

TOWSON

SUMMER 2010

WEIGHTY MATTERS 8
DOG'S BEST FRIEND 12
LAND OF OPPORTUNITY 14

Eyeing the Outdoors

FIELD STATION OPENS



**TOWSON
UNIVERSITY**





Matt Jennette, a master's student, gets the opportunity for hands-on research at the 228-acre Field Station in Monkton, Md., thanks to a partnership between TU and landowners Al '66 and Suzie Henneman.

FEATURES

WEIGHTY MATTERS 8

Keith Ahrens '85 dropped more than 200 pounds from his 414-pound frame and saved his life. His tale underscores the dangers of obesity...and the rewards of wellness.

DOG'S BEST FRIEND 12

Nancy Johnson '75, a canine foster mom, turns tales of abuse and neglect into stories with happy endings.

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY 14

Wooded parcel means TU can have a field day conducting research in the great outdoors.

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Miss Adventure
Honorary Degree Bestowed





With a productive and successful academic year behind us and a summer promising to be just as busy, many new and exciting developments are on the horizon for Towson University.

Square-foot by square-foot, our campus landscape is quickly changing, but with a thoughtful eco-friendly approach. By fall 2011, three campus construction projects will be open with Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) silver certification. The second phase of what will become the campus' largest classroom building, the College of Liberal Arts, will add 300,000 square feet of new academic space. The second phase of West Village housing will provide 650 additional campus beds and will be finished at the same time as the West Village Commons, a building large enough to be a second student union that will provide much-needed office and meeting spaces, and additional dining options.

Recognized for our environmentally conscious efforts, Towson University is proud to be included in *The Princeton Review's Guide to 286 Green Colleges*. The book lists the nation's most environmentally conscientious campuses that have taken a comprehensive look at green building, energy conservation and waste reduction.

Taking our award-winning Go Green campaign a step further, campus-wide efforts have extended to foster a healthy campus environment from recycling initiatives to clean air. On August 1, TU will become Maryland's first smoke-free four-year institution, banning smoking on any university property.

The end of the academic year also brings sobering legislative news. When the Maryland General Assembly concluded, Towson saw a \$12.6 million cut to its fund balance with the knowledge that a minimal tuition increase and employee furloughs are imminent.

Towson University is growing a smarter, healthier and welcoming campus atmosphere. Please plan to visit us this summer to experience all of the campus changes.

Bob Caret

President, Towson University

Published three times a year by the Division of University Advancement for Towson University's alumni, faculty, staff and friends. Please send comments and contributions to *Towson*, University Relations, Towson University, 8000 York Rd., Towson, MD 21252-0001. Telephone: 410-704-2230. Please send address changes to Alumni Relations, Towson University, 8000 York Rd., Towson, MD 21252-0001.

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“ On August 1, TU will become Maryland's first smoke-free four-year institution, banning smoking on any university property. ”

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Starting with a Bang

NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING COSMOLOGIST DELIVERS LECTURE AT GRAND OPENING OF TU'S DIGITAL PLANETARIUM



Fluctuations in microwave background light, evidence of the Big Bang discovered by Mather and COBE, are represented in TU's renovated planetarium.

The friendly skies of TU's planetarium twinkled with excitement on March 27 when Nobel laureate John Mather opened the newly renovated Watson-King Planetarium with a bang—a lecture on the Big Bang to be exact.

Mather, who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Prize in physics for his critical role in confirming the Big Bang theory, spoke to a packed house. More than 300 people filled Smith Hall's largest auditorium with another 100 listening to his talk, "From the Big Bang to Life and the End of the Universe," in a nearby classroom with a live video feed.

Mather led the 1992 Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite experiment that detected minute variations in the brightness of light left over from the formation of the universe. Researchers had been looking for such phenomena for decades as evidence of

the Big Bang; Mather's team was the first to discover them.

He connected with the audience at Towson by filling his talk with humorous stories and cartoons, says James Overduin, assistant professor, Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences, who introduced the Nobel laure-

While waiting for a planetarium show, visitors also enjoyed telescope viewings, learned how to make pocket solar systems or watched space-themed movies. Later this year, a new 16-inch telescope will be installed, which will be wired to the planetarium projector for indoor viewing.

The \$50,000 planetarium renovation is the first since the facility's construction in 1965.

ate. Mather also illustrated the Big Bang by not illustrating it at all, Overduin adds. Instead, he presented a blank slide explaining, "The event cannot be pictured except by going to higher dimensions and looking down from outside," something that cannot be done.

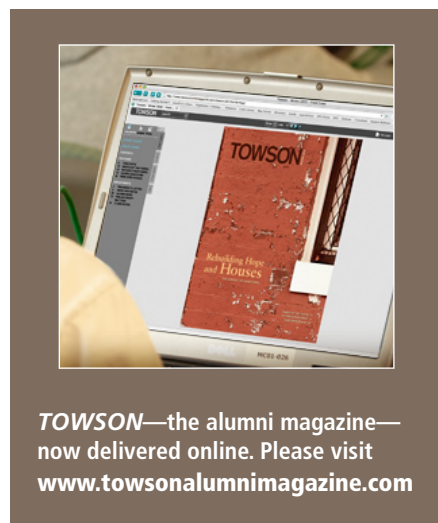
The evening also included five consecutive shows in the updated planetarium. The \$50,000 renovation is the first since the facility's construction in 1965, and includes a state-of-the-art projector, new sound system and a redesigned seating layout that centers the audience in the room rather than around the perimeter as in a traditional planetarium space.

The new equipment and seating arrangement allow the audience to become more immersed in the show, says Alex Storrs, associate professor in the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences.

"Our fisheye-lens projector and the arc shape of the seats now allow us to put people right in the middle of the dome, where the illusion of the sky is best," says Storrs. A centrally linked computer allows astronomers to zoom and pan through an astronomically accurate night sky, from the rooftop of Smith Hall to the limits of the known universe.

The redesigned planetarium and telescope facility will act as lab space for many courses in the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences. It will also continue to serve the community as a venue for shows and stargazing, with free events for the public scheduled on the third Friday of every month during the academic year.

Mather's talk is available at <http://mediasite2.towson.edu/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=91273d0411f2460db3ac83d36d01b81a>



TOWSON—the alumni magazine—now delivered online. Please visit www.towsonalumnimagazine.com

3 **NOTEBOOK**

Computer Sentries

When it comes to computer security, TU has the A-team on its side.

Eight TU students won the Mid-Atlantic Regional Cyber-Defense Competition last March by defending the information technology infrastructure of a fictional town.

Coached by TU professor Mike O'Leary, students Madeline Pelkey, Brian Haar, Shane Lester, Felix A. Mercado, Brian Namovicz, Finn Ramsland, Bryan Sizemore and Jon Wiseman kept the town's e-mail, websites, databases and a disaster management system up and running while under attack from a team of hackers—professionals skilled in network warfare and

TU's winning cyber sentries



testing security systems.

The TU students successfully fended off two days of attacks, earning a victory that sent them to San Antonio in April for the finals of the National Collegiate Cyber-Defense Competition. Towson placed fourth in a field of eight.

"We learned a lot that can help us prepare better

Eight TU students won the Mid-Atlantic Regional Cyber-Defense Competition last March.

for next year," says Pelkey, the team captain. "Nationals are very different from the regional competition, so there's an entirely different way to approach it."

Nature of Nutria

A 1953 ad from *Popular Science Magazine* (below) hooked Lauren Tucker into studying how a furry

cutter that would eat unwanted vegetation," she explains.

But soon, there was little market for nutria fur and the animals at



rodent, nutria, went from being an economic windfall to an environmental disaster. Her research, she says, "explores the evolving discourse on nutria in the Chesapeake Bay and the notion that exotics become invasives when a place is deemed forbidden to them by humans."

Nutria were touted throughout the world as the next big commodity in the fur market, says

Tucker, who earned a master's in geography in May. At Maryland's Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, the animal was cultivated not only for its pelts but also as a "four-legged grass

Blackwater were released into the wild.

While nutria have eaten more than 7,000 acres of marsh vegetation in the Blackwater refuge, eradication of the species was pushed decades before there were any physical changes, Tucker says, to preserve the "native ecosystem."

As Tucker examined early historical reports and conference proceedings relating to the animal, she expected to find documentation of its large population and its increasing damage to plant life. Instead she found a "drastic evolution" in the perception of the animal "even before there was an increase in the population of nutria and even before any damage had been reported," she says.

Next year Tucker will begin a Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

LOOK BACK

Through the Yearbooks

The archives of Cook Library has what is thought to be the first yearbook—*The Aletheia*—from the 1902 class of the Maryland State Normal School. Before 1902, a simple unbound photograph album held class pictures.

Much like the school it chronicled, the yearbook changed names throughout the last 108 years. In 1914 it was the *Normalite*, in 1919 *The Daisy* and from



1971 Tower Echoes

1928 to 1932, *The Crystal*. Then came a 13-year span when the student newspaper produced a soft-bound June issue that served as the yearbook.

In 1947 a hardbound volume returned, but it didn't have a name. Then the class of 1948 dubbed its yearbook *White and Gold*, which was followed by *Tower Echoes* in 1949. Thus began a 50-plus year publishing run, although a few classes—2003 through 2005—did not produce a volume.

But now TU's yearbook has gone the way of analog TV. *Tower Echoes* won't be published in 2010. Call

it a victim of increased costs and perhaps students' preference for Facebook and other social networking media rather than a tome.

OUTREACH

Life After Cancer

Mary Curran '79/'05 M.A. understands the obstacles faced by young adults who survive cancer.

For five years, the clinical assistant professor in TU's Department of Nursing has delved into the psychosocial issues affecting those aged 15 to 40 who survive the shock of diagnosis, the often rigorous and debilitating cancer treatments, and then must somehow return to a normal life.

Last January, her efforts earned her a Volunteer Service Award from the Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Survivors.

“Many fear the cancer may recur, which often makes them unable to plan or feel as if all their plans must be accelerated.”

—Mary Curran

Curran has a personal interest in younger patients—her son is a young adult cancer survivor.

Despite the range of ages, younger survivors share common concerns. “Many fear the cancer may recur, which often makes them unable to plan or feel as if all their plans must be accelerated,” Curran says. What's more, “they cannot relate to their peers,” who still possess the invincibility of youth, she adds.

Curran began her studies by surveying the needs of young adult survivors to provide education and networking groups. In 2006, she presented an abstract of the project at the International Psycho-Oncology Society in Venice, Italy. In a follow-up study, Curran, a 2008 recipient of the TU College of Graduate Studies Faculty Fellowship, collaborated with a number of agencies, investigating the effectiveness of support services for young adult cancer survivors in Baltimore City.

One surprising finding was “we did not have a big enough group coming back to use the services,” she explains. So future studies will shift support and education to parents and health care providers who must also learn how to deal with the needs of cancer survivors in this age group.

SPORT SHORTS

Gymnastics Coaches Retire

TU's gymnastics coaches vaulted into retirement this June after a stellar final

season. Head coach Dick Filbert '71 and assistant coach Lynda Filbert '94, his wife and a Tiger gymnast from 1975 to 1978, once again led the Tigers to a sixth straight ECAC championship title.

Dick Filbert was also named the ECAC Coach of the Year for the fourth time in his career.

Lynda Filbert was honored as the ECAC Assistant Coach of the Year for the second time in her career.

Golf and Swimming Champs

Make room in the trophy case. The men's golf team and the women's swimming and diving team each won the Colonial Athletic Association Championships this year.

The men's golf team was ranked 151st in the Golfweek/Sagarin College Rankings but that didn't stop them from claiming their first CAA Men's Golf Championship, winning the title by a comfortable 11 strokes.

The women's swimming and diving team won its third straight CAA Championship, finishing ahead of UNC Wilmington by more than 100 points.



Extreme Makeover

RENOVATION GIVES ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AREA A NEW LOOK



Nadia Nasr holds a Babylonian tablet from 2300 B.C.

Although holdings in Cook Library's Special Collections date back as far as 2300 B.C., the spaces housing them are less than a year old.

A once dark and cramped repository of archives and artifacts located on Cook's fifth floor has been transformed into a functional, user-friendly facility, with 50 percent

collectible and daily-use china from former president Theresa Wiedefeld; and a 24-karat gold-plated Maryland blue crab in the collection of former governor Robert Ehrlich. The Baltimore Hebrew Institute Joseph Meyerhoff Collection contains more than 70,000 volumes, and a number of rare and special items, including approximately 130 Holocaust video testimonies and a Jewish scholar commentary on the Bible published in Naples, Italy in 1492.

Renovation and expansion of the archives and Special Collections began in spring 2009. "We gutted the place from floor to ceiling," says Nadia Nasr, university archivist and digital collections librarian. Renovators took down walls, ripped up carpet and lightened up the dark, formal space of the adjacent Towson Room by removing its wood paneling.

Nasr says the three-month renovation was extensive but necessary. The old storage space contained several windows, which exposed materials to sunlight and drafts.

Special Collections has Babylonian clay tablet cuneiforms dating from 2300 B.C., and a 24-karat gold-plated Maryland blue crab in the collection of former governor Robert Ehrlich.



additional storage capacity and spacious, brightly lit work areas.

Now known as Special Collections, it is home to the historical records and artifacts of the university dating back to its founding as the State Normal School in 1866. Holdings include school catalogs and bulletins from 1866 to the present; faculty and staff publications; more than 12,000 photographs, slides and negatives; a complete run of student literary magazines from 1952 to now; a complete run of student newspapers from 1921 to the present; and yearbooks dating back to 1902.

Special Collections also serves as repository to an eclectic mix of items, including Babylonian clay tablet cuneiforms dating from 2300 B.C. purchased by former history professor Lena Van Bibber in 1939; a wide assortment of

Fan coil units connected to the TU power plant's heating and cooling systems prevented rooms in the archives from maintaining a stable temperature or humidity level. A "desperately needed" dedicated workspace for visiting researchers was created; in the past, researchers were forced to use the Towson Room, if it was available.

The updated facilities contain two closed-stack storage spaces that are climate and humidity controlled along with dedicated user space. Other additions include built-in staff stations, a small conference room and a new materials processing area with high counters.

"Whether you're a student, a faculty member, a researcher or just a curious passer-by up on the fifth floor," says Nasr, "we hope you'll find Special Collections an inviting place to explore."



A disaster drill last spring, sponsored by the College of Health Professions, enabled more than 350 nursing students to gain invaluable hands-on experience helping victims of a faux tornado.

What's New



Fisher Dean

David Vanko, a geologist who has studied the formation of ocean crusts, was named dean of TU's Jess and Mildred Fisher College of Science and Mathematics in February. He came to TU in 2001 and since 2007 served as acting dean of the college. His accomplishments include establishing the college's Advisory Board, creating the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program which is funded by a five-year, \$900,000 National Science Foundation grant and spearheading an Academic Research Infrastructure proposal to the NSF for \$1.87 million. Vanko received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and a Ph.D. in geology in 1982 from Northwestern University in Illinois.



Dancer's Dozen

What else can we say? They did it again. The TU Dance Team won the National Dance Alliance (NDA) Collegiate National Championship in April. It was the team's 12th consecutive victory. Performing to a medley of tunes including "Stand By Me" and "We are Family," the dancers rocked Florida's Peabody Auditorium and the Daytona Beach Band Shell. The young women not only sparked in their blue and black costumes, they also dazzled the judges with hyper-paced precision moves and synchronization. Says coach Tom Cascella, "The team spirit and cooperation of this group of young women makes them champions. I can't begin to tell you how proud I am of our team."



Green Rooms

Dig this. TU broke ground on phase II of the West Village housing project in April, a project that will build two residential facilities slated to receive LEED silver certification when they open in August 2011. Located in the university's West Village precinct, the buildings will mirror the Paca and Tubman houses and contain 651 beds for freshman and sophomore students. Those beds will be in single- and double-occupancy rooms, and students will find communal lounges, study space, meeting rooms and community centers in their living quarters. What's more, the buildings are designed with tranquility in mind—featuring sound mitigation systems to reduce noise between rooms. One last perk—each entrance lounge will have a flat screen cable television.

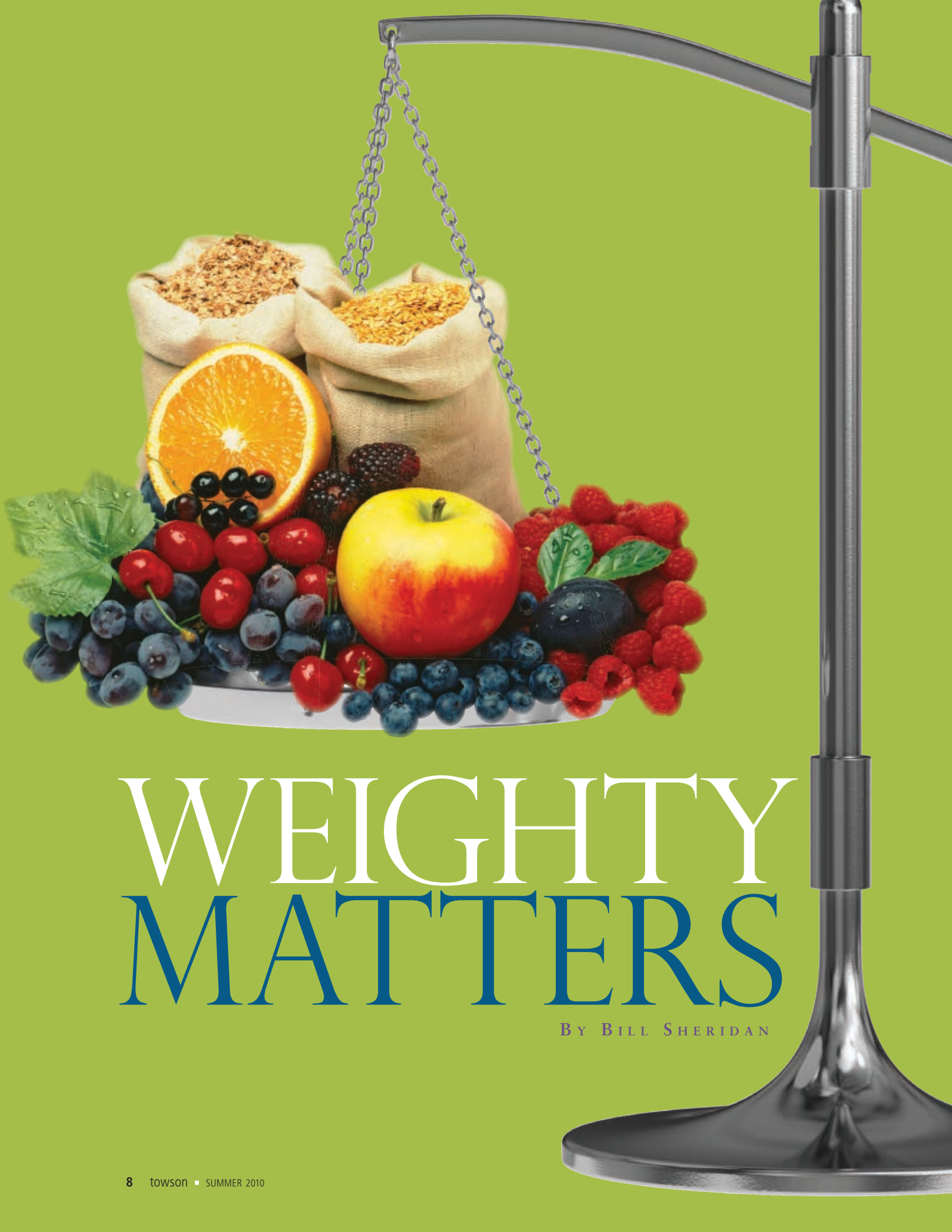


Honor Roll

More than 15,000 Towson students propelled TU onto the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The award comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service and is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service learning and civic engagement. TU students logged 255,700 hours volunteering for projects which included tutoring elementary, middle and high school students, helping the homeless in South Florida and rebuilding homes in Baltimore neighborhoods. TU is one of 115 schools nationwide but the only Maryland school named to the Honor Roll with Distinction for 2009.

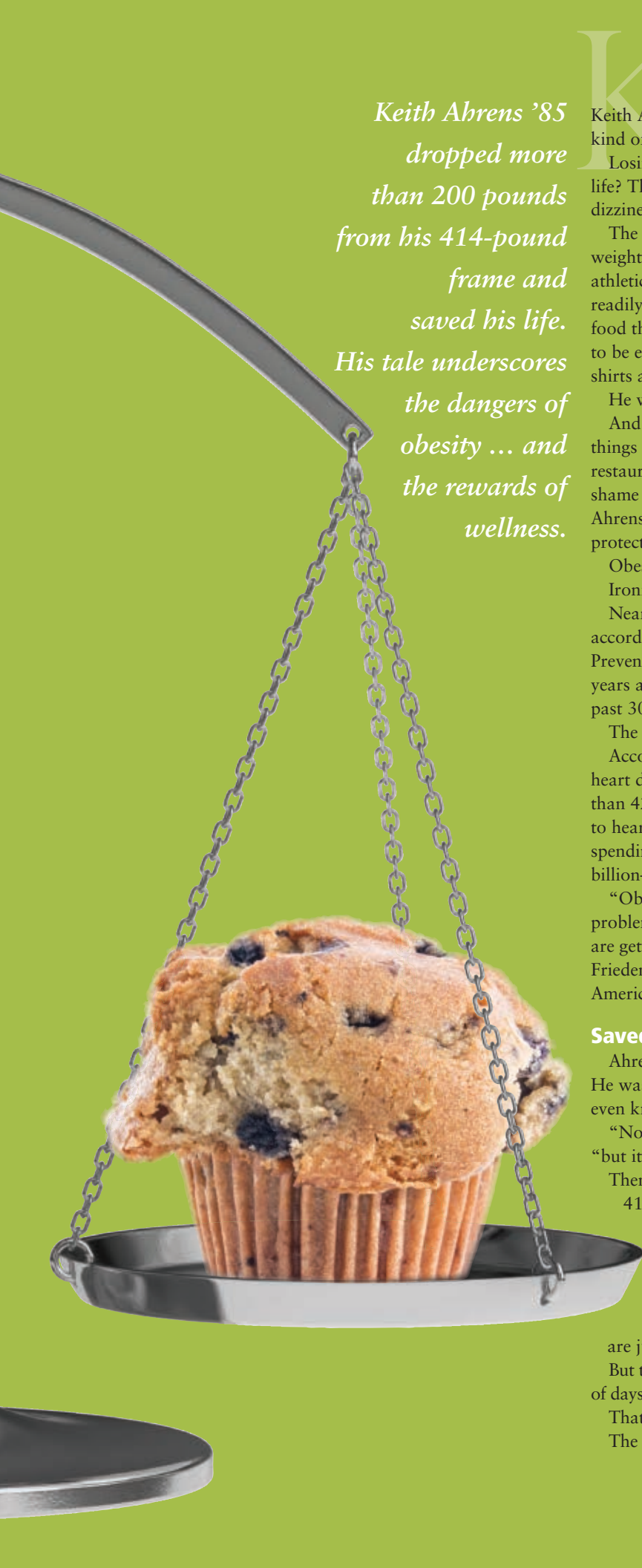


The Education Trust's January 2010 report ranked TU as one of the top 25 for increasing graduation rates for under-represented minorities from 2002-2007.



WEIGHTY MATTERS

BY BILL SHERIDAN



*Keith Ahrens '85
dropped more
than 200 pounds
from his 414-pound
frame and
saved his life.
His tale underscores
the dangers of
obesity ... and
the rewards of
wellness.*

K Keith Ahrens never meant to weigh 414 pounds. It just kind of ... happened.

Losing more than 200 of those pounds and saving his life? That took a little more effort—and just a touch of dizziness.

The 1985 Towson University graduate had battled weight issues for most of his adult life. Though active and athletic while at Towson, the post-graduate Ahrens too readily embraced a sedentary lifestyle and a love for fast food that piled on the pounds. Years went by—22 of them, to be exact—and eventually, he was wearing size XXXXXL shirts and pants with a 60-inch waist.

He was, in a word, obese.

And being obese, of course, meant enduring all of the things that come with it—the disapproving glances at restaurants, the judgmental comments from passers-by, the shame of not being able to fit into a seat on an airplane. Ahrens experienced it all, and at some point he built a “big, protective shell that kept people away.”

Obesity, it turns out, is often a lonely battle.

Ironically, Ahrens wasn't alone.

Nearly 34 percent of adult Americans are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's more than double the percentage of 30 years ago. Among children, the number has *tripled* over the past 30 years, to 17 percent.

The related health trends are predictable.

According to the American Heart Association, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in America. More than 425,000 deaths—one in every six—were attributed to heart disease in 2006. Nearly 9 percent of all medical spending in the United States each year—some \$147 billion—can be attributed to obesity, according to the CDC.

“Obesity, and with it diabetes, are the only major health problems that are getting worse in this country, and they are getting worse rapidly,” CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden told a gathering of reporters in 2009. “The average American is now 23 pounds overweight.”

Saved by a heart attack

Ahrens was one of them, but he didn't stop at 23 pounds. He was well on his way to an early grave, and he didn't even know it.

“Nobody thinks heart disease will strike them,” he says, “but it doesn't discriminate.”

Then came that day in April 2007—the day he lifted his 414-pound frame off the bed and felt dizzy.

He had been used to shortness of breath and chest pains that he passed off as heartburn. “When you are obese,” he writes in his book *Outrunning My Shadow*, “you always blame any warning signs of potential heart disease on the fact that you are just fat.”

But the dizziness was something new. It came again a couple of days later, only more severe. He decided to see a doctor.

That decision saved his life.

The dizziness, the heartburn, the shortness of breath

were all symptoms of a “silent” heart attack, a condition whose warning signs go largely unnoticed. Some studies indicate that up to 60 percent of all heart attacks are not recognized as such, and nearly 200,000 people are affected by them each year.

In Ahrens’ case, the symptoms were made worse by three almost entirely blocked arteries. Without bypass surgery, he was told, his life would be in danger.

That moment—the worst of his 45-year-old life—marked the start of his resurrection.

Back from the brink

In the three months between his diagnosis and his surgery, Ahrens lost 60 pounds mostly out of necessity; doctors told him the extra weight would pose a risk during surgery.

After surgery on Aug. 23, 2007, Ahrens got down to business.

Soda was replaced by water. Fast food was out; vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats and fish were in. So was exercise, and a lot of it.

Before his heart attack, Ahrens couldn’t walk from his office to his car without being completely winded. After, exercise became an important part of his daily routine. Walking on the treadmill led to bicycling ... and basketball ... and work on a punching bag ... and swimming ... and weight training. He worked his way up to five hours of cardiovascular exercise each week.

In essence, he deconstructed his life and rebuilt it on a foundation of health and wellness—a daunting endeavor, to be sure.

“Was it scary? No. But it was challenging,” he says. “It came down to this: I had to make *me* the most important

impact on health, “but we no longer honor eating in a way that is really healthy.”

Modern America, she says, views food either as an obsession or an inconvenient necessity. We have completely lost touch with the notion that “we are what we eat”—that who we are physically depends on the foods we eat.

“As I travel, it seems to me that people in other countries are less neurotic about food,” Werts says. “People just *eat*. They eat when they’re hungry and stop when they’re full and go on with their lives. We’ve lost a lot of that in our modern society.”

The problem in America isn’t a lack of knowledge. People seem to understand which foods they should be eating. The problem, says Werts, is finding an incentive that convinces them to make a change.

“Saying you should do it just because it’s good for you is not enough,” she says. “If I was to tell someone, ‘I’m from *The Biggest Loser* and we’ll give you a million dollars to lose some weight,’ that might work. Unfortunately, we’re at a place where we have to incentivize healthy eating, and I haven’t seen anyone doing that very well.”

The answer, says Werts, might lie in helping people eat in a way that doesn’t demonize food but honors it instead.

“It’s not just about food; it’s about how people nourish themselves physically and emotionally,” she says. “Eating more simply, slowly and seasonally—what I call the three S’s—can make great strides in getting people more connected with their food.”

Back to the dinner table

Carrie McFadden prefers Michael Pollan’s mantra. Pollan, author of the best-selling books *The*

“I HAD TO START TAKING CARE OF MYSELF. THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY I WOULD POSSIBLY SURVIVE.” —Keith Ahrens ‘85

person in my life. I had to start taking care of myself. That was the only way I would possibly survive.”

‘We no longer honor eating’

The obese Ahrens is a cautionary example of the consequences that come with the modern American diet.

Gone are the days when families spent time cooking their meals, then sat down together and enjoyed those meals amid leisurely conversation. Today, the key word is “fast.” If we’re not eating takeout or at a restaurant, we’re “cooking” processed foods at home that bear little resemblance to anything our ancestors ate. We’ve lost our relationship with food, says Niya Werts, a TU assistant professor in the College of Health Professions, and it’s taking a toll on our health.

“Eating and having an appreciation of our food is part of our natural cycle,” says Werts, who lectures on food and its

Omnivore’s Dilemma and *In Defense of Food*, implores his readers to “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”

“If we ate like that, we’d be so much better off,” says McFadden, a visiting instructor at Towson’s College of Health Professions who lectures on nutrition. “We need to get back to the dinner table and eat real food with one another.”



McFadden's basic nutrition class requires students to keep a "food intake journal" in which they record everything they eat over five days. And everything means *everything*. If they have a chicken salad sandwich, they must record all of the ingredients of that sandwich—the chicken, the mayonnaise, the bread and everything in between. The students then post that information into a website affiliated with MyPyramid.gov by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In return, they receive a snapshot of the nutritional value of the foods they eat.

It's an exercise that never fails to astound.

"MY STUDENTS WALK OUT OF THE CLASSROOM WITH AT LEAST SOME KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO MAKE SMARTER DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR FOOD."—Carrie McFadden, lecturer, College of Health Professions

"The reaction from students is overwhelmingly one of shock and surprise," McFadden says. "They really have no idea how many saturated fats, how much cholesterol or sodium they take in, or how little Vitamin E and Vitamin D they get, or how low in fiber, antioxidants, calcium and water their diets are."

Nor do they realize how their diets are affecting their health. McFadden routinely asks her students if they

feel tired, stressed or overwhelmed, "and the hands shoot up. One of the immediate tolls our diets take is on our collective energy, and these kids are at an age when they shouldn't feel that way. We'd all have more energy, would feel better, would sleep better if we ate better and didn't carry around that extra weight."

The project is making an impact.

One student told McFadden the food journal had changed her life. McFadden says, "She never realized how poorly she was eating until she started this project."

Another student came to class one day and announced to her classmates that she had quit her management job ... at McDonald's.

That's the kind of difference McFadden is determined to make.

"My job is to help them become aware of how they're eating and how that can impact their health, for better or

worse, then give them some strategies for making wiser choices," she says. "My students walk out of the classroom with at least *some* knowledge of how to make smarter decisions about their food."

'I'm more alive than ever'

Following his surgery, Ahrens' new diet and exercise regimen left him feeling better than he had in years, and the pounds began to melt away. That combination was addictive, and Ahrens was hooked on his new life.

Two and a half years after his heart attack, Ahrens was

down to 208 pounds. He dropped 20 inches from his waist and five X's from his shirt size.

"My life has taken a 180-degree turn," he says. "I feel like a champ every time I wake up."

There are other benefits as well. He fits comfortably into any chair now, including those narrow airline seats, and as a result he has traveled to parts of the world he's never seen. He can wear a seatbelt. And he sometimes catches women staring at him—not because he's fat, but because hey, he's a good-looking guy.

"That's definitely a different experience," he laughs.

The most satisfying byproduct of his life change, though, is his new career. Ahrens added "author" to his resume last year when he published *Outrunning My Shadow*, which chronicles his journey back to health, and he has since become a motivational speaker and certified fitness trainer. His goal: to help other overweight people make the journey, too.

"There's nothing more rewarding than knowing that people have hope and motivation by hearing my story and seeing what I've done," Ahrens says. "I get to help hundreds of people, and every day something else happens that inspires me."

And what does he tell them?

"It can be done. It's not impossible. It's never too late and you're never too old," he says. "If you screw up and overeat today, there's always tomorrow. It's kind of like that movie, *Groundhog Day*. Every day, we get an opportunity to wake up fresh and clean and make a change, but we have to have faith and confidence in ourselves that we can do it."

For those who complete that journey, the greatest reward of all awaits.

"I have my life," Ahrens says. "I wake up every day and take a deep breath and know that I'm alive ... and I'm more alive than I have ever been." ■

Bill Sheridan's last magazine story was about Don Roberts '78, a television anchor in Virginia.



Ahrens (left) at 400-plus pounds and (above) after dropping 200 pounds and five X's from his shirt size.



DOG'S BEST FRIEND



Nancy Johnson '75, a canine foster mom, turns tales of abuse and neglect into stories with happy endings

By Emily Koch
Photos by Kanji Takeno

Sammy's family decided they were better off without him. They packed up a truck, chained him in the backyard and moved away. Alone, without food or water, Sammy withered. By the time the little Pekingese was rescued, he was blind.

"Doctors told us his condition could have been avoided," says Nancy Johnson '75, who is all too familiar with stories of abandoned pets like Sammy.

Johnson is a foster parent to Baltimore's most unwanted animals. To Sammy, she was a hero.

She welcomed him into her home and cared for him as if he were her own—slowly showing him how to get around her house, feeding and walking him, and adjusting her work schedule to administer the eye drops he so desperately needed.

"He was such a wonderful, gentle dog," she recalls wistfully. "But I knew it might be difficult to find a home for him."

Still, Johnson began searching for a permanent or "forever" home for Sammy. Five weeks went by without an inquiry. But good things come to those who wait, and Johnson eventually received an e-mail from a family experienced in caring for dogs with special needs.

"I knew right away they could give Sammy the love and care he needed," she says. Within days, the family had fallen in love and signed an adoption agreement. Now it was time for Johnson to say goodbye to the dog she had come to adore as her own.

"As long as I know they're going to good homes, it makes it easier. But it's still very hard to let go," she admits.

And sometimes she just can't.

“The first time I saw Collie, her face was covered with lacerations,” says Johnson, recalling the 10-year-old dog she fostered for several months and eventually adopted. “When a potential home was found for Collie, I was forced to think about letting her go. As the adoption day approached, I realized the home I most wanted for Collie was my own.”

Since Collie’s death less than two years later, Johnson has adopted two more dogs—Kirsi and Annabelle—and continues to foster other pets in need.

This is surprising behavior from someone who until recently considered herself a “cat person” and didn’t even have a dog of her own. It was walking in the park among other people’s pets that she met animal rescuer Sallyann Jennings—and found her life permanently changed.

“Sally asked me if I wanted to foster,” says the education major, who coordinates GED classes for the Center for Adult and Family Literacy, a division of the Community College of Baltimore County.

“At the time, my two kids were grown and in college, and I was living by myself in a condo with a cat. I thought, ‘Well, I can just give this a try. If I don’t like it, I don’t have to do it again.’”

That was about six years ago. Now, 34 foster dogs later, she is still bringing home canines that need foster care before they find a permanent human to look after them. “I just enjoyed the process, so after the first dog was adopted, I kept doing it.”

She fosters through area organizations like Recycled Love and Pet Rescue of Maryland. These groups find Baltimore’s most desperate animals—often at overburdened and underfunded animal shelters—and place them with foster parents to save them from euthanasia.

“A lot of the dogs we take in wouldn’t be put into traditional adoption programs because they’re too sick, too old or have handicaps of some kind. They aren’t considered ‘adoptable,’” Johnson explains.

Tell that to Cookie, a playful Pomeranian who suffered from Alopecia, a condition that results in significant fur loss. Her patches of baldness discouraged potential owners before they even had the chance to get to know her sweet, loving personality. “I guess for some people that was a

turnoff,” says Johnson, who fostered Cookie until she was adopted.

In cases like Cookie’s, rescue organizations finance all medical bills, but foster families provide the dogs with affection, food and shelter, and help rehabilitate the animals that have been severely mistreated or abused. “It can be a slow process for some of the dogs, but just letting them know that you love them and that you aren’t going to abuse them in any way is the first big step to finding them a forever home,” Johnson says.

To unearth the perfect adoptive family, rescue groups increasingly rely on social media and Internet ads, but

most permanent homes are still found through old-fashioned word-of-mouth. When someone expresses interest in adoption, the dog and family are introduced, references are checked and a home visit is conducted to guarantee a safe, secure environment for everyone involved.

“The most important thing we’re looking for is permanence and a stable home situation,” explains Johnson. “We want to ensure the dog gets adopted into a home where the family won’t turn around and decide it isn’t the right fit.”

This rarely happens. The majority of Johnson’s foster dogs live out the rest of their days in a comfortable, healthy home with loving people.

Happy endings inspired her to write *Recycled Love: Foster Dogs Have Tales Too*, a self-published book that chronicles the uplifting stories of 20 once neglected, now adopted dogs. With the help of Towson lecturer

Barbara Steele, who provided encouragement and editorial guidance, Johnson finished the book in 2008. Copies sold across the country have raised money for area rescue groups and expanded Johnson’s good will to four-legged friends everywhere.

“Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole,” wrote the late Roger Caras, a television personality, former president of the ASPCA and Baltimore native. Nancy Johnson is a believer—and her door is open to any dog in need.

“I’ll always foster as long as my life allows it,” she says. ■



Sammy is one foster dog Johnson kept for her own.

“We want to ensure the dog gets adopted into a home where the family won’t turn around and decide it isn’t the right fit.”

—Nancy Johnson '75

Emily Koch is an editor in University Relations.

Land of Opportunity

Wooded parcel means TU can have a field day conducting research in the great outdoors.



By Dan Fox
Photos by Kanji Takeno

Something is growing in the woods of Baltimore County. On 228 acres of protected land along the banks of the Gunpowder River, an innovative research center has taken root.

Conservation biology students splash through a shallow stream, breaking apart decayed logs as they hunt for salamanders. On the crest above them, a team of graduate students is just wrapping up a GIS survey of the hillside. In the nearby Gunpowder River, an ecology class follows their professor waist-deep into the flow, seining nets in hand. And back on the TU campus, 19 miles away, meteorology students track an approaching storm in real time.

Or at least, they will.

It's all part of the plan for the newly established Towson University Field Station, a research outpost for TU students and faculty that opened this spring. Located in Monkton, Md., the facility will be host to long-term ecological and biological studies, field work and hands-on research.

"We've been interested in obtaining a site like this since the early '90s," says Don Forester, TU professor emeritus and program director for the field station. "But we couldn't find anything that was the right size, with the right resources, in the right location." Until now.

Made possible by a partnership between TU and land owners Al '66 and Suzie Henneman, the field station opens avenues of natural research that students and faculty can't pursue on TU's suburban campus.

The site itself offers a diverse cross-section of Maryland geography and ecology. The Gunpowder River bisects the northern tip of the property, and low-lying wetlands punctuate the landscape. A steep elevation in the interior rises to one of the highest points in Baltimore County—700 feet. Throughout the property, mature hickory and oak trees tower overhead, providing thick shade to the wildlife below.

And every inch of it is protected from development by a conservation easement. Adjacent properties are under similar protections, including 1,000 acres of neighboring Gunpowder State Park.



Don Forester (above), professor emeritus and field station director, is excited by the prospect of studying how the land changes at the research outpost in five, 10, even 20 years down the road.



TU crews converted the rustic red building (above) into lab areas.

One research priority is to catalog the plants, animals and insects on the property, which include the Northern Dusky salamander (right).

Don Forester, field station director, and master's students Teal Richards (biology) and Matt Jennette (environmental sciences) arrived in April to survey the pond (far right).



“It’s not just a 228-acre research site,” says Forester. “It’s 228 acres in the middle of a much larger protected area. We’re incredibly lucky to have access to it.”

A budding partnership

In 2008, when Al Henneman purchased a disused, former summer camp that would eventually become the field station, he admits he had no idea where the venture would lead. But he’s not one to let a little ambiguity stand in his way.

“I’ve always been a bit impulsive,” he says. A retired Baltimore County high school teacher, Henneman operated the Worthington Valley Swim Club in Owings Mills, Md., for two decades. He purchased the ramshackle club in the early ’80s, working hard to make it a premier recreation center and profitable business. In many ways, he says, the challenge of the Monkton property reminded him of those early days with the swim club.

“The camp was really run down. But I’d been retired for a few years and knew I had to do something to keep busy. I’ve always loved the outdoors, so I thought, ‘This is it. This should be my next move.’”

While Henneman knows a thing or two about smart moves, he also knows that success isn’t always measured by the bottom line. He wanted his new endeavor to have an impact beyond the balance sheet.

“This time, I wasn’t looking to make a profit. I continued running day camps and scout camps in the summer. But what was I supposed to do for the other nine months of the year? I knew there had to be someone out there who could use the land, but I was at a loss for where to look.”

So Henneman contacted Towson about a possible partnership. Within days, senior members of TU’s administration were walking the grounds, and Don Forester had his field station.

Room to grow

Under the agreement, TU will operate the facility during the academic year. The Hennemans will continue to offer a stable of camps, scouting programs and outdoor education opportunities during the summer months.

In exchange for use of the land, the university invested \$100,000 to renovate the infrastructure and existing buildings—many of which Henneman has granted TU exclusive use.

“The facilities still look pretty rustic on the outside,” says Forester, referring to the humble architecture and traditional barn-red paint job of the buildings. “But inside they’re completely updated.”

TU Facilities Management crews worked for months to renovate the structures. The once-spartan classroom buildings (think camp-style wooden benches and not much else) have been refitted with new walls, windows and doors. New lab areas have been carved out of the current classroom spaces. A wet lab will support the study of aquatic life on site, while new equipment—microscopes, plant presses, a state-of-the-art projector for presentations—will serve as a toolkit for field work and class meetings alike. Plans are also under way to run fiber optic line to the site for high-speed Internet access.

Possibilities for research abound (see sidebar) but, according to Forester, a few activities will take priority. The Department of Biological Sciences will soon conduct a “bio blitz” to catalog the complement of plants, animals and insects on the property. The Department of Geography and Environmental Planning is expected to conduct a survey of the entire site using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping equipment.

While the sciences seem the obvious beneficiaries of the site, Forester is quick to point out that the real value of the field station comes from its interdisciplinary appeal.

“Initially the field station will be used for the [Jess and Mildred Fisher] College of Science and Mathematics. But eventually we hope for other colleges to get involved.” Forester envisions the College of Education promoting environmental education, the College of Liberal Arts conducting ongoing geography surveys, or

the College of Health Professions using the facility’s ropes course for kinesiology programs.

Even more exciting for Forester is the possibility of long-term studies. “The majority of research—the stuff we can do in a traditional lab—lasts no more than two years. As long as we renew this partnership, we have potential for longitudinal studies of five, 10, even 20 years. We’ll see how the environment is changing over time. That’s the kind of research that students and faculty don’t usually get

to undertake.” In fact, it’s the kind of research that most universities don’t get to undertake.”

Henneman, too, is excited by the long-term prospects.

“I hope this lasts a long time. Who knows what kind of discoveries they’ll make out there? Maybe they’ll find some new species.”

He laughs. “Hey, maybe they’ll even name it after me.” ■

Dan Fox is a senior editor in University Relations.

Out of the Woods

Proposals for study range from bees to deer to stars and weather

When the TU Field Station is running at full capacity, it will be a model of interdisciplinary education and research. Here’s what’s currently on the drawing board.



Buzzworthy. The property is home to a highly active honeybee colony, which until recently had been inhabiting the walls of the main building. The bees have been moved to a box hive, where the colony will be maintained and studied. An observation hive—a sort of ant farm for honeybees—is also in the works; it will allow students and faculty to see the inner workings of the hive and study things such as colony hierarchy and bee body language.

Why it’s important: Honeybee populations are in decline worldwide. Theories include parasites, pesticides and even EMF-emissions from electronic devices. The cause is still under debate, but there’s no question that the TU Field Station’s colony is thriving, making it an excellent candidate for research.



Starstruck. TU’s Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences is currently selecting a location for a permanent telescope installation at the field station.

Why it’s important: Being located far from urban centers and offering one of the highest elevations in the area, the field station’s night sky suffers little of the light pollution found closer to Baltimore and Towson. The pitch-black nights offer perfect opportunities for serious research and stargazing alike.



Weather, or not: Plans for the TU Field Station include the installation of a weather station with fiber optic Internet link. Students and faculty can monitor weather conditions in real time, without even leaving the TU campus.

Why it’s important: The field station is located in the heart of the Hereford Zone, a “microclimate” region in northern Maryland that experiences weather patterns drastically different from the surrounding area. A weather station at the site ensures not only greater understanding of weather patterns, but also more accurate reporting during severe weather events.



Oh deer. Construction of a 100-meter deer enclosure is under way. These tall fences restrict deer access to certain tracts of land. Without deer to consume low-growing vegetation, or understory, plant life flourishes and sets into motion great ecosystem changes within the enclosure. Says Forester, “It’s amazing how much growth occurs. It’s almost like seeing a rain forest sprout up right in front of you.”

Why it’s important: As urbanization pushes deer out of population centers and into shrinking forest boundaries, excessive grazing leads to the decimation of low-lying plant life. Enclosures prevent grazing and allow insight into what the forest floor should look like.



A vast array. Planning and site selection are in progress for a stock tank array for ecological research. The array will comprise a series of steel tanks, each capable of holding hundreds of gallons of water.

Why it’s important: Researchers interested in the effects of human impact on natural phenomena, such as acid rain on vegetation or road-salt runoff on aquatic life, can establish a tank array to test different variables in a more natural environment than a traditional lab.



Mark Becker '80, president of Georgia State University

Georgia State on his mind



Mark P. Becker '80 is leading Georgia's second-largest university to distinction.

BY JAN LUCAS

PHOTOS BY MEG BUSCEMA

Ask non-Georgians to name a public university in the Peach State, and they're most likely to point to the University of Georgia or Georgia Tech. But perceptions are shifting, says Mark Becker '80. What's more, they're shifting into high gear under his leadership.

Sworn in last year as Georgia State's seventh president, Becker is determined to see the Atlanta-based urban research institution—with enrollment exceeding 30,000—reach its potential.

It's a dream job for the internationally known biostatistician, public health researcher and academic leader, but it was not the career path he assumed he'd follow as a teenager in Havre de Grace, Md.

That career called for enlistment, not enrollment.

"My father was a soldier," Becker says. "I thought I would be one, too." His parents felt differently, however, and made the case for higher education. "They thought college was a better idea for me," he recalls.

Becker transferred to Towson in

1978 after completing two years of study at Harford Community College. He initially intended to major in physics, but opted for mathematics instead. It was a fortuitous move, he adds, recalling with gratitude the Department of Mathematics faculty—especially Martha Siegel, Ohoe Kim and Albert Chang—who recognized his aptitude and mentored him. "All three encouraged me to pursue graduate studies," he says.

Becker found love as well as academic success on campus. He met his future wife, mathematics major Laura Voisinet '81, in a probability theory class. "She sat in the front row, and I took my usual place near the back," he says. The former classmates started dating during his senior and her junior year, marrying in 1983 after Voisinet completed the first of two master's degrees.

After graduating magna cum laude from Towson, Becker enrolled in graduate school at the Pennsylvania State University, where he earned a doctorate in statistics in 1985.

The next 25 years saw him focused on research, teaching and academic administration—the rigorous, highly

competitive apprenticeship required for a chance at a university presidency.

He taught statistics at the University of Florida and was a post-doctoral fellow in biostatistics at the University of Washington before moving to the University of Michigan in 1989, where he rose through the ranks to professor of biostatistics and associate dean of academic affairs at the School of Public Health.

In 2001 Becker joined the University of Minnesota as dean of the School of Public Health, later taking on the added responsibilities of assistant vice president of Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response following the 2002/2003 global SARS outbreak.

"PUBLIC PERCEPTION HASN'T CAUGHT UP WITH THE REALITY OF HOW FAR WE'VE COME. BUT IT WILL."

—MARK BECKER '80

Four years later the University of South Carolina beckoned with its second-highest administrative position: executive vice president for academic affairs and provost.

It was an enormous undertaking, with responsibility for developing and implementing academic policy, as well as coordinating teaching, research and public service programs.

Georgia State entered the picture in 2008 when it launched a search for a president who could continue the work of taking the institution from a somewhat underappreciated commuter campus to its rightful place as one of the nation's great educational assets.

community needs from the outset.

The university traces its roots to 1913, when Georgia Tech established an evening business school for working adults in downtown Atlanta.

The school, operated out of rented space at several locations, flourished in the rapidly growing state capital. In 1947 it graduated to "Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia," followed in 1955 by the "Georgia State College of Business Administration." Only six years later the state's Board of Regents recognized its enlarged mission with a yet another name: Georgia State College.

In 1969 the college, which had by then added several colleges as well

producing original scholarship."

Students are changing too, Becker adds. Once composed almost entirely of nontraditional-age commuters, Georgia State is now attracting recent high school graduates for whom it's a first-choice school.

"We enrolled 3,000 freshman last fall—traditional freshmen of increasing quality," he says. "This generation wants what we have to offer and likes being in an urban environment."

They want to live near school as well. "We have 3,000 beds on campus and a waiting list of 700 students," Becker says. The university will soon open a Greek townhome complex with an additional 300 beds, and



BECKER STRESSES CHILDHOOD LITERACY AND READS TO PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ON CAMPUS AS PART OF THE FERST FOUNDATION'S "THE BATTLE OF THE CEOS," A FRIENDLY COMPETITION AMONG GEORGIA EXECUTIVES TO RAISE MONEY FOR CHILDHOOD LITERACY.

By then Mark Becker was up for the challenge. He admired Georgia State's commitment to high-quality education, its relatively new role as an urban research university and its vibrant diversity.

But the evolution was far from over. For years admission policies had offered access, but too many incoming students struggled with college-level work. Retention suffered. The university needed academic resources and opportunities for student and faculty researchers. Its sprawling campus was trying to catch up with the kinds of services and amenities long taken for granted at more traditional schools.

Although its origins were modest, one look at Georgia State's history shows it addressed important

as master's and doctoral programs, attained full-fledged university status. Fifteen years ago the University System of Georgia designated Georgia State as one of only four public research institutions in the state.

Mark Becker plans to continue the work begun by his predecessor—and to put his own stamp on Georgia State's steady rise to distinction.

The 1995 mission change was transformative, he points out. "Becoming an urban research university changed how the faculty allocated time and effort. Faculty members have always cared about teaching, but now there's a significant research expectation.

"That changed how Georgia State recruits new faculty, he adds. "We're seeking people with a passion for

officials remain alert for opportunities to add more housing.

Students also wanted a football program, and Georgia State added the sport to its roster of 16 varsity teams not long before Becker's arrival. The Panthers, coached by former Baltimore Colt Bill Curry, will play their first game September 2 at the Georgia Dome. In 2012 the team will join Towson in Colonial Athletic Association play.

Urban campuses have to integrate into the neighborhood, which can make expansion challenging, Becker says. "We identify the projects we want to do, then look for opportunities to acquire land or repurpose an existing structure." He notes that the university recently dedicated a new

Honoring one generation, encouraging the next

FIRST RECIPIENTS OF THE MILDRED T. BECKER SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED



Robert Baldwin



Sara Miller

Two mathematics majors have been named as the first to receive the Mildred T. Becker Scholarships. Beginning this fall, seniors Robert Baldwin and Sara Miller will use the award to further their education at Towson.

Baldwin and Miller are Honors College students and Top 10% Scholars; both have 3.98 GPAs.

Mark Becker '80 and Laura Voisinet '81 established the scholarship endowment at Towson in 2006 to honor his mother and to encourage promising mathematics students. Recipients must be juniors or seniors with a record of academic accomplishment and be considering graduate study in mathematics or teaching high school mathematics.

Miller says she was delighted to receive the letter informing her that she'd been selected to receive the scholarship

for her final year at Towson. The Kingsville, Md., resident praises the Department of Mathematics, not only for the excellent academics, but also for its accessible and helpful faculty.

"The award definitely will come in handy," she says.

She has been accepted as an undergraduate researcher at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh this summer, where she'll work on mathematical science projects. Although unsure about what lies beyond commencement, she says she's considering graduate school.

In addition to helping talented students at their alma mater, Becker says he and his wife sought to pay tribute to his mother, whom he describes as "moral, hard-working and committed to the success of her children."

When the teenage Becker balked at going to college, she encouraged him to give higher education a try. That motherly nudge helped launch a career that has taken Mark Becker to heights neither he nor his mom could have imagined back then.

"I haven't been out of school since age five," he says. "Education is my life."

Jan Lucas



Located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia State enrolls more than 30,000 students.

science research and education building made possible by a land swap.

In the end, it's all about students: what they take away from Georgia State and what they can give back to the state of Georgia as citizens and workers.

"Georgia State is getting bigger and better," Becker emphasizes. "Our average freshman SAT score has risen 87 points since 1995, while over the past six years alone our freshman class has grown by more than 1,000 students. And this January *The Education Trust* lauded us for significant gains in our minority graduation rate and for eliminating the so-called achievement gap."

But, like his colleagues at other public universities that are grappling with budget reductions and the need to raise tuition, Becker is deeply concerned about continued access to higher education.

"People must have the opportunity to develop their talents, so that they may better contribute to the work force and to the community," he says.

He notes that 74 percent of Georgia State freshmen have a HOPE Scholarship, a program that enables any qualified Georgia high school graduate to attend one of the state's public

colleges or universities tuition-free.

Even so, students continue to rely on loans, Pell Grants and other forms of financial aid to help pay for their education. "HOPE Scholarships have kept high-ability students in Georgia," Becker explains. "We have to work with HOPE recipients to ensure that they maintain the 3.0 grade point average required to keep the scholarship."

Despite these and other concerns, Becker exudes confidence about Georgia State's future.

"Public perception hasn't caught up with the reality of how far we've come," he says. "But it will.

"I believe Georgia State has unlimited potential as it emerges as one of the nation's premier urban research universities.

"We're on the move, and we're not going to stop." ■

Jan Lucas is an associate director in University Relations.

Super Men

Two former **Tiger** football players are now Saints and winners of **Super Bowl XLIV**



Joe Vitt, Saints assistant head coach/linebackers coach, was a member of the undefeated 1974 TU football team that was inducted into the TU Hall of Fame in 2004.



Jermon Bushrod, the Saints starting offensive left tackle, was a four-year starter for the Tigers and an All-Atlantic 10 pick in 2006.

BY GINNY COOK

Photos by
Michael Herbert
and Kanji Takeno

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT JOE VITT

There is no denying it. Joe Vitt is, well, a regular joe.

Sure he's part of the 2010 Super Bowl winning team. But the assistant head coach/linebackers coach of the New Orleans Saints has always remembered his Towson football roots. For five years, he has hosted an annual crab feast to benefit Tiger football. "This year I'll be bringing the Lombardi Trophy with me," he says.

Vitt can rattle off the names of teammates, their positions and key plays from 36 years ago as easily as if he were reciting his ABCs. It's all part of his philosophy of staying grounded, being humble, working hard and putting team first.

Just a lucky guy

Despite more than 30 years in the pros, Vitt still has a crackerjack memory when it comes to TU football. Mention that and he's quick to say, "Here's the deal, and it's something we relay to the Saints football team. When you share special accomplishments, you never forget that bond."

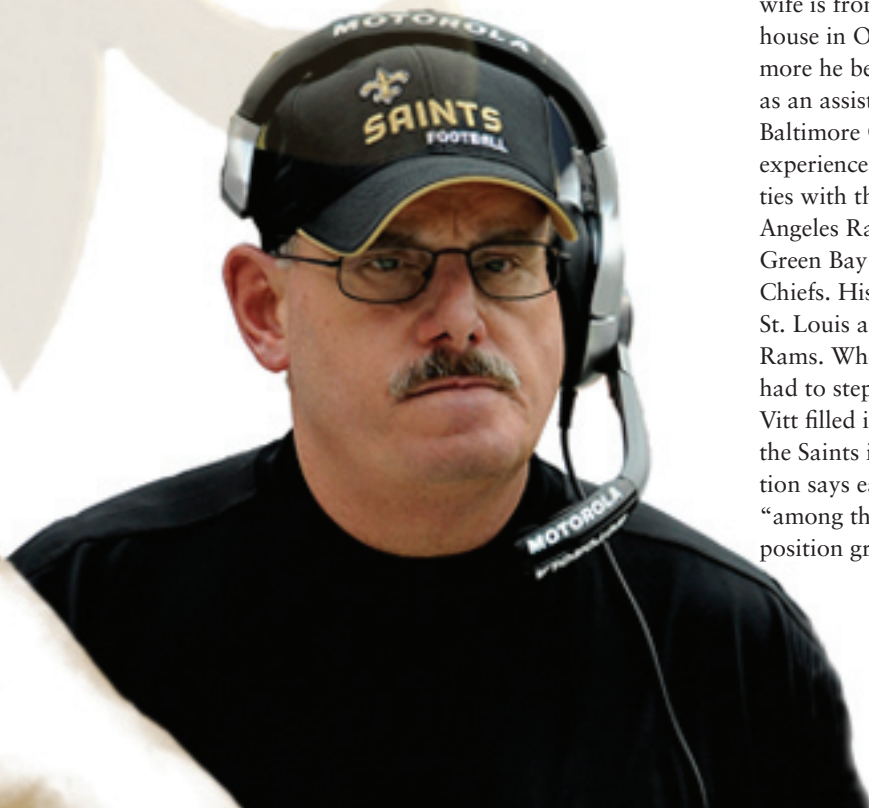
He and other Tiger teammates have attended each other's weddings, christenings and other events marking life's milestones. "Now at 55, you are on the back-nine of life and can see the clubhouse," he says. "But there are at least six guys—six friends—around to be your pall bearers. I feel pretty lucky."

1974's perfect season

In 1974, TU football enjoyed a season of gridiron greatness. The team played 10 games and recorded 10 wins with three shutouts. Vitt, then a freshman linebacker, says, "I got a lot of playing time because Jim Sandusky '75 broke his arm." The Tigers were anything but a shoo-in, however. "No one gave us a chance," he notes. "But we were tough, and had a hard-nosed defense. We worked together and found the will to win. In fact, we didn't just win; we blew the other teams away. We had scores. There were no close games. And no one thought we could do it."

Vitt in charge

The Saints Super Bowl victory against Indianapolis was especially sweet for Vitt, who still has a soft spot for the Baltimore/Maryland area. "My wife is from Towson and we have a house in Ocean City," he says. What's more he began his pro career in 1979 as an assistant strength coach with the Baltimore Colts. From there he gained experience and increased responsibilities with the Seattle Seahawks, Los Angeles Rams, Philadelphia Eagles, Green Bay Packers and Kansas City Chiefs. His next stop, in 2004, was St. Louis as linebackers coach for the Rams. When Head Coach Mike Martz had to step down because of illness, Vitt filled in for 11 games. He joined the Saints in 2006 and the organization says each year his unit has ranked "among the Saints' most productive position groups."



The Saints formula

What makes a winner? “Individual accomplishments are nothing,” Vitt says. “Our togetherness, our unselfishness starts with Sean [Payton, head coach] and Mickey Loomis [executive vice president/general manager] drafting players of high character.” From there, Vitt points to a locker room filled with rapport. “While everyone might not agree, I believe team chemistry is key to success,” Vitt says, “and the Saints have it.”

A metaphorical guy

Football coaches are statisticians, with figures such as passing completions, tackles, running yards and interceptions filling their heads and clipboards. While Vitt talks that talk, he also compares coaching his players to “cultivating a garden that must be strengthened, and watered, and cared for if it is going to bloom.”

The iconic onside kick

The Saints began the second half of the Super Bowl with a startling onside kick, which says Vitt “was something we worked on all week.” Practice didn’t make it perfect, however, as Vitt adds Thomas Morstead’s onside kick in the game was his worst ever. The good news was, “my players saw him making a cross-body kick all week, so when we found out we were going with that play, it was a no-brainer. We knew where the ball would end up.” And for anyone who was not part of the record audience who saw the game on television, the Saints Chris Reis recovered the ball. The possession led to a touchdown, putting the Saints ahead for the first time in the game.

Super Bowl jitters?

None. “I get nervous every week before games because I want to get things right,” Vitt says. “But the Super Bowl was the least nervous time ever for me. The players were physically, mentally and emotionally ready. Besides, as a coach you want to be calm and offer nothing but encouragement.”

Team building blocks

Teams need trust. Vitt says, “Our program is built on trust. Trust the team; trust that if we fall behind you can persevere; trust that if you are in the lead, you can maintain the lead.”



Kissing the Vince Lombardi Trophy

“Really?” says Vitt, when told of the photo. “I do not remember that at all. What I do remember is getting on the team bus at the end of the game to ride back to the hotel. There was a cooler of beer in one seat. Sean [Payton] was sitting across from me. And I remember wishing that ride would never end.”

What’s next?

“Defend the title,” he says. “The Saints won one Super Bowl and we’re the only team that can do it again.”

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT JERMON BUSHROD

At 6' 5", 315 pounds, Jermon Bushrod '07 dwarfed just about every other human in the Towson Center last March. And it's a good thing too, because everyone wanted a piece of him.

Parents thrust pint-sized children at his side, recording the moment on cameras or cell phones. Older fans, too, wanted pictures with him or appeared with posters, footballs, programs and napkins for him to autograph.

Bushrod, who came back to TU for a basketball halftime celebration in his honor, responded with the characteristic humility and grace he always displayed as a TU student-athlete. He smiled and posed and signed, saying, “It’s a blessing to be in this situation.”

That is his off-field persona.

On the field, his height, weight and quickness on his feet make him an almost-impenetrable human wall who guards the quarterback’s blind side. He is a barrier that opposing defensive ends find difficult to penetrate.

Triple player

He played his first football game in middle school. A few years later he was a three-sport standout, playing football, basketball and baseball for the Foxes at King George High School in Virginia where he earned an honorable mention all-state selection at offensive tackle. He helped the basketball team win a district championship and led them to the regionals. Bushrod was also named honorable mention All State for the baseball team.

The Tiger

A four-year starter at Towson, he was voted an All-Atlantic 10 selection at left tackle in 2006 and excelled in both pass protection and run blocking. He earned third-team all-league honors as a junior and recorded nine blocks that resulted in touchdowns. He posted 72 knockdown blocks and garnered third-team All-Atlantic 10 honors as a sophomore. One game memory he cherishes is the 35-31 win over Delaware in 2005, a nail-biter in which the lead changed hands four times during the last 10 minutes. One thing he didn't like—the yellow football helmets. “I always wanted the black ones, but we didn't get them until after I graduated,” he says.





The size and speed of Jermon Bushrod '07 kept opposing pass rushers away from his quarterback.

Riding the pine

In April 2007, the New Orleans Saints chose Bushrod in the fourth round of the NFL draft, making him the Tigers' highest NFL draft pick. He signed a three-year contract but as backup to All-Pro left tackle Jammal Brown, Bushrod saw little action in 2007 and 2008 other than a few plays on special teams. To stay sharp while waiting on the sidelines, Bushrod relied on his work ethic. "My motivation was to keep focusing on goals, to keep trying to be the best I could be," he says. "You pay attention to detail and that is your contribution to the team's success."

Pseudo-rookie season

It happened in a snap. The Saints' All-Pro left tackle Jammal Brown was out of the lineup, injured in practice. Bushrod was in. He shrugs when asked how he performed, or reminded that the Saints had one of the top offensive lines in the NFL in 2009. "All 11 guys were doing their assignments. I just go out and get the job done," Bushrod says. But that job has been more than impressive. He helped keep quarterback Drew Brees from being sacked in regular season games against the Giants, Cowboys and Patriots,

and in the NFC championship game against the Vikings, denying "sack machine" Jared Allen a chance to tackle his quarterback.

Good-luck grub

Although not as storied as Notre Dame football players slapping the "Play Like a Champion Today" sign before each game, Bushrod has his own game-day tradition—a pre-game meal. "I have a Belgian waffle," he says. "It's something I like to do." The menu changes slightly for night games. "Then it's a Belgian waffle for breakfast and steak and potatoes—mashed potatoes," he emphasizes, "for dinner."

Biggest surprise as an NFL-er

"The talent," Bushrod says. "Week in and week out, I am surprised at the size and the speed of some players I face on the field."

The on-side kick

"Coach had talked about the onside kick all week, but when I knew it was coming, I was biting my fingernails," Bushrod says. "I understood that if it didn't work they would get the ball back in great field position. But we

executed like we envisioned and I was just waiting to get back on the field to score."

Post-game healing

After brushing off the last bit of confetti and riding in the New Orleans parade to celebrate the Saints Super Bowl win, Bushrod took a rest. Week after week of bodies crunching on the field leaves a punishing toll. "I need to get my body up underneath me," he says. "Playing in the NFL is like playing two back-to-back college seasons."

What's next?

Bushrod doesn't mention taking vacations or getting the prized Super Bowl ring. He is already thinking about training for next year. "I'll get back to the weight room, but I'll be starting slowly," he says. "Conditioning is key. I don't want to show up out of shape."

An unselfish player

Bushrod has always been involved in the community, volunteering at NAACP events. "Anytime I get time off, I make visits to hospitals and schools and whatever else the Saints arrange," he says. Bushrod reiterates that he "feels blessed and is happy to be able to give back." ■

Ginny Cook is the editor of *Towson*.



from the

alumni president



Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I will be serving you this year as president of the Towson University Alumni Association. As a seasoned member of the Board of Directors, I am familiar with our successes and challenges and am committed to representing your interests. My involvement with the TU community over the years includes being a member of the Alpha Omega Lambda Fraternity, which celebrated its 40th reunion last year. In addition to lifelong friendships, this group makes a difference to students.

Many years ago, the fraternity established the Joseph Ferrante Memorial Scholarship Fund to support a junior lacrosse player who, based on the coach's recommendation, is the team's unsung hero. Every year, at the last home game, we proudly walk onto the lacrosse field to make the presentation. The moment is both bittersweet and beautiful, but the scholarship will always honor Joe's memory, even after the brothers who remember him are gone.

With the ever-increasing costs associated with a college education, I challenge you to give back to Towson. Your generosity can change the lives of students.

Please use the envelope inside this magazine to make your contribution. No amount is too small. On behalf of the students, I thank you in advance for your consideration.

I look forward to serving you this year, to connecting with old friends and meeting new ones. You can e-mail me at alumni@towson.edu if you have any comments or suggestions.

Lou Dollenger '74
 President
 Towson University Alumni Association

Meet the Board

THE TOWSON UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES THE 2010-2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

Lou Dollenger '74
 Lance Johnson '93
 Fran Bond '55/'60
 Keith Ewancio '94/'07

President
 Vice President
 Treasurer
 Secretary

At Large Members:

Ken Abrams '92
 Darcy Accardi '06
 Frank Berry '74/'85
 Donnice Brown '91/'94
 Andre Cooper '87
 Patrick Dieguez '07
 Teresa Eaton '00
 Barbara Eckley '77
 Scott Hargest '79
 Beverly Norwood '68
 Cathy Plakatoris '83
 John Raley '80
 Mark Rapson '93
 Barbara Shifflett '79
 Bill Stetka '77
 Bill Wood '87

College of Business and Economics

Lisa Michocki '06

College of Education

Karen Blair '74

College of Fine Arts and Communication

Chris A'Hern '94

College of Health Professions

Diana Ramsay '78

College of Liberal Arts

Gerry Gaeng '81

Fisher College of Science and Mathematics

David Lucantoni '76

Past President:

Kim Fabian '88

Ex-Officio Members:

Robert L. Caret, president
 Gary Rubin, vice president, University Advancement
 Lori Armstrong, associate vice president, Alumni Relations
 & executive director, Alumni Association



The City of Angels



< The Los Angeles Alumni Dinner

Los Angeles, home of Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Griffith Observatory and Hollywood, the "entertainment capital of the world," is also the place of residence for many Towson University graduates. Some of them gathered with TU President Bob Caret for good times at the Water Grill in Los Angeles on Feb. 3.

Life's A Beach



< Santa Monica Alumni Reception

In Santa Monica, Calif., folks enjoy swimming and surfing at the beach, outdoor volleyball and the attraction-packed Pier. There are art galleries and shopping. And this February, there was an event at the Jonathan Club where TU alumni and friends visited with TU President Bob Caret and Vice President Gary Rubin '69 to discuss memories and recent highlights of Towson University.

1 Bob Caret, Larry Gould Jr. and Shea Welsh '89 2 Pepper Mintz '89 and Martin Kruger 3 Joe Heidelmaier '77 and DonnaAnn Ward '96 4 Suzanne Burke '80 and David Burke 5 Jeremy Gabriel '99, Erika Gabriel, Bill Horten '82 and Cynthia Fary '03 6 Gary Rubin '69 and Chris Devlin '90 7 Amanda Sutherland and John Kassir '81 8 Michael Armstrong '05/'07, Brianna Armstrong '05 and Doni Ross '06

Diamonds and Crabs

Sarasota, Florida Reception >

Take me out to the ballgame as the Orioles defeat the Tampa Bay Rays in Sarasota, their new home for spring training. But forget the peanuts. Instead, how about some crabs? The Alumni Association hosted a crab feast at the Ed Smith Stadium Picnic Area for more than 100 alumni and friends on March 3. A special thanks to Peace River Seafood for serving up the super Maryland-style blue crabs. Mark your calendars for 2011 once the Orioles release their spring training schedule.



1 Jeff Riddle '75, Gary Tarr '74, John Gilliss '74, Frank Mezzanotte '73, Steve Willett '79 and Lou Dollenger '74

2 Carmen Alvarez '84 and Sonia Velasco '88 3 Iris Berger '63 and Bernie Berger 4 Jessica Ritter '96 and Matt Ritter

5 Michael Murphy, Cheryl Murphy '78 and Nicolas Murphy 6 Tom Harrison '76, Kathy Harrison '77 and Bob Caret

7 Lori Armstrong, Oriole Bird, John Gilliss '74 and Frank Mezzanotte '73



Fun in the Sun



< Naples, Florida Alumni Reception

Last summer *U.S. News & World Report* selected Naples as one of America's "10 Best Undervalued Places to Live." So what better place to gather with TU alumni? On March 1, President Bob Caret sought out TU graduates near the white sand beaches and warm climate of Naples, Florida.

Lunch and Learn



< Charlestown/Oakcrest Alumni Reception

Residents of Charlestown and Oak Crest Villages spent a relaxing afternoon on March 18. There was a luncheon and discussions led by Ray Lorion, dean of the College of Education and Nadia Nasr, archivist at TU's Cook Library. Special thanks to Louise Fitzell '38 for being the Charlestown liaison to the TU Alumni Association.

1 Doug Dollenberg, Molly Shock '75 and Bob Caret 2 John Richardson '67, Bobbi Richardson '68 and Gary Rubin '69
 3 Lou Dollenger '74, Patricia Raco '91, Marlene Oshry '63 and Sam Oshry 4 Gayle Webb and Donald Webb '54
 5 Mary Marks and Louise Fitzell '38 6 Wrenda DeHaven '73, Billy Hauserman and Margaret Schwanebeck '31
 7 Mary Flanery '49, Sylvia Butler '49/'68 and James Butler

A Re-laxing Event

Bull roast for men's and women's lacrosse >

The Men's and Women's lacrosse teams and the Alumni Association couldn't have picked a better day than April 3 to host the annual bull roast. Earlier in the day both teams defeated Delaware—the Tiger women won 17-8 and the men won 9-7. Then it was on to a celebration to benefit TU's lacrosse programs.



1 Vinnie and Laura Mezzanotte 2 Peggy Ardolino '75 and Joe Ardolino'74 3 Lou Dollenger '74, the Easter Bunny and Nancy Bumgartner '77 4 Mike King '74, Sal Maffei '76, Steve Willett '79, Ron Brown '76, Frank Berry '74 and Jeff Riddle '75 5 Justin Riefner, Warren Riefner '77, Phil Ross '77 and Jim Williamson 6 Kathy Yeager, Jeff Yeager and Paul Markey enjoyed coloring their Easter bags.



Special Edition



< **Towerlight Alumni Reunion**

Former *Towerlight* editors, writers, photographers and other staffers gathered April 10 to celebrate the Lorraine Mayers Scholarship Fund. Mayers, who spent 30 years as secretary for *The Towerlight* before retiring in 2005, was an office fixture whom many Towerlighters remember fondly. The \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded annually to a student who will work on the paper for at least a semester.

1 Angela Davids '95 with her husband Lyle Hein and their children Laney and Gavin 2 Jennifer Lehman '04, Lewis Poole '04, Rachel King '06/'09 and Cailin McGough '04 3 Donna DeMarco '96, Dean Storm '96, Nicholas DiMarco '09
 4 Brian Stelter '07, Eric Gazzillo and Lauren Slavin 5 *Towerlight* alumni

Connecting

Towson University Executive Club >

Members of the Towson University Executive Club gathered at the home of TU President Robert L. Caret and Liz Zoltan on April 14. The event marked the beginning of the 2010 membership cycle and celebrated the camaraderie and business successes of alumni. For more information on the Towson University Executive Club, please call Alumni Relations, 410-704-2234 or (toll-free) 1-800-887-8152.



1 Les Ireland '86 and Gary Rubin '69 2 Marcia Zercoe '83, Liz Zoltan and David Nevins '76 3 Paul Wiedefeld '79 and Marcia Wiedefeld 4 Bob Caret, Cathy Williams '85 and Jack Williams '87 5 Ron Brown '76, Jodi Dinkin and Daniel Dinkin '88 6 Victor Brick '75/'82, Lynne Brick '78, Scott Hargest '79 and Carol Coughlin '82 7 William Jones '77, Susan Hunt and Barry Hunt '72



Growing a university

THE CAMPAIGN FOR TOWSON



from the

campaign chair

We are in the home stretch. In just one short year, we'll be concluding Growing a University—The Campaign for Towson, and sharing with you all of the wonderful things that gifts to Towson University have and will accomplish. We have real momentum, and are optimistic we will exceed our goal to bring \$50 million in scholarships, endowment, faculty enrichment and partnerships to the Towson University community.

There is still time for you to be part of Towson's success. Your gift makes a strong statement that you believe in quality, public, higher education. It says you believe that Towson University is of great value, not just to the Baltimore region and Maryland, but also to the country and beyond.

Towson graduates are everywhere, accomplishing great things through their careers and passion for business, education, health care, art, science and public service. Flipping through the pages of this magazine, keep in mind that every one of these successful TU alumni started as a student.

I am proud of Towson and its achievements and growth thus far, and I ask you to join us as we continue to grow our university.

Thank you.

Molly F. Shock '75
Campaign Chair
Growing a University—
The Campaign for Towson

Success is in Sight

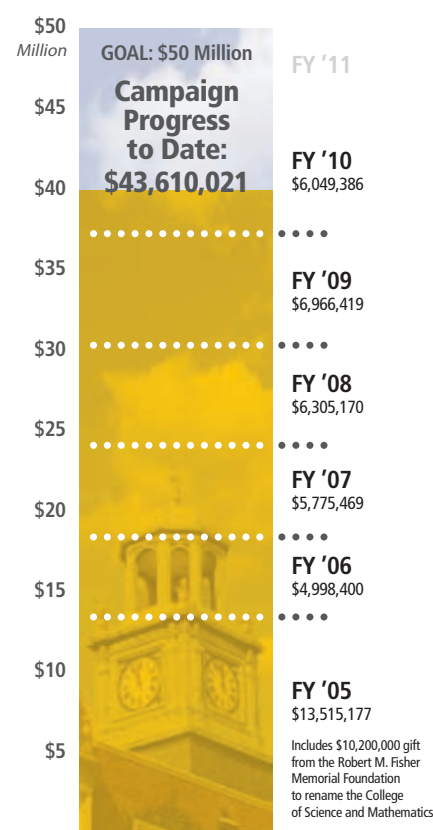
\$43.6 MILLION AND COUNTING

On July 1, we mark the start of the new fiscal year, and the beginning of the final year of *Growing a University—The Campaign for Towson*. We have worked to gain the support of a broad segment of Towson alumni, parents and friends, and we are succeeding. Your gifts to Towson University have been transformational—from ensuring that students can afford classes to providing funds for crucial programs. But we are not done. We are close to our goal, but must continue our progress to get there, and your gifts can help build and grow Towson in ways we can only imagine.

From purchasing a brick at the Auburn House to naming a classroom to naming a college, you can leave your mark on Towson while giving strong support to the university's students, faculty and programs.

Says TU President Robert L. Caret, "There has never been a better time to support our students, faculty and programs, and to make an incredible difference for Towson with a leadership gift to the university."

Make a gift today.



Preserving Judaica and Asian Art

FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL BENEFIT FROM TWO GIFTS IN KIND



The late Alvin S. Mintzes

Not all gifts to Towson University arrive as monetary donations. Thanks to the generosity of donors, many items have found a home at Towson, including books, sports equipment, record collections, sculptures, art, historical artifacts and more. Now TU adds two more exceptional donations to its roster—collections of Judaica and Asian art.

With the express intent to educate and inspire faculty, students, renowned scholars and the community, Elaine S. Mintzes of Baltimore has planned a charitable bequest of a

have been chosen to be stewards of these artifacts that will encourage respect, honor and celebration of the Jewish faith," says Gary N. Rubin '69, vice president for university advancement.

Oliver and Pei-Hwa Foo have been collecting ancient ceramics, furniture and other works of art from periods as early as the 6th century Tang Dynasty. Recognizing the important work that the Asian Arts and Culture Center does to preserve and promote Asian arts, they have given a part of their collection to Towson for study and exhibition.



The generosity of the Foes and the Mintzes adds Asian art and Judaica to Towson's collections.

collection of nearly 100 items of Judaica to the Towson University Foundation. She has also bequeathed a fund for the display and maintenance of the collection.

Once received by the Towson University Foundation, these bequests will be known as the Alvin S. and Elaine S. Mintzes Judaica Collection. Mrs. Mintzes and her late husband, Alvin S. Mintzes, are recognized for their service, philanthropy and deep commitment to humanitarian efforts. Many of the items in the varied collection were given to the couple to honor their generosity.

The collection includes several mezuzot, Torah crowns and sculpture, rare books and artwork. "Towson University is proud to

Items in the collection range from a pair of 19th-century Famille Rose hexagonal-shaped enameled lanterns to a carved bowl from the Ming Dynasty, 15th century.

"We were so pleased to be able to give these items to the Asian Arts and Culture Center, which has done a beautiful job of bringing the art to the community," says Mrs. Foo.

The Foo's gift is an important contribution to Towson's collections, notes Suewhei Shieh, director of the Asian Arts and Culture Center. "The range and quality of the items the Foes have given to TU is significant," she says. "We are so grateful that they wished to share this collection with us and the present and future patrons of the Asian Arts and Culture Center."

Powerful Ingredients

MCCORMICK'S LINKS TO TU BENEFIT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Since 1889, McCormick & Company has been a fixture in the Baltimore area, producing spices, flavorings and other products that are sold in more than 100 countries worldwide. But the company, now headquartered in Sparks, Md., is also a seasoned veteran of philanthropy, giving back to its neighbor, Towson University.

Most recently, McCormick partnered with TU's College of Business and Economics with a leadership gift to support the Business Writing Assistance Lab. The lab enhances

the communication and critical thinking skills of TU's business students.

In addition to improving student's writing skills, McCormick has offered

internships to TU students for years. Being an intern not only fulfills a graduation requirement but also gives students the opportunity to gain real-world experience and build their resumes. Many of these internships have turned into full-time positions after graduation.

TU alumni who have found employment at McCormick include F. James McGrath '79, vice president of human relations and a member of the CBE Advisory Board. "Towson has changed dramatically since the '70s when I attended," he says. "I was a non-traditional student, and experienced the campus differently than most. Since I've been on the CBE Board, I've been involved at Towson in ways

I could never have been when I attended. I'm so happy to be reconnecting with TU."

Even TU's President, Robert L. Caret has ties to the spice company, working there as a chemist early in his career.

Now McCormick's Chairman, President and CEO Alan Wilson has begun forging a connection with the university. He volunteered for CBE's "The Associate," based on the popular television show, "The Apprentice." Now in its sixth year, TU's version of the competition allows business majors to show-

case their skills for Baltimore's business elite.

Wilson served as "Donald Trump," and is part of a panel that critiques the research and presentations of each team of business students, ultimately deciding who is fired and who comes

back the following week. "It's a little... different, to actually look at somebody and say, 'You're fired,'" Wilson says. "But being exposed to the students and their energy and strengths has been really rewarding."

The winner of this year's Associate competition will receive a position with McCormick & Company, a boon in difficult economic times.

"We are fortunate to have a truly engaged partner in McCormick & Company," says CBE Dean Shohreh Kaynama. "The time, leadership, energy and insight McCormick's representatives provide has a positive impact on the entire CBE family of students, faculty and staff."



A group of Associate competitors

WAYS OF GIVING

Contribute to an existing scholarship. Help make a Towson University education possible for a current student. From a financial aid award, such as the Towson Promise Scholarship, to a scholarship designed for specific majors or interests, there are many ways to support students who are studying at Towson.

Make an unrestricted gift.

The University Enhancement Fund at Towson is used to support the priorities of the university.

Create a named fund in your area of interest, or take advantage of our many naming opportunities.

Honor a loved one by naming a classroom, lab or any one of many options on TU's campus.

Plan for Towson's future by making an estate gift to the Towson University Foundation.

Bequests, beneficiary designations and gift annuities are popular gift options. Start your planning at www.towson.edu/giftplanning.

For more information on ways you can make a difference, visit www.towson.edu/supportTU or contact the Development Office toll-free at 1-866-301-3375 or towsonfund.edu.

Towson Needs You

HELP TODAY'S STUDENTS BECOME TOMORROW'S ALUMNI



Decreasing state support means making some hard choices. Over the last 30 years, state support has been reduced by almost 50 percent. While trimming and streamlining has led to greater efficiency in what we do at Towson University, it has also meant making cuts to the programming and activities that contribute to our success. Towson now increasingly relies on individual contributions to maintain excellence.

We need you to help us support the people and programs that are important to you. Student aid is needed now, more than ever. Requests for aid continue to rise as students and their families feel the effects of the economy.

According to Vince Pecora, director of financial aid, more than 68 percent of Towson's full-time undergraduate students receive some sort of aid from Towson (from federal need-based aid to tuition waivers), and 46 percent of that same group receive student loans.

In response to growing financial need, the Towson Promise Scholarship was established in 2009 to provide a source of immediate support to students facing financial challenges. Towson has promised to do all it can to ensure that students are able to continue their education, but we can't keep that promise without your help. Make a gift. Help today's Towson students become tomorrow's proud alumni.

Giving to Towson can take but a moment—the impact can last a lifetime. Visit www.towson.edu/supportTU to make your gift.

CALLING ALL GOLDEN TIGER SOCIETY MEMBERS

The Golden Tiger Society recognizes the loyalty and commitment of donors who have given annually to the Towson University Foundation for five or more consecutive fiscal years. The support of our Golden Tigers enables TU to accomplish great things. Don't forget to make your gift by June 30 to keep your membership alive. For more information, visit www.towson.edu/goldentiger.

Stewardship Update

FIND OUT WHAT YOUR FUNDS ACCOMPLISH

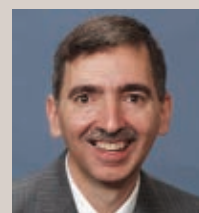


Destiny Whitehead
Class of 2013

The Ronald E. Garrison Memorial Scholarship

will support Destiny Whitehead during her sophomore year.

"I chose to attend Towson based on the cultural diversity of the university, as well as its high academic standards. As a criminal justice major, I plan to work for the FBI or DEA to help protect people and to combat the manufacturing of illegal drugs," she says. "You have made such a great impact within my educational career because of your generosity. Thank you!"



Seth Hammer
Professor,
Accounting

The Accounting Faculty Professional Development Fund

helped keep accounting faculty at the top of their fields by providing funds for research, travel to professional conferences and more. "By providing funding to attend a national conference, you have allowed me to showcase my research and share in learning the latest developments from scholars in my field," says Seth Hammer, professor. "During these difficult economic times, the resources provided have been invaluable to our faculty's continued growth and maintenance of professional skills. Thank you."

Obituary



Dan L. Jones, former provost and interim president of Towson University died May 13, 2010 of sepsis. He was 72.

Jones' career at Towson spanned four decades beginning in 1966 after having earned his bachelor's and doctoral degrees in English from the University of Utah. He moved through the ranks at Towson, becoming chair of the English Department and interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

When the university needed him most, Jones presided over TU bridging the gap of the presidency for more than 14 months until June 2003. He demonstrated steady leadership and brought a sense of calm and healing to the university at a time of uncertainty.

A poet and professor, Jones was known as "the writing guru of Towson University." Some of his many contributions to Towson included the development of more than 16 interdisciplinary programs and the expansion of the English curriculum to create the Master's in Professional Writing program. One of his favorite metaphors for the university's exceptional value was that Towson University is "a Mercedes at the cost of a Chevy."

He is survived by his wife, Daisy Regina Johnson; two sons, Kirsch Marlow Jones of Baltimore and William Richard Jones of Catonsville; two sisters and two grandsons.

To contribute to the Dan Jones Award for Writing Excellence, contact Tracey Ford, 410-704-3729 or tford@towson.edu.

Before the 1960s

Ida Grimes '25 ELED celebrated her 105th birthday on Feb. 16 with a dinner attended by family and friends. Born in 1905, the sixth of seven children, she has spent most of her life in Williamsport, Md., except for two years when she attended the Maryland State Normal School. "I guess it was in my blood," she told the *Herald Mail*. "My uncle was a teacher and I had friends who became teachers." Grimes returned to Williamsport after graduation, teaching first, second and third grade in a one-room schoolhouse. Later she taught elementary students at other schools until she retired in 1976. Grimes is a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Williamsport and is visited weekly by her minister and other members of the church.

Herman C. Bainter '35 ELED enjoyed a cabaret-type program performed at Baltimore's Everyman Theatre in December, which featured many songs by composer Irving Berlin. He writes that former professors, "Miss Weyforth and Miss Pritchard opened the doors to music of all types adding so much background to my eventual enjoyment."

Ralph Piersanti '52 and Bucky Kimmett '51 are two of the five-member team that represented Maryland at the 2009 Summer National Senior Games in California. The pair along with other team members practice three times a week in the Bykota Senior Center in Towson. Piersanti, 81, and Kimmett, 80, played together on the TU basketball team from 1947-1951, when Kimmett scored more than 1,000 points and Piersanti led the team in assists.

Clara Bowie '57 EDUC wrote *Coming of Age: A Personal Memoir* with her daughter, Lydia Hazel. The memoir confronts a cluster of issues surrounding the process of aging. The book, Bowie says, "combines wisdom from clinicians in the field with insights gained from personal experience. The authors present old and new strategies for navigating the uncharted waters of this complex transition." Bowie lives in Carbondale, Ill.

In Memoriam

Alumni

Jay F. Wall '70
January 1, 2010

James O. Nash '83
January 16, 2010

Louis J. Jerbi '70
January 23, 2010

Neal A. Elover '75
January 23, 2010

Patricia Shipley Hook '52
January 25, 2010

Russel E. Kacher '64
January 26, 2010

Bruce H. Winand '84
January 26, 2010

Kathleen L. Powers Zimmerman '65
January 31, 2010

Carol H. Gabinet '71
January 31, 2010

Gregory W. Schummers '81
February 2, 2010

Kathleen M. O'Neill '87
February 3, 2010

Elizabeth M. Weigand '71
February 5, 2010

Patricia A. Daley Moses '74
February 5, 2010

Kevin H. Kotzen '92
February 7, 2010

John F. Kern '73
February 8, 2010

Vella Kobin Steinberg '42
February 9, 2010

Betty M. Manning '44
February 12, 2010

Marion P. Szymanski '72
February 12, 2010

Jane L. Kovalcik Hite '52
February 15, 2010

Margaret K. Guchemand '73
February 15, 2010

Rena Deitsch Sugar '29
February 17, 2010

Robert P. Semies '76
February 18, 2010

Margery M. Wilmore '61
February 19, 2010

Raul Munoz '74
February 20, 2010

Warren Douglas Lewis '95
February 20, 2010

Barbara E. Zimmerman '36
February 21, 2010

Helen Freitag Fink '39
February 25, 2010

Edna O'Keefe Troutman '44
February 25, 2010

Bruce E. McDade '70
February 25, 2010

Agnes M. Thomas '41
March 1, 2010

Matthew Bishop McDonough '09
March 3, 2010

Arthur F. Johansen '69
March 5, 2010

Richard Feeny '66
March 6, 2010

Sean William Stellfox '09
March 7, 2010

Stephen D. Hein '75
March 11, 2010

Carol Ann DeGiulio '83
March 11, 2010

Erin K. Kvedar '04
March 16, 2010

Robert B. Holmes '74
March 17, 2010

Martha Karsh Resnick '42
March 20, 2010

Kathleen Yotz Harrell '77
March 20, 2010

Ryan E. Stumptner '00
March 21, 2010

Gladys Mullendore Kubski '38
March 23, 2010

David C. Johnson '70
April 1, 2010

John A. Snyder '74
April 4, 2010

Gene W. Meekins '75
April 12, 2010

Lillie T. Grill '74
April 18, 2010

Pearl Lowitz Silberman '32
April 19, 2010

Peggy Crump Nottingham '47
April 25, 2010

Martha J. Masters '70
April 28, 2010

Staff

Charles E. Maloy, who served TU for 30 years as Counseling Center director, VP of Student Services, VP of Student Affairs and as ombudsman, died December 20, 2009.



Miss Adventure

Ruth D. Keen '48

Former teacher puts zip in her golden years

It's called the "Kid Killer." Maybe that's why it was no match for 82-year-old Ruth Keen '48.

Last December the octogenarian became the second oldest person to ever slide down that zip line over a rocky chasm in Zacatecas, Mexico.

"I've been told I had a look of pure terror on my face on the way down," Keen says. And rightly so as she thought she was bound for a leisurely gondola ride over the massive canyon.

Before she knew it, Keen found herself strapped into a harness, instructed not to touch the wire and given a push. One adrenaline rush later she joined her son, Tim, who had preceded her on the zip line.

"Once I joined Tim at the bottom, I had to walk all the way back up, [to the starting point]," Keen says. But when she reached the top, "I was given a healthy round of applause!"

Keen is no stranger to travel and adventure. The former public and private schoolteacher, and current Florida resident has also traveled to Russia, China and Australia.

"I got to sit in on an art class in Russia, and held a koala bear in Australia on my 40th wedding anniversary," she says. "I walked the Great Wall of China on my 50th anniversary, and recently had the chance to see the migration of the Monarch butterflies in Mariposa, Mexico."

When not traveling, Keen is an active community participant. She is involved with the Teen Moms program and various church activities, and started training to become a docent at the Palm Beach County History Museum.

The former educator also recently returned to the classroom—this time as a student studying Spanish.

"When I spent last Christmas in Mexico, all I could say was 'hello,' 'goodbye,' and count to ten," she says. "When I visit again, I want to have the chance to thank everyone in Spanish for their wonderful hospitality."

Although she has faced hardships, including the death of her husband from Alzheimer's disease and the deaths of two of her sons, Keen continues to live life to its fullest, inspiring both friends and family.

"She is full of energy and joy, but most of all she has a big heart," says Keen's daughter-in-law, Mariela. "She is an example of how we have to live our lives at the age of 82."

—Melissa Kviz

1970s

Blaine Taylor '72 HIST published his seventh book, *Hitler's Chariots Volume 2: Mercedes-Benz 770K Grosser Parade Car*.

Sally T. Grant '77 HIST was the guest speaker for the fourth annual Women's History Month celebration presented by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development on March 15.

Kenneth "Boh" Hatter '79/'87 M.A. was inducted into the Maryland Fastpitch Softball Hall of Fame in October 2009 for being "an outstanding clutch hitter and fierce competitor" who is "known as a deft handler of pitchers." He has competed in seven world and national softball tournaments in over 30 years.

1980s

Daniel Still '80 was promoted to police lieutenant in the Tacoma Police Department in Washington. He has been with the department for 25 years.

Brian Stricker '82 MATH was named senior vice president of corporate development for the Baltimore Life Companies. Stricker joined Baltimore Life in 1983 as a pricing actuary, was elected vice president and actuary in 1996, vice president of insurance services in 1999 and vice president of business development in 2006.

Diana Fusting '83 BUAD, former director of development and admissions, and director of marketing at the Edenwald Retirement Community, was appointed director of major gifts at Towson University.

Joe Durham '85 BUAD was promoted to business banking market manager for greater Baltimore/Chesapeake at M&T Bank.

Ken Skrzysz '86 DANC/THEA moved to Delaware five years ago to start Clear Space Productions, a theatre company and arts institute. Now his company, with a mission "to educate and inspire audiences, artists and students to explore and participate in the performing arts through high quality experiences," has an incredibly successful record.

According to its website, more than 25,000 people attended or participated in Clear Space Productions programs, over 800 students studied with CSP faculty and more than 100 community organizations have seen its "On Tour" programs.

Frank D. Barile '89, a former member of the U.S. Army airborne infantry and a 20-year veteran of law enforcement, is one of three members of the Fallston Group, a Harford County business. The company specializes in crisis leadership, communications and management, planning and preparedness, marketing communication, and business development and operations.

1990s

John Long '92 BUAD/'94 HIST leads an effort to clean up the 3.71 mile Bread and Cheese Creek in Baltimore County. The creek has been identified as one of the top three streams contributing to the pollution of Back River and the Chesapeake Bay. Long organized an April 10 cleanup along Plainfield Road Bridge and Old North Point Road to remove trash and debris to keep it from ending up in the bay.

Benjamin Wade '93 PSYC was named the 2009 Elementary School Counselor of the Year by the Maryland School Counselor Association.

Joseph Cummiskey '94 HIST was named vice president of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation by the company's board of directors on December 15, 2009. He was also named president of PESCO, the company's natural gas marketing subsidiary. Cummiskey began his career with Chesapeake Utilities Corporation in 2005. Prior to that, he was employed by Ferrell North America. Cummiskey was also a U.S. Army officer for 12 years.

Michelle Harvin Huggins '94 PSYC/ SOCI, personnel administrator of the Maryland Department of Transportation, will serve a four-year term as a consumer member of the Maryland State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors beginning July 1.

Joe Loverde '95, principal for Mission Media and manager of MissionTix, is offering a mobile e-tickets technology that "revolutionizes the process of admission to Baltimore events from concerts to school plays and beyond." Used at the Recher Theatre in Towson, ticket buyers will be able to bring any mobile device with an

Internet browser to the theatre and will present their electronic ticket by accessing www.MissionTix.com.

Jack Monell '97 CCMM completed his first book, *Delinquency, Pop Culture, and Generation Why?* to be published in the CPCC Press. He is an instructor in criminal justice at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, N.C.

Tim Maurer '98 BUAD authored *The Financial Crossroads: The Intersection of Money and Life* with international bestselling author Jim Stovall. Maurer is also an adjunct faculty member at TU.

Natalia Okshewsky '98 M.S./'10 M.S. graduated in January with a master of science degree in integrated homeland security management from Towson University. It is her second master's from Towson—her first was in psychology. She works in the homeland security field for the federal government.

2000s

Tracy L. Steedman '00 INST was one of only three fellows selected nationwide to participate in the Forum on the Construction Industry



Brian Stricker '82 is senior vice president of corporate development for the Baltimore Life Companies.

Send Us Your News

What's new? Your friends from college want to know. Please send news about your personal and professional life to Class Notes, Alumni Relations, Towson University, 8000 York Rd., Towson, MD 21252-0001 or e-mail alumni@towson.edu. Because of production schedules, your news may not appear in the magazine you receive immediately after submitting an item.

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Here's my news (please use a separate sheet of paper if necessary): _____

Women and Minority Fellowship Program of the American Bar Association. The three-year program will draw on her experience in construction law.

Edward Molen '00 HIST, president of the TU Quarterback Club for more than 19 years, had the Service to Tiger Football award named in his honor. Now known as the Edward Molen Service to Tiger Award, it is given to supporters of TU football.

Charisse Hodges Montgomery '02 ENGL completed her Master of Arts in English Literature at the University of Toledo in May and plans to pursue a doctorate in educational psychology at the University of Toledo's Judith Herb College of Education. Montgomery is director of communications for the University of Toledo College of Pharmacy, and founded Alliance Editing & Copywriting, an editing house that works with academic and literary writers.

Doray A. Sitko '05 SCHE accepted a position at Econometrica, Inc., a private research management and consulting firm near Washington, D.C. Her skills as an educator, technical adviser and project manager benefit the company's federal program clients in the housing and health care sectors. Sitko is pursuing her master's degree in education from Virginia Tech University.

Rachelle Bell '07 ACCT was promoted to senior in the audit, accounting and consulting department at Ellin & Tucker, Chartered, a regional certified public accounting and business consulting firm.

Jose Zambrano '07 ECON was promoted to senior in the tax department of Ellin & Tucker, Chartered.

Megan Hykes Roach '08 PSYC married Stacey Roach in a Holy Union ceremony on Dec. 31. The couple, who adopted a puppy named Max in October, was legally married in Boston. Megan began work as a psychiatric rehabilitation counselor at Mosaic Community Services in Baltimore in November.



Heather Wallace '09 is the assistant art director at US Lacrosse.

Honorary Degree Bestowed

David H. Nevins '76

CBE gives award to lifelong TU advocate



David H. Nevins '76 received a Doctor of Humane Letters from the College of Business and Economics at Towson University's 2010 commencement ceremonies in May.

The president of Nevins & Associates, the Hunt Valley, Md., marketing and public relations firm he founded in 1983, has spent most of his life championing Towson's role in the University System of Maryland mission.

Nevins' passion for TU began as an undergraduate and has continued unabated through four decades.

As an undergraduate business administration major and Student Government Association president, he lobbied for legislation requiring

student representation on the Board of Regents—then made Maryland history as the first student regent.

In the years following graduation, he advocated for his alma mater in key roles, notably as president of the Alumni Association and as a member of the university's Board of Visitors.

He served on the University System of Maryland Board of Regents from 1999 until July 1, 2009, working tirelessly on behalf of Towson and its sister institutions.

Excerpted from the citation in the Commencement Program. To read more about Nevins, see the Winter 2009 issue of *Towson*, the alumni magazine.

Visit www.towsonalumnimagazine.com.

Patrick Smith '09 CCMM, a photojournalist at *The Daily Herald* in Provo, Utah, received an Award of Excellence for his sports action photo in the respected Pictures of the Year International contest in March 2010. The image, "That's How It's Done," shows a golfer letting go of his club just after firing his first drive of the day at the Sorenson Champions Challenge Golf Tournament in Utah last year.

James Stierhoff '09 ECON won the 114th Maryland Hunt Cup, his first National Steeplechase Association-sanctioned event, taking home a \$75,000 purse. The race seemed all but over until the lead horse faltered at the 20th jump on the four-mile, 22-jump course on the Worthington Farms site in northern Baltimore

County, Md. Then Stierhoff rallied his mount, Twill Do, crossing the finish line a half-length ahead of the second-place horse.

Heather Wallace '09 was hired by US Lacrosse, the national governing body for men's and women's lacrosse based in Baltimore, as assistant art director. Wallace previously was a part-time designer at Biographical Design.

Leave Your Mark



You might be surprised by the diversity of ways to leave your mark at Towson. From an Auburn House brick to one of our academic buildings, from sports fields to colleges, there are many ways you and your loved ones can be remembered at Towson.



Visit www.towson.edu/YourNameHere to learn about ways to leave your mark at Towson.



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All that glitters is
GOLD

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OCTOBER 24-30
www.towson.edu/homecoming

ALUMNI HOMECOMING FESTIVAL & REUNION ROW
Saturday, October 30, 2010 ★ 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. ★ **Burdick Field**
Games • Giveaways • Activities for children • Food

REUNION ROW
Do you have a group of TU friends and classmates coming back for Homecoming?
Reserve a tent for your group at the festival. Call the Alumni Office for more details.

Towson Tigers vs. Rhode Island
Kickoff: 3:30 p.m. • Uinitas Stadium

For further information, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 800-887-8152 or alumni@towson.edu, or visit the Homecoming website at www.towson.edu/homecoming.

★ **LOOK FOR DETAILED INFORMATION IN THE FALL ISSUE OF THE TOWSON MAGAZINE.** ★