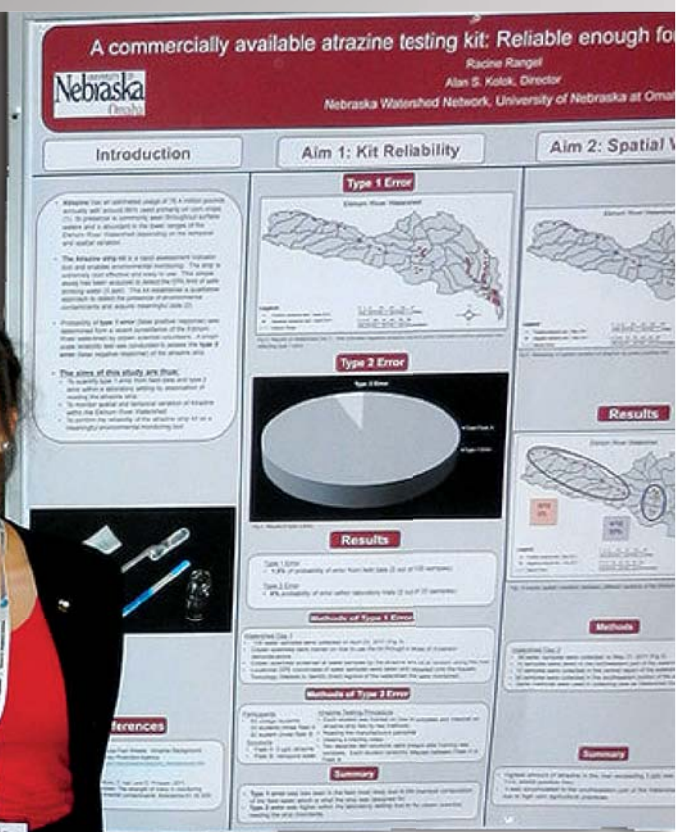
Graduate “outstanding” **Tiparna de Vreede**, *Effect of Shared Mental Models on Consensus*, Faculty Mentor: Roni Reiter-Palmon, Psychology

Graduate orals “outstanding” **Joshua Larson**, *Evaluation of the therapeutic value of two drug-like compounds for clearing human infections using the mouse model*, Faculty Mentor: Paul Davis, Biology

Graduate orals “outstanding” **Aaryn Mustoe**, *Care to share? Exploring the relationship between altruism and oxytocin in marmosets*, Faculty Mentor: Jeff French, Psychology and Neuroscience

Additional honors going to Arts and Sciences students this year include **Daniel Harris**, Graduate Thesis Award and Summer Graduate Scholarship, *The influence of problem construction, implicit aggression, and task valance on malevolent creativity*. Thesis advisor Roni Reiter-Palmon, Psychology

Melissa Mount, Phi Delta Gamma Award, Rhoden Biological Fellowship, Graduate Research and Creative Activity Grant “Effects of Urbanization on the Abundance and Reproductive Success of Native Grassland Birds.” Thesis advisors: Lareesa Wolfenbarger and John McCarty, Biology.



Racine Rangel’s poster demonstrated that citizen scientists were able to accumulate a large amount of meaningful data by using an atrazine strip kit.

Photo by Steve Ress, Nebraska Water Center

<http://www.unomaha.edu/cas>

Faculty Awards for 2013-2014

Jodi Kreiling, Ph.D., Chemistry

College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award

UNO Chancellor's Excellence in Teaching Award



"Dr. Kreiling is the teacher that makes science 'cool'! I am now in the Teacher Academy Project at UNO with the goal of teaching high school science. When people ask me why I want to be a science teacher, I will always think of Dr. Kreiling." *Kelley Barnett, former student*

"I learned a lot in the classroom from Dr. Kreiling; however, being a student researcher with her is where I grew both as a student and an individual. She demonstrated both dedication and patience as she taught me new laboratory techniques, how to construct and run a research project and present and publish research. Dr. Kreiling was not just my mentor; she became a role model for me. She encouraged me to pursue my dream of getting into medical school and becoming a doctor." *Jenna Allison, 2nd year medical student*

Claudia Garcia, Ph.D., Foreign Languages

UNO Outstanding Faculty Service Learning Award

Dr. Garcia is responsible for "some of the most creative student engagement projects at UNO. Her productivity is staggering." *Dr. Lourdes Gouveia, Director, Office of Latino/Latin American Studies.*

"Dr. Garcia came to me with her dream to create an opportunity for senior citizens, whose first language is Spanish, to be provided with an opportunity to visit Joslyn and connect with the beautiful artworks. Students visited the Museum twice, and under Dr. Garcia's leadership, researched artworks, and prepared themselves to have conversations about the art, in Spanish, to native speakers. The mood of the Museum was beautiful as I observed this intergenerational experience unfold." *Laura Huntimer, Interpretive Media Manager, Joslyn Art Museum*



Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, Ph.D., Political Science

College of Arts and Sciences Excellence in Service Award



"When service learning began in earnest at UNO in 1997, Dr. Alvarado was at the forefront of faculty incorporating this pedagogy into their teaching strategies. Since then Jonathan has served as a mentor to many UNO faculty members. . . . Jonathan's service to the community has also been a tremendous asset to the Service Learning Academy. . . especially in south Omaha, . . . he has earned the respect and regard of key community leaders. I am tremendously grateful to Jonathan for being so willing to share these relationships with us." *Dr. Paul Sather, Director, Service Learning Academy*

Lisabeth Buchelt, Ph.D., English

College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award

"Her passion for Celtic literatures ignited interest in her students, whose excitement clearly manifested in class discussions. . . . Such an interest in the medieval Celts was ignited in me, and they are now the focus of my graduate studies at UNL. . . she remained my scholastic mentor. . . generously reading drafts of my research papers, and guiding my research toward important and relevant texts. Her generosity, enthusiasm, and vast knowledge of her discipline make Dr. Buchelt an excellent candidate for the College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Award." *Esther Ward, former student*



Carson Holloway, Ph.D., Political Science

College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award



"A bright, well-reasoned, and highly motivated professor who has an uncanny ability to meet students at their level. His patience and temperament in the classroom are complemented by his humility and amazing intellect. Most importantly, his teaching style is learner-focused . . . He cares about his students and always has time for them. He wants to ensure they not only master the material, but also develop critical thinking skills and analytical abilities." *Matthew Ream, former student*

Roni Reiter-Palmon, Ph.D., Psychology

College of Arts and Science Excellence in Research Award

Dr. Reiter-Palmon is one of the "superstars" in the field of creativity, and she's only getting better. She's the kind of scholar and leader who raises the quality and production of everyone around her. Her most recent work (such as that exploring negative creativity, or her work on divergent thinking assessment) is powerful and exciting." *Dr. James C. Kaufman, Director, Learning Research Institute, California State University, San Bernadino.*



Faculty Awards (continued)

Mary Rita Dennison, Mathematics College of Arts and Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award for Full-time Instructors and Lecturers

"I especially appreciate Mary Dennison's enthusiasm in trying to engage students in critical thinking and conversation without fear of retaliation, and while she emphasizes teamwork, she, similarly, encourages independence and self-reliance. It is apparent Mary Dennison intends to inspire an environment with impartiality, passion, reflection, collaboration, energy, and last but not least, for those times of overwhelming frustration, humor." *Katie Hill, former student*

Karen Murch-Shafer, Biology College of Arts and Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award for Full-time Instructors and Lecturers

"I was scheduled to give a presentation on my research and I was terrified. She assured me that I would do great and she spent hours working with me. She taught me skills on how to present but most of all she taught me to believe in myself. When the day came to give the presentation I was prepared and she was there for me. It turned out to be one of the most empowering experiences in my life. Dr. Murch-Shafer is a brilliant woman with a plethora of knowledge in her field. As a teacher she is helpful, approachable, knowledgeable, challenging and by far one of the best I have had at UNO." *Scarlet Heim, former student*

Victor Medina, Foreign Languages College of Arts and Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award for Part-time Faculty

"Profe Medina is the best professor that I have had in my 5 years of college. His passion for the Spanish language is contagious in his classroom. He makes his class both challenging and fun at the same time and is easily approachable when any student has a question. . . . He is the first professor I suggest when any student mentions having to take a foreign language. His influence will be one that I will not forget in my own teaching career. I hope to have the same passion for my students and influence in their lives."

Sean Jackson, former student



Peggy Jones, all about the journey

Associate Professor of Black Studies, a member of the Women's and Gender Studies faculty, artist, dramatist, with research interest in linguistics, Peggy Jones traverses several planes but aims at one objective—knowledge of self. Though it is a personal journey, it is not a journey she takes alone. She encourages others to join the adventure.

This most recent leg of her journey has been a remarkable one. Last February, her first play was produced at the Rose Theater and Performing Arts Center and performed by Young, Gifted, and Black teen production. It is an artistic interpretation of how Aaron Douglas, first black graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln art department, decided to become an artist. The play is titled *The Journey, a Play for Younger Audiences*.

The Journey has two missions. Educating young people about Aaron Douglas, a leader of the Harlem Renaissance, is one of Jones' inspirations. In the 1930s, Douglas became known as "the Father of African-American art" for his powerful paintings depicting African-American life. In 1939, he moved to Nashville where he founded the art department at Fisk University. Jones received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council for her work on this play and traveled to Fisk University to study Douglas' work and papers.

The play is not simply a biography of Douglas. Jones uses his life to illustrate the importance and difficulty of choosing to be true to oneself, especially if that means becoming an artist, especially if one is black. Jones explains that, as a black artist, one not only has the society-wide pressures to choose a traditional career path, but also the special pressure from black culture: "What are you doing to help your people?"

Through this play as well as through her teaching at the university, Jones poses the question, "Are you doing anything to help you?"

As a young woman, Jones determined to go to Notre Dame because "my brother told me I couldn't get in." She did. Her first thought was to become a lawyer, but she soon found her calling when she enrolled for a design class. As a young person, she had always been drawn to symbols, the visual, the graphic, but never chose to take art classes in school because art seemed to be a class for "the cool kids." She nevertheless worked at art consistently, decorating and creating posters for events such as prom and homecoming.

Though *The Journey* has a serious message for young people, Jones serves up "edutainment," in the vein of Broadway hit, *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*. Production of the *The Journey* includes dramatic lighting and imagery, music, and dance.

This April, rounding out Jones' personal journey for the year, the Women's and Gender Studies faculty awarded Jones the Mary Ann Lamana Award for Excellence in Women's Studies. Presenting the award, last year's recipient Marcia Adler defined Jones' contributions, "Her special gift to the world is to make every person she encounters feel valued. Her capacity to function as an authentic professional woman enhances her effectiveness in the classroom as she mentors young women to excel at achieving their dreams."

You make a difference!

The University of Nebraska's ability to uphold its mission is dramatically strengthened as a result of our donors. We'd like to welcome new donors and thank everyone who has made a difference by financially supporting the College over the past year.

There are multiple ways that alumni, friends, faculty, businesses and corporations donate to aid the College of Arts and Sciences programs and research. Many people give each year when they receive an Annual Fund request by phone or in the mail.

Some wish to remember a classmate, faculty member or loved one with a memorial or honorary donation. Others choose to support research, establish a named scholarship, or create a fellowship. Examples include the Martha C. Page Study Abroad Travel Fund, the Dr. Steel R. Lunt Memorial Scholarship, and the Orville and Darlene Menard Political Science Scholarship. Named, endowed Chairs and Professorships are significant gifts that enable the College to attract and recruit the outstanding educators that prepare our students. Examples include the Blizek Professorship in Religion and the Charles W. and Mary C. Martin Professorship in American History. Gifts to the UNO Arts and Sciences Fund for Excellence create new possibilities for UNO's College of Arts and Sciences for many years to come.

I am privileged to work with the College of Arts and Sciences through the University of Nebraska Foundation. The Foundation is a non-profit organization established by the Board of Regents that raises and manages private gifts to the College. If you have questions about establishing a new fund or scholarship, making long-range plans, or giving through a different vehicle, please contact me at any time by phone, 402-502-4108, or by email, mbernier@nufoundation.org. I'd love to talk with you!

Mary Bernier



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