

# WINDOW

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY ■ SUMMER 1995

EAST  
MEETS  
WEST,  
LINE  
MEETS  
LIGHT



CREIGHTON  
AND OMAHA:  
A MARRIAGE OF  
117 YEARS

THE FIRE  
BURNS, TOO,  
IN THE NUNS  
OF TODAY

LAW DEGREE IN  
1965 LEADS TO  
B.A. IN 1995  
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# WINDOW

Volume 11/Number 4 ■ Creighton University ■ Summer 1995

**East Meets West; Line Meets Light**  
Visiting Chinese Professor Wen You-Yan, and Creighton Professor John Thein combine to teach Eastern and Western art forms. See Pam Adams Vaughn's story of culture melding on Page 4.



**Married to the City; Creighton and Omaha for 117 Years**

Bob Reilly writes about 117 years of cooperation between Creighton University and the City of Omaha. Page 12.



**The Fire Burns, Too, in the Nuns of Today**

Three writers examine the changing world of women in religious life. Once large classes of novitiates have dwindled, but the dedication of the few who pursue a life wed to God still burns in them. Page 18.



**Three Decades from Law Degree to a C.U. Bachelor's Degree**

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# LETTERS

WINDOW Magazine edits Letters to the Editor, primarily to conform to space limitations. Personally signed letters are given preference for publication. Our FAX telephone number is: (402) 280-2549. E-Mail address is: window@creighton.edu.

## The Heart of the Matter

Congratulations to WINDOW and Bob Reilly for the overdue article on Fr. Henry Linn, S.J., that humble but intense man who was a vital force in making Creighton what it is today.

Because he was more comfortable laboring in the shadow of the university or of his charismatic associate, Fr. Carl Reinert, S.J., too few credited him with his invaluable contributions to Creighton and the community. I was privileged to work with and for this unique man and flattered myself by considering him a friend, one who cared deeply about those around him.

Like so many, I found he was there whenever I had a problem, personal or professional. He cared enough to listen but was too humble to advise unless asked. I asked often, and his answer always got to the heart of the matter, replacing indecision or heat with sound logic. Whether it was his varied experience or instinctive knowledge of right, Fr. Linn would point to the solution.

On the job, he led by example, but it was an example few had the energy or intellect to duplicate. He accepted that, asking only that everyone give a solid effort.

Reilly wrote of a priest's place in Creighton history, but he told us much more. He brought back a man whom I knew and admired and loved. Thank you, Bob.

Harry A. Dolphin, BS'49  
Omaha

## A Life With Fr. Linn

I just received my spring copy of your wonderful magazine containing the story about Fr. Linn by Bob Reilly.

I entered Creighton University in 1938, the same year that Fr. Linn arrived. I was in Fr. Linn's Latin class and we became fast friends.

I was a pre-med from 1938 to 1941 and then left to attend the University of Michigan Medical School but kept in contact with Fr. Linn and other Jesuits including Fr. Francis Deglman.

In 1943 I married Harriet Holland. She was given instructions in the Faith by Fr. Linn and was baptized by him. And then he married us.

In 1951, I began practicing surgery here in Cheyenne. The next year Fr. Linn told me, not asked, to organize a Creighton Alumni Club.

We had it in Laramie after a Wyoming game and it was perhaps the biggest and best ever, featuring U.S. Senator Joseph O'Mahoney and my Dad, Governor of Wyoming Frank A. Barrett, himself a Creighton grad.

Fr. Linn always stayed with us and was always very fond of my late wife. He was a wonderful priest.

*Francis A. Barrett, M.D., Arts '42  
Cheyenne, Wyo.*

### **A Major Created for Her**

Thank you for the beautiful, insightful article on Fr. Linn. When I was just 16 years old, I attended a meeting where he was guest speaker. Afterwards, we engaged in what I thought was casual conversation. He inquired about the classes I took in my three years of high school and my scholastic standing. His ever-calculating mind was working, as when I finished, he said "You have enough credits to enter college." With his encouragement, I took my science in summer school, and kept on going, graduating two years ahead of my time.

When he found out that I did not want to be a teacher or a nurse as most college women at that time were delegated to be, he created a new major for me. With his remarkable foresight, my major created a whole new department, speech and communications. Although it was difficult at the time taking the comprehensive examination all by

myself, I am proud to be the pioneer graduate in this department.

I am most grateful to Fr. Linn, and it was interesting, after all these years, to discover that I, like he, may lack a high school diploma, but have a college degree.

*Connie M. A. Gilligan Morse, BA '48  
Omaha*

### **Extraordinary Person**

I read with joy the article *Pilgrim's Progress - On the Road with Fr. Linn*. Truly he was a great man, one any of us would like to emulate. Every person was important to him. He was an extraordinary person full of love for God, his people and Creighton. Would that more of us could be like him.

Thanks for that great article.

*Patricia McGovern, BS '50  
Omaha*

### **Dairyman Still Needs Fr. Linn**

I relived the past in reading your article about Fr. Henry Linn, S.J.

I was much closer to Fr. Linn than most people realized.

Also, Fr. Reinert. Whenever I was in some kind of trouble at Roberts Dairy, Fr. Reinert always knew. Busy as he was, he would always call me, and give me counsel. Always, he helped.

I used to entertain the Jesuits at Elkhorn Farm recreational place. I miss those days. I wish I could return to them.

I still need Fr. Reinert's counseling.

*J. Gordon Roberts  
Clearwater, Fla.*

### **Creighton Nursing School Pride**

We are prompted to write and comment on the superb article by Judith Studt on Nursing Research - "A New Relevancy Dawns." Having spent many wonderful years at the School of Nursing, it makes us proud to know these excellent faculty from the School of Nursing.

The profiles of the primary investigators and project descriptions should serve to demonstrate to the general public the valuable impact

that nursing research has on improving the health and well being of the patient.

Creighton University should take great pride in its School of Nursing, especially for the expertise of these faculty members who generate new knowledge to improve patient care, foster collaboration within the health community and continue to maintain the Jesuit standards of working with and caring about the individual student.

Congratulations to each and every one of you!

We continue to value and treasure those Creighton memories which will always remain part of who we are.

*Sheila A. Ryan, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Dean, School of Nursing  
Director, Medical Center Nursing  
University of Rochester  
Medical Center  
Rochester, N.Y.*

(Editor's Note: Dr. Ryan is a former dean of Creighton's School of Nursing.)

*Stephanie Krupinsky Cooper,  
MS '89, RN  
Director, Development  
and External Affairs  
University of Rochester  
Medical Center  
Rochester, N.Y.*

### **Obedience, Too**

Ward Anthony's comment on obedience in the Catholic Church leaves out an important element of Christian faith — it was Christ's obedience that led to our salvation.

Without this obedience, which in His case was radical and humanly illogical, we cannot imitate Christ.

The real question is whether we can trust the Church and its teachings as much as Jesus Christ trusted His Father. Since the Church is the embodiment of Christ wherein the Holy Spirit dwells, the answer is, we can.

*Mary J. Roque, JD '89  
Foxboro, Mass.*



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# EAST MEETS WEST, LINE MEETS LIGHT

By Pam Adams Vaughn

*(Editor's note: Wen You-Yan is Creighton's second visiting professor from Northwest University. As part of this semester's cross-cultural exchange, Wen taught Creighton students the Chinese way of painting, especially relating to the human figure, while Creighton Associate Professor John Thein emphasized the Western way of drawing the human form in the second half of the semester.)*

*Professor Wen (at left) ponders his next stroke on rice paper during his teaching stint at Creighton. The artist paints in the ancient Chinese calligraphic style, using brushes of various sizes.*

We're high upstairs in the studios of the Fine Arts Building, and it's raining against the windows, making the Creighton campus look, well, like a Chinese painting, minus the pagodas.

I ask visiting Professor Wen You-Yan, from Northwest University in Xian, China, a question about teaching Chinese art. Creighton Associate Professor Cheng Shih-Chuan, serving as translator, listens carefully, formulating the Chinese equivalent of my question.

Wen cocks his head to one side, his eyes light up, he jumps out of the chair and begins to "paint" an answer.

His brush twirls in the ink, pulling up just the right amount. The black figures spill onto the crisp, white paper, slowly, elegantly, steadily.

Wen is writing the word "knowledge" in the ancient script, dating back before the time of Christ. In English, knowledge is just that, one word. But in Chinese, Cheng explains, it is two words — "learning" and "asking."

You ask in order to learn.

In the East, the individual always seems to be part of a larger whole ... even in something as individualized as learning.

And knowledge is viewed as a process between teacher and learner, not as a final product.

Professor Wen, the two classical forms completed, now begins a stream of smaller calligraphs, descending down the page from right to left. "What is he writing now?"

"He's explaining the painting," Cheng responds. "Then he'll add the date and sign his name."

The signature is made by a seal, dipped in muted red ink, then applied to the page. The lower left is Wen's name, the upper right, his village.

He then presents the painting to me, followed by a small bow. I respond in kind.



*"Knowledge" is two words in Chinese. The large calligraphic figure at the top is "learning" and below is "asking."*

Wen was a gift to Creighton and its students this spring semester as part of an exchange program with China's highly regarded Northwest University. There, he is chairman of the Department of Arts and vice-dean of the College of Literature, Arts and Media.

His school lies in the same city that houses the "Terra-Cotta Warriors," that splendid array of statuary soldiers unearthed in 1974 and meant to accompany Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang on his grand entry into the next life.

In China, Wen's work is greatly prized. He has brought the "bird and flower" tradition in classical Chinese painting to mastery. "They are my joy," he says simply.

And ours. Walking through the Creighton exhibit, you see





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his deft renditions. Birds stoop, preen; a flower trails its beauty. Rendered in the Sumi style, the paintings come alive on rice paper in watercolors and ink.

Chinese painting, from landscape, to bird and flower, to “body figure,” is built upon tradition, and Wen is carrying this tradition forward.

Though China tolerates — and sometimes even celebrates — the Western influence, permitting an individual artist to sally forth into new themes and styles, the underlying rule still pre-

vails: The painting must be understood. Once again, in China, the artist does not stand alone: He or she must communicate with the viewer in the context of the art.

The West influences Chinese art in other ways. In fact, in China today, the art student first must master Western drawing before delving into the Oriental traditions. Why? “You need to develop some basic skills before you can capture what you saw or what you thought,” Wen says.

Knowing how to render the whole form enables the artist to



*Professor Wen prints the ancient Chinese symbols.*



drop the non-essentials, to find that one, strong line, the minimal form, in Chinese art.

In Chinese tradition, line is all, from the march of a distant row of hills to the curve of a face. One line must carry the painting, leading the viewer's eye from bird to branch to flower.

In the West, Wen believes, light dominates line. And, he says, this focus on light is making its presence known in Chinese painting today, especially in the body figure tradition.

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Later in the day, I find Wen in Creighton Associate Professor John Thein's drawing class. The atmosphere is casual, friendly, even exciting. Students stop by the Chinese professor's easel, watching him orchestrate light and line as a figure takes shape on paper. Wen is dissatisfied about something in his rendition, I learn later. He doesn't like the line that curves along the drape and up the face.

Participating in class along with Creighton students, Wen

gets a close-up view of Western universities, Western teaching. What are his impressions?

"The teachers, their devotion to the class, to their students," Wen says, is his biggest surprise about Creighton and the West. He also is impressed with the "curiosity about everything" he finds in Creighton students, especially when that curiosity is expressed in subjects outside their fields of study.

But, in comparing university cultures, the likenesses loom larger than the differences. Although in China students generally have no problem finding jobs because education is based on supply and demand, Wen says, Chinese students' concerns are much the same as those of their Western counterparts.

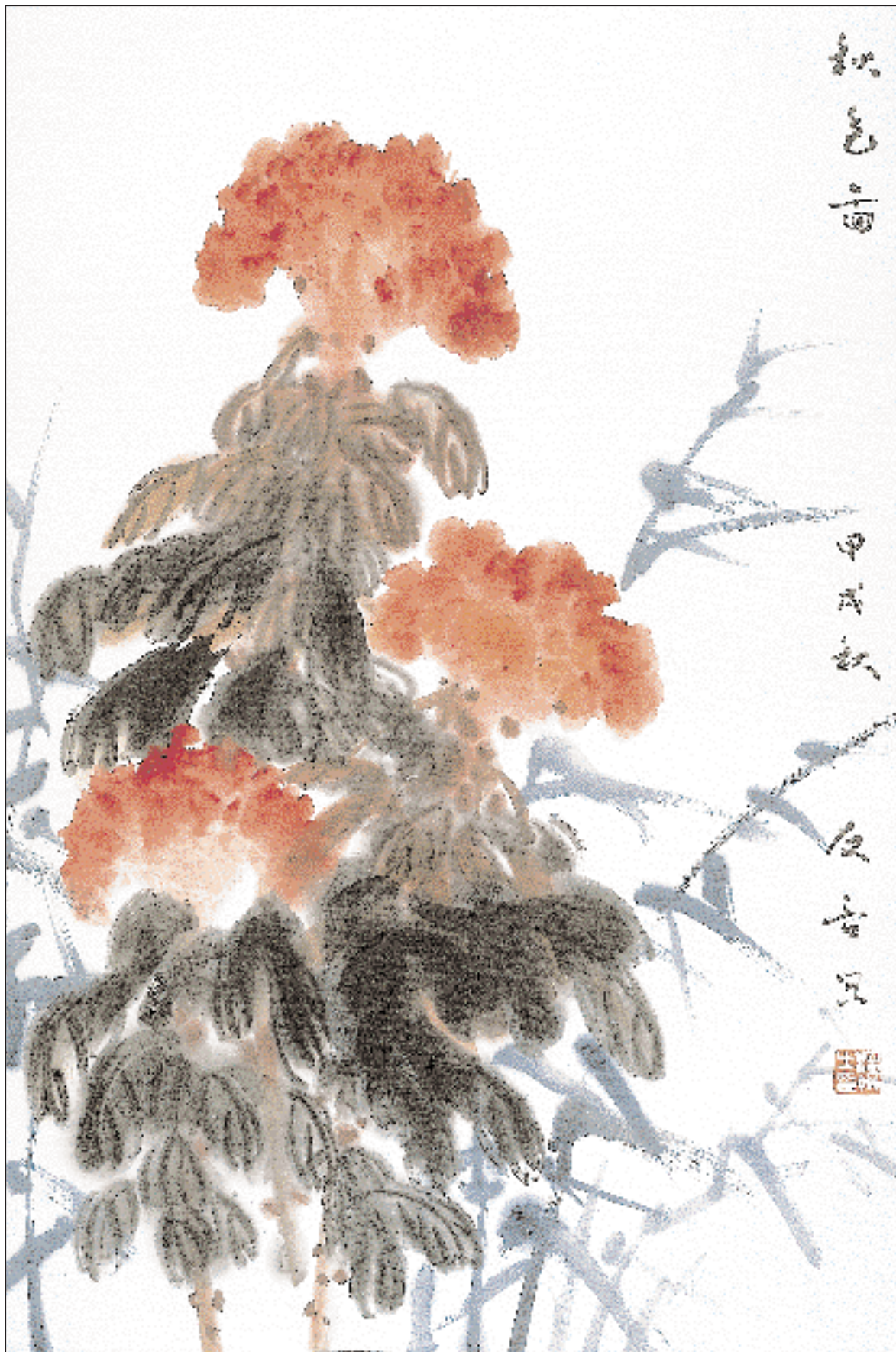
They still worry about life after college, about "how they will be able to use their skills and make contributions to society," Wen observes.

But theirs is a society that welcomes artists and long has. China, like the U.S., is wracked by numerous politically charged



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concerns. But art is definitely not one of them. In 1989, the government infused the schools with more money for art, Wen observes, now enabling even non-art majors to explore this long tradition. The new funding extends to the grade schools, as well.

This support should come as no surprise. As Chinese, Wen is part of one of the oldest continuing cultures on Earth. And that culture's traditions span the centuries. Thousands of artists before Wen have followed with brush and line the delicate tracery of pagoda and village, mountainside and tree, bird and flower.

Artist/art, learning/asking, the one/the many. There it is again: Everything in China is related to everything else. These relationships help ensure communication and understanding.

Yet, in spite of this relatedness, each artist infuses the established form, the tradition, with his or her own humanity.

Wen's cranes, he says, come from his own mind, formed there from a bird he saw long ago.

Regal in black, white and red plumage, the cranes seem startled by the observer from their hiding place, their trailing feathers waving like the reeds. **W**

*East and West meet as artist-professors Wen and John Thein (one of whose paintings is below) talk over their art (left).*



# Married to the City

## 117 Years for Creighton and Omaha

By Bob Reilly

Perhaps the bride arrived a couple of decades late, but it's hard to fault a marriage that has lasted 117 years. As with most marriages, there have been isolated domestic differences, but the union between Omaha and Creighton University has been remarkably affectionate, exceptionally fruitful, and even the great grand-children have turned out pretty well.

Except, I suppose, in the eyes of Generation X, this remains a youthful

couple, with the honeymoon long past, but the relationship still vital. After all, Count John A. Creighton, who was in at the inaugural of both city and college, died just 15 years before I was born. And a glimpse at the agenda of the meeting of the first City Council, in 1857, reveals concerns that sound familiar - suppression of gambling and awarding of liquor licenses.

Some things have changed, of course. Our embryonic metropolis had but

one police officer then, and the big business news centered on Mageath & Company's \$2,000/day hauling freight to the Mormon camp in Florence.

On the Creighton side, the most obvious change is the reflection that the bequest which launched the university would not, today, endow an academic chair.

In her last will and testament (Sept. 23, 1875) Mary Lucretia Creighton left \$100,000 as a memorial to her late hus-

***Pictured at left, Creighton College (largest building) is seen from near 20th and Dodge Streets in 1878.***

band, telegraph pioneer Edward Creighton, "to purchase the site for a school in the city of Omaha, and erect buildings thereon for a school of the class and grade of a college..."

Not more than half of that money was to be expended for the site and buildings combined, with the remainder to be invested and only the interest to be used for support and maintenance. Even when the Jesuits assumed responsibility for the trust, at the request of Omaha Bishop James O'Connor, the sum amounted to only \$147,500, the price of a decent football coach today. Even then, there were questions about the ability of this small fund to accomplish the founders' mission. Fortunately, other members of the Creighton family, notably John and Sarah, added to the endowment, and other public-spirited citizens occasionally provided financing.

The first building, now still disguised behind a facade of white Bedford stone, was once isolated, surrounded by muddy, unpaved streets, and sitting above the city in those old photos like a Victorian castle. Yet the outreach had already begun.

On Friday evening, Feb. 1, 1879, just six months after the school was opened, the public was invited to an "entertainment" in the "College Hall" for the benefit of the city's poor. Produced by Professor Edward O'Brien, who took the lead role in one of the sketches, "The Trial of Robert Emmet," the evening also featured songs and recitations.

Besides dramatics, and educating young men for free, and providing teaching positions to Irish laymen like O'Brien, O'Rourke and a pair of McKennas, Creighton also figured prominently in the area's spiritual and scientific arenas.

Holy Family Church became a Jesuit responsibility, and just nine years after the college opened, the cornerstone was laid for St. John's Church. In a broader sense, the Hilltop was regarded as the intellectual seat of

Catholicism in the region.

Thanks largely to the Jesuit Rigge brothers, Joseph and William, and through the largesse of John Creighton and John McShane, a campus observatory became a reality, with astronomical observations making local and national

health education were instituted and the general well-being of the community improved.

The university needed some good news in that decade, when hard times resulted in delinquent tuition payments and when the American Protective



***This is the Saint Joseph Hospital of 1882. Count John A. Creighton can be seen on the porch (left of the doorway). The porch section of the building was built in 1870, with the portion on the left built in 1882.***

news. Crowds came to view eclipses in 1887 and again in 1890, and Fr. William Rigge gained a certain amount of tabloid fame by using his scientific knowledge to help establish the innocence of a man accused of trying to bomb the home of political boss, Tom Dennison. (I hate to leave you hanging, but that's another story, told in the fall 1990 *WINDOW*, by Fr. John Scott, S.J.).

Omahans had additional reason to be grateful when the John A. Creighton Medical College opened its doors in 1892. The city had experienced mild epidemics of typhoid, smallpox, diphtheria, cholera and other diseases, and the medical responses were often primitive and uneven. Medical schools in the east were largely inferior and often merely profit-making enterprises. Many frontier physicians were either untrained or had served limited apprenticeships. And earlier attempts at providing medical education in Nebraska were generally short-lived. With the advent of Creighton's medical college, reforms in

Association, a bigoted nativist society, made Creighton one of the targets of its anti-Catholic invectives. Politicians were pressured into initiating some dubious civic improvements in the Hilltop area, further straining the school's limited resources.

Other citizens came to the defense of the area's religious institutions.

Writing to the *Omaha Bee* newspaper, a man identifying himself as a Protestant and the son of a Protestant minister decried the attacks as "reckless, relentless and unreasonable warfare which is now being waged against my fellow Catholic citizens."

A few years later, when bogus ex-priests and ex-nuns were paraded on the lecture circuit, The Dark Lantern Society brought to Omaha a woman described as a former nun. In his memoirs, Fr. Michael P. Dowling, S.J., captures that occasion:

"Not a single Omaha daily paper mentioned her name either before or after her discourses. Her first lecture was

slimly attended by a few anemic, ill-fed, small-eyed bigots, eager to hear her salacious story.”

Dowling goes on to say that many of these people left when the speaker got carried away with exaggerated tales of Catholic practices.

This sort of rhetoric hasn't completely disappeared. I remember during my early years at Creighton hearing stories of arms being cached in Creighton's basement preparatory to a Catholic takeover, and one woman used to write to Fr. Reinert with an elaborately worked-out plot involving 12 local bank presidents who were, she felt, a devilish reincarnation of the original apostles.

But Creighton always had people of good will protesting such slanders. Religion has rarely been an issue between university and community. People of all faiths have endorsed the Jesuit educational regimen, have applauded the discipline and the values.

Gov. John Thayer, speaking in the 1880s, told an assembled group at a campus dedication, “I rejoice at the prosperity, the beneficent influences, the ennobling efforts of Creighton College, and am glad of an opportunity to thus manifest it.”

Examples of cooperative town and gown ventures are so numerous, from Creighton's founding until today, that the problem is not identifying them but in selecting among them. Like the nervous master of ceremonies, one hesitates to mention names for fear of missing someone. With apologies, I merely cite some that come to mind.

First, of course, one has to examine the impact of Creighton graduates, an exercise we used to perform when I was P.R. director issuing brochures and reports. The results remain impressive.

In Omaha alone (January, 1995) some 27 percent of the city's physicians, 69 percent of its dentists, 59 percent of its pharmacists and 16 percent of its nurses graduated from Creighton. The impact of law school graduates shows similar percentages, and 28 law alumni serve as Nebraska judges, with two on the state Supreme Court.

Every university division can tell an

identical story - with a high percentage of accountants, physical therapists, journalists, educators, scientists and business leaders holding Creighton degrees.

When you begin putting titles to these statistics, you come up with a former ambassador to Ireland, former U.S. president of Coca-Cola, the vice president of a cable television network, a former president's personal physician, a Secretary of Commerce, an executive editor of *Time* magazine, the CEO of Canadian Pacific Enterprises, several U.S. senators, an assistant surgeon general, half a dozen widely-read authors, a Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army, both a founder and a former chairman of the largest individual and family health insurance company in the world, top executives in Hollywood and in the FBI, and the

## During the flood of 1952, a sandbag toter noted that “Everyone I meet here is either from Creighton or Hinky Dinky (grocery)”

founder of the F & F Cough Drop Company. These names appear on just one page of “Noted Creighton University Alumni.”

The current faculty also has its stars, in areas as disparate as photography and long-range weather forecasting, satellite technology and cross cultural anthropological methods in biblical interpretation. There are internationally renowned experts in bird anatomy, angioplasty, cancer, osteoporosis, brain death, poison control, and asthma.

Statisticians estimate that Creighton's presence adds \$444 million annually to Greater Omaha, including the university's budget, and the expenditures of students and visitors. More than 8,000 jobs are reckoned to be part of this economic impact.

You need such numbers to provide a

capsule look at contributions, but the detailed images offer more concrete proof.

If Creighton hadn't been here, Omahans might never have seen Bob Gibson pitch or Paul Silas rebound. Without Creighton, Mutual of Omaha might well have located elsewhere. In all four wars of this century and in several less lengthy conflicts, Creighton alumni have held leadership roles.

When the Missouri River Flood of 1952 hit, the call for volunteers was issued, and Creighton administrators got on the radio to summon vacationing students back to campus. I was standing on a levee in Council Bluffs and identified myself to another sandbag toter as being from Creighton. “Everyone I meet here,” he said, “is either from Creighton or Hinky Dinky,” a local grocery store.

The university was very much in the political picture when urban renewal was a hot topic. Some of this interest was, of course, self-serving, since Creighton was in the center of the planning area, but members of the university family gathered data, supplied testimony, lobbied legislators.

In 1949, Omaha's first television station, WOWT, needed a venue from which to broadcast while their studios were being built. The old university auditorium served that purpose and also gave the enterprising Fr. Roswell Williams, S.J., an opportunity to launch several years of programming that anticipated the later educational channels. Many firsts, from clinical operations to historical re-creations, were included among the telecasts.

Even before TV, Creighton's “University of the Air” broadcast 15 minutes of music and drama, three times a week, to a loyal local radio audience.

This tradition continues in the presence of SCOLA, a worldwide satellite network, under the direction of Lee Lubbers, S.J., who links educational and other institutions with international programming.

Consider the long civic association with Creighton's clinics in medicine, dentistry and law. There are reciprocal benefits, of course, with professional



***The year was 1960. Fr. Carl Reinert turned a shovelful of dirt at the groundbreaking for Gallagher Hall.***

students receiving valuable hands-on experience, but the advantage to patients and clients is far more substantial. I remember visiting the dental clinic with every chair filled, and seeing the wooden benches in the old medical facility lined with those who might not otherwise have received medical care.

Today, Creighton's School of Medicine maintains 20 clinics in 12 locations around Omaha, handling more than 200,000 patient visits a year. The combined total of uncompensated medical care by the School of Medicine, St. Joseph Hospital and St. Joseph Center for Mental Health amounts to approximately \$10 million a year.

The School of Dentistry adds more than \$1 million to this outreach effort, scheduling more than 42,000 patient visits each year.

A relative newcomer, the Legal Clinic operated by the School of Law to serve the legal needs of Douglas County's

low-income citizens, fields well over 1,000 requests for assistance annually.

For many years, Creighton's School of Industrial Relations trained labor leaders in everything from negotiations to public relations. The fountain south of St. John's Church is one concrete symbol of labor's gratitude.

When the Omaha and Winnebago tribes needed specialized diagnosis and treatment, Creighton responded, dispatching health care professionals to the reservation hospital on a regular basis. St. Joseph Hospital made sufficient beds available to those Native Americans who needed longer term treatment.

Several archbishops have acknowledged the work Creighton has done in educating diocesan priests and religious. What would summer school be like without the generations of nuns who attended classes? And, over several summers, an innovative program was offered for the convent cooks.

In the immediate post-war years, the university did some of its most important work when it stood solidly, if not unanimously, against local evidences of racism. Fr. John Markoe, S.J., was praised by famed author John Howard Griffin as being ahead of nearly everyone in civil rights strategies and the local De Porres Club, a Creighton creation, really pioneered sit-ins. Fr. John Killoren was one of St. Benedict's most effective pastors during those troubled years. Today's Center for Service and Justice continues these concerns on campus.

Also a leader in ecumenism, Creighton has provided forums for religious exchange while simultaneously supplying members of the Jesuit Community to assist priests in this region who needed a hand because of illness, work load or vacation schedules. Books, articles and public lectures by Creighton Jesuits have explained doctrine and devotion and a hundred relat-

# Teaching Mainframers the P.C. Way

Some 50 mainframe computer programmers at First National Bank and Union Pacific Railroad of Omaha are nearing completion of a sequence of courses designed to adapt their skills to personal computer programming.

At the request of the two firms and the Applied Information Management (AIM) Institute, Creighton faculty are teaching 10 separate courses on-site for the Omaha employees.

"Powerful personal computers are rapidly taking on tasks that used to require large mainframe computers," said University College Dean Wesley Wolfe.

"This program is designed to help computer professionals make the transition from the mainframe to microcomputers."

An advisory committee for the program meets regularly to ensure that the sequence continues to be tailored to employee needs. Employee suggestions already have affected the program, with courses expanding from five to seven weeks.

The program is conducted by Creighton through University College with full-time faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences. It was organized in January 1994.

Photo by Kent Sievers



The University also has begun a similar series of mainframe-to-personal computer courses at Offutt Air Force Base just south of Omaha in Bellevue. In addition, Creighton is negotiating with other firms to establish similar programs.

Those students completing all 10 courses will receive a Certificate in Applied Computer Science from Creighton. The courses also will carry undergraduate credit, and some will count toward graduate degrees, Dr. Wolfe said.

The University currently offers undergraduate majors in computer science, applied computer science, and management information systems. Master's degrees in computer science and computer systems management also are offered.

**Creighton organizes the AIM program for Union Pacific Railroad mainframe programmers. From left: Creighton Vice President for Information Systems Leon "Benny" Benschoter, Mike Tesarm, data processing instructor for the U.P., and Chang-Shyh "Tony" Peng (sitting), assistant professor of mathematics/computer science and director of the Computer Science Graduate Program.**

ed topics. As far back as the Scopes trial, Creighton faculty members were commenting on issues with a spiritual dimension, and as early as the 1880s, Jesuits from the Hilltop were visiting city and county jails and the county poor house.

There have been rural life institutes and writers' workshops and science

fairs and Irish festivals.

Faculty and staff members maintain membership in a variety of local organizations, provide programs for countless civic clubs, serve as judges for a myriad of contests, and sit still for endless interviews probing their academic expertise.

Students staff soup kitchens, repair homes, tutor youngsters, raise

funds and take on other community responsibilities.

There are programs allying Creighton with Japan, with the Dominican Republic, with Appalachia, and with the immediate neighborhood. Assistance is afforded minority-owned businesses and organizations devoted to social welfare. The campus hosts the Special Olympics,

and the Creighton University Press, in cooperation with Fordham University, turns out volumes on wide-ranging topics.

Both as a human resource and a periodical resource, Creighton is a local treasure.

The three campus libraries possess about 700,000 volumes, along with 6,500 different periodical subscriptions and nearly a million microforms. These recreational and research tools are available to student and citizen alike.

The mission obviously continues. A few days ago I picked up some recent copies of internal Creighton newsletters and discovered these items:

- Two new scholarships created for Hispanic students in the Omaha area.
- On-site courses in computer technology being taught to local employees.
- Creighton joins with the Omaha Housing authority to help reduce pockets of high unemployment and increase the size and quality of the work force in Omaha.
- For the past two years, Deglman Hall students have volunteered as tutors, provided general staff support, sponsored an annual Halloween party at Creighton for Girls, Inc. and served as positive role models for the members.
- Two professors receive a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality to implement a university-wide solid waste reduction and education program on campus.
- Some local Catholic High schools are using Creighton as their "gateway to the Internet," a service provided free to these schools by Creighton.

The list goes on. While there is really no need to justify Creighton's presence in the Omaha community, it may help to remind both town and gown of this impact.

But marriage is a partnership, and Omaha also has been generous to the university. This city has provided jobs to thousands of graduates and, even before graduation, they supply internships, scholarships, and even some occasional classroom lectures. Creighton's Board of Directors has always read like a *Who's Who* of community leadership. These



Photo by Kent Sievers

**Gary Michels, associate professor of chemistry, sets up a teaching demonstration at Creighton for a class of inner-city students.**

movers and shakers helped with street closings, provided landscaping skills and equipment, and gave the university the means to grow. Their names, along with those of generous alumni, are sprinkled all around the campus.

"I didn't go there myself," says Bob Daugherty, founder and chairman of Valmont Industries, "but I have a warm and wonderful feeling about the place. They do a first-class job of educating people, by sharing knowledge, by somehow inculcating the Jesuit culture."

Gene Mahoney, president of the Zoo Foundation and former director of Nebraska Game and Parks system, feels Creighton reflects favorably on the national image.

"Creighton has almost the same identity in length of years as Omaha," explains Mahoney. "It's one way people identify Omaha. Yes, that's where Creighton is."

This sort of respect has translated into millions of dollars. What Creighton has become is almost totally a reflection of alumni and community support.

You turn again to the newsletters and see a progress report on the \$10 million Lied Education Center for the Arts, and read of a recent endowed chair by Charles and Mary Heider. There's an acknowledgment of Microsoft's gift of computer software, and a grant from ConAgra that permits Creighton stu-

dents to tutor at-risk elementary school students. A "Campaign Update" presents a roster of significant gifts to the current campaign — from graduates, friends, communication firms, insurance firms, brokerage houses, banks — even \$600,000 from an anonymous Omaha corporation.

Jack Williams, longtime Creighton registrar, believes he knows why the local response has always been this positive.

"You feel good when you have something of quality in your midst," he says. "And Creighton has always been viewed as a quality institution."

Former public relations director Harry Dolphin adds another reason.

"An awful lot of people came to Omaha because Creighton was here," he states. "And many stayed or came back. I was one of those. A lot of good people in town might never have been here if it wasn't for Creighton."

There's also the bond established by years of familiarity. After all, the original building is still on campus, surrounded now by what others have made of Edward Creighton's dream.

That kind of continuity cements friendships, like two companions growing old together, knowing each other's failings and peculiarities but focusing always on the good years past and the good years to come. **W**



*Window on a 'Counter-culture.'*

# WOMEN RELIGIOUS OF TODAY'S WORLD

By Dr. Eileen Wirth

*“Religious women are on fire with the conviction that their lives have meaning. It is their personal relation with Christ and the gift of being members of communities with shared vision which characterize their attraction to religious life.”*

*“In my situation, I can truly say I have deep friendships with other religious of my order around the world. We have been educated together or have worked together for the sake of our ministries.”*

*“But what is the most significant bond? It is that when we share our stories, we discover each person has been drawn by God to want a deeply contemplative life coupled with the work of education which enables youth to discover meaning in life.”*

— Sr. Muriel Cameron, RSCJ,  
Ministry for Religious of the Sacred Heart/Retreat and Spiritual Direction  
Lecturer, Religious Studies, • Loyola University • New Orleans

When Mary Kay Dobrovolny graduated from Creighton in 1991 with a degree in sociology, she opted to try a lifestyle which she calls "countercultural."

The Hastings, Neb., native took the



**Dobrovolny**

first step toward becoming a Sister of Mercy.

It wasn't what she had expected to do when she came to Creighton to major in math, then possibly attend law school

and enter politics. But Dobrovolny's experiences at Creighton changed all that:

- She took a service trip to Appalachia.
- She got involved in the Peace and Justice Center directed by Sr. Anne Pellegrino, RSM.
- She found the questions Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM, raised in a Christian ethics course far more compelling than any equation.

Halfway through her sophomore year, with the help of Dr. Stevens, Sr. Pellegrino and a few friends, Dobrovolny found herself seriously considering religious life.

Today, Dobrovolny, 25, is one of six Mercy novices living in St. Louis for her canonical novitiate year — a year of prayer and study in preparation for taking vows. Her training also includes attending classes with 35 male and female novices from 10 religious orders and working with children born with AIDS and drug addiction.

She's one of a small number of young women nationwide to enter a religious order in recent years.

A generation after the massive changes in at least the externals of religious life which followed Vatican II, what causes a young woman to enter a religious order today? How do women religious at Creighton view their calling? What might the future hold for women religious and their orders?

Interviews with several women religious affiliated with Creighton indicate that such questions are more easily asked than answered.

Ironically, say the women, despite all the attention to external changes, the essentials of religious life and the reasons for choosing it haven't changed.

"What it's all about is the mission of the Church," said Dr. Stevens, an associate professor of theology at Creighton. "Form doesn't matter. It's not central."

"We can't be identified by our ministries any more," said Dr. Mary Alice Haley, OSM, an assistant professor of philosophy and a former prioress general of her order. "If it were just the ministries, we could do that as lay women. We stress the opportunity to develop a spiritual life and the search for God. (Religious life) is still the idea of a total focus on the Gospel."

Women religious share the call to serve God and the Church with the "whole body of the Church," said Sr. Mary Jude Graham, RSM, a retired instructor in philosophy. The call to serve for women religious is not "unique." However, these women bring the Church special gifts, she believes, including "the ability not just to hear but to really listen with head and heart."

According to these women, the call to religious life comes in a special way to each individual and is probably no more easily explained than falling in love and deciding to get married.

Dobrovolny, for example, said she was attracted to religious life because of community and ministry. This attraction grew "very much out of my relationship with God.

"On a pretty fundamental level, my experience with God and my relationship with God drew me to this lifestyle," she said. At the same time, however, her decision to choose religious life wasn't easy.

"I was scared because it is so different," she said of her decision. "I had a difficult time telling some of my peers and telling people in my hometown."

Dobrovolny said she was relieved to discover that the reaction from others was "more positive than anything else."

She said her parents had an easier time understanding her interest in reli-

gious life than many might have because one of her aunts is a member of the Sisters of Mercy. Creighton friends also supported the idea.

"The people at Creighton were very supportive and very encouraging," Dobrovolny said. "Other people were real excited, and they helped me get excited."

Among those who asked Dobrovolny the most questions was Roni Galas, BSN'90, who, it turned out, had her own reasons for the questions.

"Basically, Roni had thought about religious life but never seriously," said Dobrovolny. "But she was very excited and asked me questions which helped me find my own excitement. I realized later that many of her questions were more for her than me." Today, Galas is a fellow Mercy novice in St. Louis.

Dobrovolny said that she and others formed a group called "Stepping Stones" at Creighton to discuss the possibility of religious life. Although she and Sr. Galas are the only two members who have joined a religious community so far, the group was valuable.

"It's important to have peers who are asking the same questions," she said. "You need to have someone to journey with."

Admiration for women religious seems to play a role in developing some vocations. For example, both Drs. Stevens and Haley said mentors were important in their choice of religious life. They also both said the support they have received from their communities has been important in retaining their commitment.

Dr. Stevens, a graduate of Omaha's Mercy High School, traces her attraction



**Dr. Stevens**

to religious life to the influence of her teachers.

"They were vital, happy, energetic people. I wanted to be part of that," she said. "They were extremely hardwork-

ing, but they sang and danced and laughed. They seemed like a wonderful

group of people.”

Dr. Stevens said that when she entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1966, she had no firm idea of what her future held.

“I pictured myself going where the needs were,” she said.

It was a time of transition for the Church and the Sisters of Mercy.

That year’s novitiate class included 16 young women. The year before there had been 33 novices. Soon classes the size of Dr. Stevens’s would seem large. Some orders would go for years without a new member, and many women who entered religious life would leave at some point. Only three of Dr. Stevens’s classmates are still members.

Dr. Stevens, however, said she has many reasons to remain a Sister of Mercy.

Her strong ties to the order are obvious from the decorations in her Creighton office. Wall hangings include a portrait of Mercy Founder Catherine

McAuley, with a McAuley quote prominently displayed: “Ours is not to do the extraordinary, only to do the ordinary extraordinarily well.”

Dr. Stevens serves on the order’s regional leadership team in addition to her teaching and research work at Creighton and maintains close ties with her fellow religious even though she no longer lives in a traditional convent community.

“I’ve had the support of the Sisters of Mercy, and I really believe in what my life is all about,” Dr. Stevens said. A central focus of her mission is “trying to inspire students that they can make a contribution to the world.”

Young people, she said, need to think about the relationship between religion and society and between the public and private good.

“What I’m most concerned about is that in the U.S., religion tends to be rele-

gated to the private and personal and emotional. How do we talk about the importance of faith in the public arena?”

Dr. Stevens stressed that there is no such thing as “religious life in general” and each sister and each community are distinctive. However, a dedication to God and serving others seem to be common threads among women religious.

Love of God, especially, led Dr. Haley to leave her home in Massena, N.Y., to join the Servants of Mary in Omaha



Dr. Haley

when she was only 17. She also had been inspired by the example of the sisters who had taught her.

“I had a desire to really share the Gospel,” Dr. Haley said. “That was my main purpose. I thought this was a life with a well-defined purpose and that my life would have a direction and goals.

## ARE VOCATIONS VANISHING? Looking Behind the Statistics

By Judith Martz Studt

As late as 1987, the American nuns still outnumbered priests by two to one, according to a survey that was conducted by Patricia Wittberg and published by the *Social Scientist Journal* of the Scientific Study of Religion in 1989.

But today, women religious may be an endangered species; the statistics are far from encouraging.

Since 1966, according to Sr. Sandra Schneider, IHM, in *Challenge for Tomorrow’s Religious* (updated in 1992 by Lora Ann Quinoñez and Mary Daniel Turner), the number of women religious has fallen from 180,000 to 126,000, only 1 percent of whom are under 30.

Deaths obviously contributed to part of the decline. The drop also was due to an increase in “defections,” which were especially noticeable in 1970. That year alone, more than 4,300 women left religious

orders to pursue other interests.

Another major factor in the decline was a decrease in the rates of entry. Rose Fuchs Ebaugh in *Women in the Vanishing Cloister* cites two surveys that were sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Women and conducted by Marie Augusta Neal, SND, which show just how the number of novices changed over the years. Between 1953 and 1957, 88 percent of the religious orders in the U.S. had more than 32,000 new members. But from 1976 to 1980, the orders had fewer than 3,000 young women entering.

What was once a steady stream of “new blood” had tapered off to a trickle. For many local orders today, one or two

entrants a year is typical. One nun knows of orders that have gone for more than two decades without a new member.

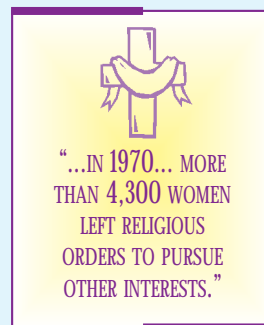
With fewer numbers to contribute to operating funds, many religious organizations are now feeling the financial pinch, Creighton Economist Fr. Gerard Stockhausen, S.J., observed. “To add to this dilemma, the median age for women religious in America has climbed to an all-time high of almost 70. Now orders are

faced with the added stress of caring for their elderly.”

What’s behind the falling numbers? What factors are affecting entry and retention in women’s religious orders? Some cite the assimilation of American Catholics into the larger culture as a reason for the decline in vocations; others point to the feminist movement.

Both forces, they say, have widened life opportunities for American Catholics — and, specifically, American Catholic women.

But others attribute the decline in



The sisters seemed contented and happy, and their lives seemed meaningful.”

The externals of religious life two generations ago were very different, she said, but the essentials of prayer, service and community have not changed.

“Our lives were very enclosed except for teaching because we were a teaching order,” Dr. Haley said. “We wore traditional habits and lived in large communities. We had a very carefully defined authority structure. Obedience to superiors and the rule (a list of procedures governing community life) were much emphasized.”

Dr. Haley’s life today is drastically different than when she entered, but it is still centered around the same passion for Gospel values.

She shares an inner-city house with several other members of her order and is involved in teaching and other service work off campus. The old authority structures have long since been replaced

by democratic community rules which she said she greatly prefers.

Dr. Haley said she still draws strength and support from the members of her community and their shared commitment to the Church and religious life.

For Sr. Graham, her religious life has revolved around her great love for teaching. “I consider teaching the most Christ-like profession, because even when Christ healed he seems to have done so to teach the healed and/or the attendant crowd.

“I don’t have a nice, clear-cut explanation of — nor an elaborate reason for — a religious vocation,” she said. “It is, indeed, a call to a unique way of life — but the ‘how, when, why me, where’ are not always so clear.

“For me, my religious vocation ... has always been a special gift, special since I am a convert. (My vocation) wasn’t

something I looked for nor did I have a known desire for it. It was and continues to be a gift — gratuitously given by God to me. I responded to that gift 58 years ago. I continue to respond each day — for that I am most happy.”

Sr. Graham and all the others agreed that the form of religious life will continue to change, but none would predict



*Sr. Graham*

exactly how — and (perhaps surprising to a lay person) none was very worried about the answer. “I’m more concerned that we have good, strong women doing the work of the Church,” said Sr. Graham. “The future will be dependent on that, but we can’t dictate the future, and I don’t know that we should want to. What is most important is now. We make the future, but we don’t need to know the future.”

vocations to Vatican II.

Essentially, Vatican II represented a total rethinking of the mission of the Church, said Dr. Maryanne Stevens, RSM, associate professor and associate chair of theology at Creighton. “It was a major paradigm shift that rocked everybody.”

With Vatican II, “authority structures became more democratic,” writes Ebaugh. “The cloister gave way to open boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Job opportunities for nuns opened up within Catholic parishes ... Finally, Vatican II redefined the vow of poverty with emphasis upon a commitment to issues of social justice and identifying with the materially poor.”

“(Vatican II) was a time of reaffirmation,” Dr. Stevens believes, “a time when men and women religious were called on to rethink their roles in modern society.”

And it was what Dr. Stevens terms “a call to laity to take their rightful place in the Church.”

For the first time, the congregation was encouraged to become involved with practically every aspect of the Church. “It meant that lay people could now help with

the service and take on all of the roles traditionally held by nuns,” said Fr. Richard Hauser, S.J., professor of theology at Creighton.

In some ways, the call to laity was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it meant that lay men and women could now hold jobs in Catholic schools, hospitals and social services.

On the other hand, Fr. Stockhausen pointed out, it meant that parishes could no longer count on inexpensive labor to run their operations. “They had to start paying wages that were at least somewhat competitive with those of public institutions.”

Concerned about underpricing laity in jobs, Dr. Stevens said, women religious began asking for comparable salaries.

“What the lay movement did was to give nuns freedom — freedom to use all their gifts and talents in meeting the pressing needs of society,” said Dr. Mary Alice

Haley, OSM, a Creighton assistant professor of philosophy.

As a result, women religious have

become far more diversified and specialized, as evidenced by the composition of a group of nuns Dr. Haley recently met for lunch. Among those attending were two chaplains, one of whom works in jail ministry; the other, at a local hospital. Also at the table were a Creighton researcher, an executive secretary of social ministry for a local diocese, a social worker, a nurse who cares for AIDS patients and an elementary school teacher.

“Now nuns are free to pick the needs that they can satisfy,” Fr. Stockhausen said. “They no longer have to be everything to everybody, but can focus on what they do best.”

Dr. Stevens believes the role of nuns has “become far clearer” since Vatican II. To her, that role is a compelling one: meeting the “unmet needs of modern society.”

“BETWEEN 1953 AND 1957, 88 PERCENT OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN THE U.S. HAD MORE THAN 32,000 NEW MEMBERS. BUT FROM 1976 TO 1980, THE ORDERS HAD FEWER THAN 3,000 YOUNG WOMEN ENTERING.”

Drs. Haley and Stevens both noted that, based on membership figures, women's religious orders should be showing the characteristics of dying organizations, drawing into themselves to conserve their resources and displaying a preoccupation with their internal problems.

Instead, they said, women's orders are creative and dynamic organizations whose members are moving into new ministries, more concerned than ever about serving the poor and planning for the future.

All three women expressed optimism about the future of vowed religious life in some form — though all agree that current forms of the life may be obsolete.

Dr. Haley, whose order is half the size it was in the 1960s and has no members in the United States under 30 other than two pre-candidates, said she's sad to see so few women entering religious life because she's found it satisfying.

However, she said the detachment which was part of her training has enabled her not to worry too much about this.

New forms of religious life will emerge, she said. For example, her order now has 42 associate members in the U.S.

"They take no vows but share in service and prayer and community," Dr. Haley said. "There's a wonderful bonding."

Dr. Stevens said her order has responded to its reduced and aging membership by trying to ensure that the community has the resources to care for older sisters.

The regional leadership team also is working to ensure that today's younger sisters will be cared for when they need it, she said.

Dr. Stevens said she trusts the members of her order to plan responsibly for her welfare even if there are relatively few younger sisters to help support the community.

The Sisters of Mercy, she said, face less financial distress than some orders because of good financial planning in the past and the receipt of comparable salaries in their health care institutions. The schools could never afford comparable salaries, she pointed out. Their health care institutions provide them with more resources than teaching orders, which worked in extremely low-paying Catholic schools.

Is the future of religious orders a concern to a young religious woman? Not as much as a lay person might imagine, Dobrovolny said.

She noted that, when she first started considering the religious life, one of her questions was "if I would find enough peer support and if there would be

other peers around."

Now, she said, she's less concerned about what might happen.

"Religious life will continue to be present in some form," she said.

"The number of vowed members will probably continue to decrease," she said. "There will be more collaboration and more inclusivity and more global focus."

Dobrovolny said she believes that religious life is at an "in-between state."

"We're seeing that the models of the past are not necessarily those of the future. We're experimenting with new models."

Meanwhile, Dobrovolny said she is glad she has chosen religious life and encourages other young women to consider it.

"It is very definitely good for me," she said. "The Sisters of Mercy have challenged and supported me and facilitated conversion in my life. They have called me to deepen my relationship with God and all of creation."

"My advice to anyone considering religious life is to keep asking questions. Talk to other folks and find a trusted person either in Campus Ministry or Peace and Justice (at Creighton) who can journey with you. Be gentle to yourself. This is a countercultural decision. It can be difficult to make. Be patient with the process. Have hope."



*More than 70 nuns posed in this 1919 photo, taken to commemorate their Summer School session at Creighton.*

# WOMEN RELIGIOUS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

*(Editor's note: Sr. Jennifer Simwa, RSCJ, is a junior at Creighton, majoring in pastoral care and social work. She lives in Omaha, where she and eight other sisters serve the community as Religious of the Sacred Heart.)*

By Sheila Swanson

At the age of 12, Jennifer Simwa was working with her mother in the family garden in her native Kenya. Out of the blue, she proclaimed to her mother that she wanted to work in a mission.

Coming from a family of Quakers, her mother told her, "Unless you are Catholic, you cannot work in a mission."

Her mother's answer did not stop Sr. Simwa. And she began her personal journey toward learning the Catholic tradition, converting to Catholicism in 1978



Sr. Jennifer Simwa.

and professing her final vows as a Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1991.

As numbers of women religious entering orders decline in the U.S., the numbers are rising in developing nations like Sr. Simwa's native Kenya. In fact, according to the latest Statistical Yearbook of the Church, the number of women religious in Africa from 1986 to

1991 (the most recent issue of the yearbook) has increased by more than 10,000, from 38,579 to 48,976.

Dr. Ashton Welch, associate professor of history and coordinator of the Black Studies Program at Creighton, has some assumptions about why the numbers are increasing: "In many instances, these young women are first- or second- generation converts, and they possess a much stronger commitment from their recent conversion," he believes. Dr. Welch also believes that religious leaders in Africa still have a very prominent role. "They are seen as role models whom younger Africans would like to emulate."

Sr. Simwa says she feels more young women are choosing religious life because "they see that missionaries come and change their culture, prompting them to say, 'If I am called to be a nun, then I can be a missionary to my own people.'"

Her choice was not initially accepted by her family, but they have "learned to accept (my vocation) and are very proud of me and my accomplishments," she says. Her family's initial objection stemmed from a cultural issue in Kenya — and most of Africa: Children take care of their parents as they age. Sr. Simwa remembers her mother asking her, "But, Jennifer, who will take care of you when you are old, and who will bury you when you die?"

According to Sr. Simwa, children are valued in African culture more than anything. And, when Africans see a priest or

a sister, they "automatically think you will live a poor life because you have no children."

But this attitude is not stopping young Africans from choosing religious life. "There are so many young women who want to become nuns in Africa right now," Sr. Simwa says. "The novitiates are extremely full."

The Creighton student, however, has found a family in the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ). Wanting to "live a universal life and experience the universal love that Jesus had for all," Sr. Simwa chose an international congregation in "order to experience other people's cultures and teach people about my own



Sr. Simwa is shown with Fr. Richard Hauser, S.J. (standing), and arts junior John Hoffman.

Photo by Monte Kruse, BA '83

culture while nurturing a mutual respect along the way."

When Sr. Simwa finishes her studies at Creighton, she will return to the Kenya/Uganda Province.

"I see my mission as communicating with the youth in my province. They need to see that the ways of previous generations may not be the ways to follow," Sr. Simwa says.

"There is so much unrest and self-imposed hatred in Africa stemming back to colonization when tribes were separated by their colonizers. I want to teach new generations that we are all one family in the eyes of God." **W**



# Creighton Today; Creighton Yesterday; Creighton Always

“Sherman, set the  
Wayback Machine for 1965.”

— Mr. Peabody  
*The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*

By Dick Jeffries

I am a time traveler. If everything had gone on schedule and I had been a better student, I would have graduated from Creighton University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism in 1965. Instead, I am a member of the class of 1995, anxious to cross the stage and receive my diploma 30 years late. Instead of 22, I am 52. My wife and four children all have completed their higher education pursuits on schedule. But back then I was distracted by Creighton’s extra-curricular offerings, and while not a resident student in the tradi-

*(Editor’s Note: Author Dick Jeffries is a member of Creighton’s Board of Directors and a prominent attorney in Omaha. He answers here the question often asked: “Is the Creighton of today anything like the Creighton I attended in 19xx?”)*

tional sense, I pretty much lived full-time in the Student Center.

Consequently, in the spring of 1965, when the other members of my class were receiving mailings about graduation, I received a summons to meet with Fr. Thomas K. McKenney, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. A misdirected old Jesuit named Fr. O’Donnell had thrown me out of a four credit hour Latin course due to my sporadic attendance. I petitioned the dean to have my record expunged of that injustice. A friend helped me draft the letter to Fr. McKenney contending that Fr. O’Donnell’s conduct might ruin a later career as a teacher. I had no intention of becoming an educator but thought that possibility might touch Fr. McKenney’s heart. After receiving Fr. McKenney’s invitation to visit him in his office on the second floor of the Administration Building, I was sure he would choose my future over Fr. O’Donnell’s rash conduct, and restore my record to its previous purity.

Fr. McKenney could yell louder than anyone I had ever met. He explained, in no uncertain terms, what he thought of me, my college work habits, my future prospects, my past misdemeanors, and may have commented on my personal appearance and hobbies, though I don’t specifically remember that. What I do remember is that everyone on the second floor of the Administration Building that day had received a full and complete briefing about my likely future in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The end of the second semester of my fourth (senior?) year arrived and I was 13 hours short of the requirements for graduation. I took stock: There was no foreign language course that I would ever pass; my parents were through paying my tuition, and Fr. McKenney was still dean. Similar to the bandits who had confronted Marshall Dillon, I figured it was time to get out of Dodge.

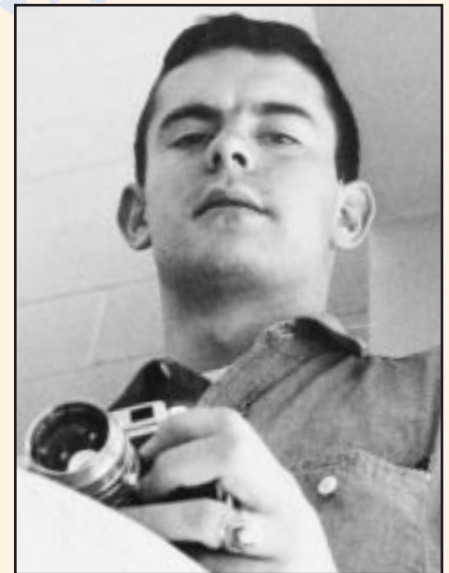
Under a lenient admissions program, long gone and forgotten, I applied to the Law School, was admitted, and subsequently graduated with my Juris Doctor degree in 1968.

The years have been very kind to me and I am blessed with a perfect wife and, as might be expected from such a union, near perfect children. Over the years I thought about my missing Bachelor’s degree. It made no difference to any of my endeavors, few inquired about it, and if

they did, the idea of a J.D. without a Bachelors Degree was treated merely as a curiosity. Nonetheless, I always felt as though I had left something undone.

In 1990 I made two discreet inquiries of the university. Was Fr. McKenney still dean of Arts and Sciences, and was there still a language requirement for a B.A. degree? Fr. McKenney had gone to his eternal reward and so had the language requirement. I secretly hoped they both ended up in the same place, but couldn’t linger over such sweet thoughts. The university’s guard was down and so I made my move.

First, just a sip of academic wine—a summer journalism course offering 3 hours credit in one week of full-time attendance. The course was a computer layout course



**The author took journalism during his mid-Sixties Creighton session.**

for editors and publishers. Being neither, and also being computer illiterate, I knew the course sounded like a natural for me. A boy and girl on either side of me in class, and my friend Tim McMahon on the outside, helped me through the course.

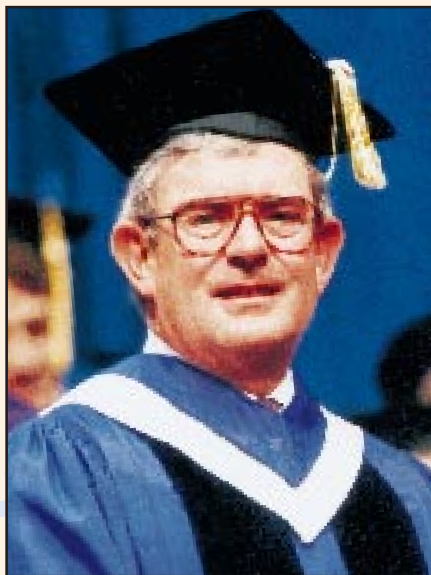
Fast forward to 1995. I inquired about completing my degree requirements. A course of study was designed: three class hours of political science, three hours of independent readings and reports in political science, three hours of journalism, and completion of an approved senior research and writing project.

To qualify for such a program, I had to reapply to the university and go through the admissions process. At the appointed time for my interview, I showed up at the

Admissions office dressed in my best and ready to schmooze my way under the fence. I was far more nervous than the 17-year-olds with backward baseball caps waiting for their interviews.

After being escorted to my personal admissions counselor, we small-talked our way past the initial discomfort of my being so much older than she. Yet, she was holding my academic future in her hands. My transcript of achievements of 30 years before had floated to the surface like a bad mafia hit, and before I knew it she was discussing certain "trouble spots" I had experienced in my earlier academic life. Nonetheless, the university was in a merciful mood and elected to let me return.

After registering by mail and picking



*The author as a director on the dais during 1995's graduation.*

up a confirmation sheet (what happened to the old gym and tubs of registration cards and classes filling up?) I went to the bookstore for my first brush with educational reality, 30 years later. My books cost more than my first car. A week later I received my tuition bill, and this foray was going to cost more than John D. Rockefeller's first car.

An envelope arrived at my home from the university, proclaiming on the outside "You qualify for student housing!" By the time I saw it, my wife had added "Don't even think about it!" So much for dorm life.

On my first day of class, I left home with a good luck kiss and a briefcase full of new books and new pencils, pens and

notebooks. With my usual somber suit and tie and gray hair, I could not have been more conspicuous if I had brought a zebra to class. The students wondered if I was ATF, FBI, or CIA. Unfortunately, I was only AARP.

My class schedule was Dr. Eileen Wirth's Public Relations Case Studies class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; Dr. Tom Mans' class on The Public Policy of Health Care on Monday nights; Dr. David Haberman's Senior Project Seminar on Thursdays, and unscheduled independent reading and writing in Political Science. It wasn't too daunting, but I do think my wife should not have been so hasty about the dorm room decision.

So what is it like today? I am pleased to report that Creighton University is very impressive at the classroom level. My fellow students are far more sophisticated and cosmopolitan than we were in 1965. Their awareness of world events and their ability to relate them to the subject matter of their courses is incredible. The students in my classes were attentive, well-prepared, articulate and meaningful participants in the classes. My teachers were extremely well prepared, were professional in their classroom leadership, and inclusive of the students in the process. The classroom demeanor was much more reminiscent of law school than of my time in the undergraduate school. There was far more participation by the students and more dialogue than simple lecturing. The work load was greater than I remember. Significant writing assignments were part of the regular class diet, and the papers were critiqued thoroughly and returned promptly.

The professors utilized guest lecturers to expand on the subject matter. In Public Policy and Health Care, we had lectures from healthcare experts on AIDS policy, aging, rural healthcare and Medicaid. The lectures were informative but not judgmental. The issues were presented in a thought-provoking manner, but the conclusions were left to the students.

In Dr. Wirth's class, we had outside experts lecture on topics as diverse as library computer searches and archival sources to media management. Dr. Wirth required written reports, oral presentations and community research projects demanding interaction with prominent individuals in various fields. The students undertook the workload with enthusiasm and the products of their effort were far more

insightful than I would have expected at the undergraduate level.

I was pleased that each course visited the subject matter in a context of moral values. Creighton still provides a true Jesuit education. Ethics, societal obligations and mores were the foundation for the specific disciplines. Expectations of academic integrity were emphasized in the classroom and in the university's published standards.

My latter-day undergraduate experience had some advantages over my earlier days. As a member of the university Board of Directors, I have a permit that allows me to park in any campus lot. Most often I would select a spot near the Criss Medical Research Facility. Nothing warms the heart of a J.D. like knowing that an M.D. is spending a little more time walking the asphalt. The one exception to my imperious approach to parking was when I selected a spot in the Jesuit parking area adjacent to their Community dining hall. The word filtered down to me that unless I wanted to spend another 30 years in undergraduate school, I should find another place to park. Ready access to the refectory is apparently a *Jebbie* tradition.

So what did the student in his autumn years learn? I learned that Creighton University and its mission are more important today than 30 years ago. The value based educational process is a necessity in the modern world. No easy answers exist, and those institutions of higher learning that can't or won't address society's obligations and the individual's responsibilities to the rest of society are not truly educating their students. Values, principles, ethics, and becoming men and women for others are components of a Creighton education and time only increases their value.

My longtime friend and secretary Cathy Bennett did the word processing for most of my school papers. My long suffering and patient wife, Kathie Jeffries, did most of the editing. My children and co-workers tired of my moaning about how tough school is for the modern day undergraduate. Collectively and individually, I think they will be cheering at my graduation.

So will I. **W**

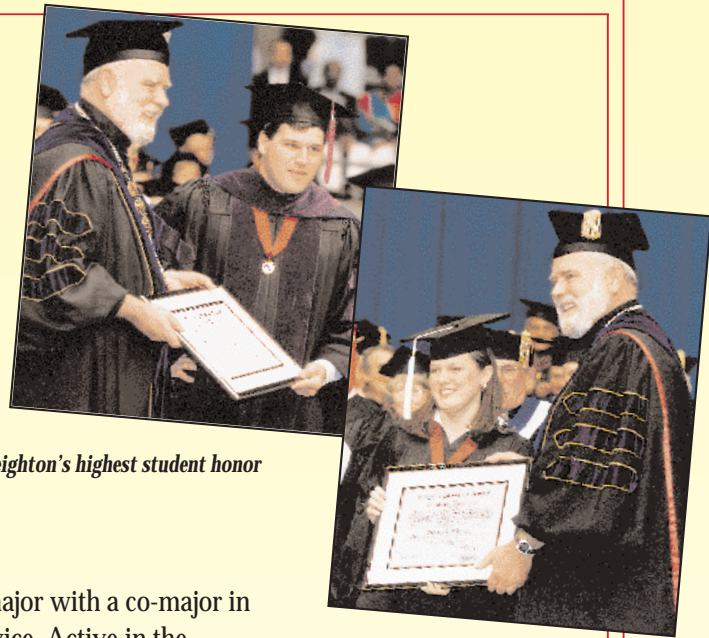
*(Postscript: On May 13, 1995, at approximately 11:04 A.M., I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Creighton University.)*

# PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## THE SPIRIT OF CREIGHTON

“...Remarkable initiative and able enterprise ... wisdom in action and modesty in achievement ... great personal self-sacrifice for the good of others ...”

*These words from the Spirit of Creighton Award aptly describe the commitment of Courtney L. Carlson and Trenten P. Bausch, who earned Creighton's highest student honor at May 1995 Commencement ceremonies.*



The Creighton career of Courtney Carlson, a theology major with a co-major in history, has been characterized by scholarship and service. Active in the Freshman Leadership Program, Carlson also devoted herself to the AIDS Awareness Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Omicron Delta Kappa, Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honor Society, Christian Life Community, and Gamma Phi Beta Sorority.

In addition, the Merriam, Kan., senior served as a resident adviser, Campus Ministry student adviser, and service trip participant and coordinator.

Carlson represented Creighton in the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) Semester Abroad program, tutoring children and women's groups in Hato Mayor, Dominican Republic. She also serves as an English as a Second Language tutor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Omaha.

Trenten Bausch's Creighton honors and activities are characterized by the same spirit. They include service on the Creighton Law Review, the Student Bar Association's mentor program for incoming students, Moot Court, the Creighton Law Student Chapter of the American Trial Lawyers Association, and ILAC.

The Creighton Law graduate from Lincoln, Neb., also gave of himself as a volunteer for Siena-Francis House, "Amanda the Panda" — an organization for seriously ill or grieving children, Habitat for Humanity, the Open Door Mission, and numerous food and clothing drives.

Congratulations to Courtney Carlson and Trenten Bausch — and to all the Creighton students they represent — for their commitment to living as persons for others in the spirit of Creighton University.

**CREIGHTON  
UNIVERSITY**



*"The Degree of Difference"*