

S U M M E R 2 0 0 0

# CREIGHTON

U N I V E R S I T Y M A G A Z I N E

## THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

*In April 1945,  
101 African-American officers  
took a stand against racism  
in the military. Creighton  
alumnus Dr. James B. Williams  
was one of them.*

Spirits of Creighton

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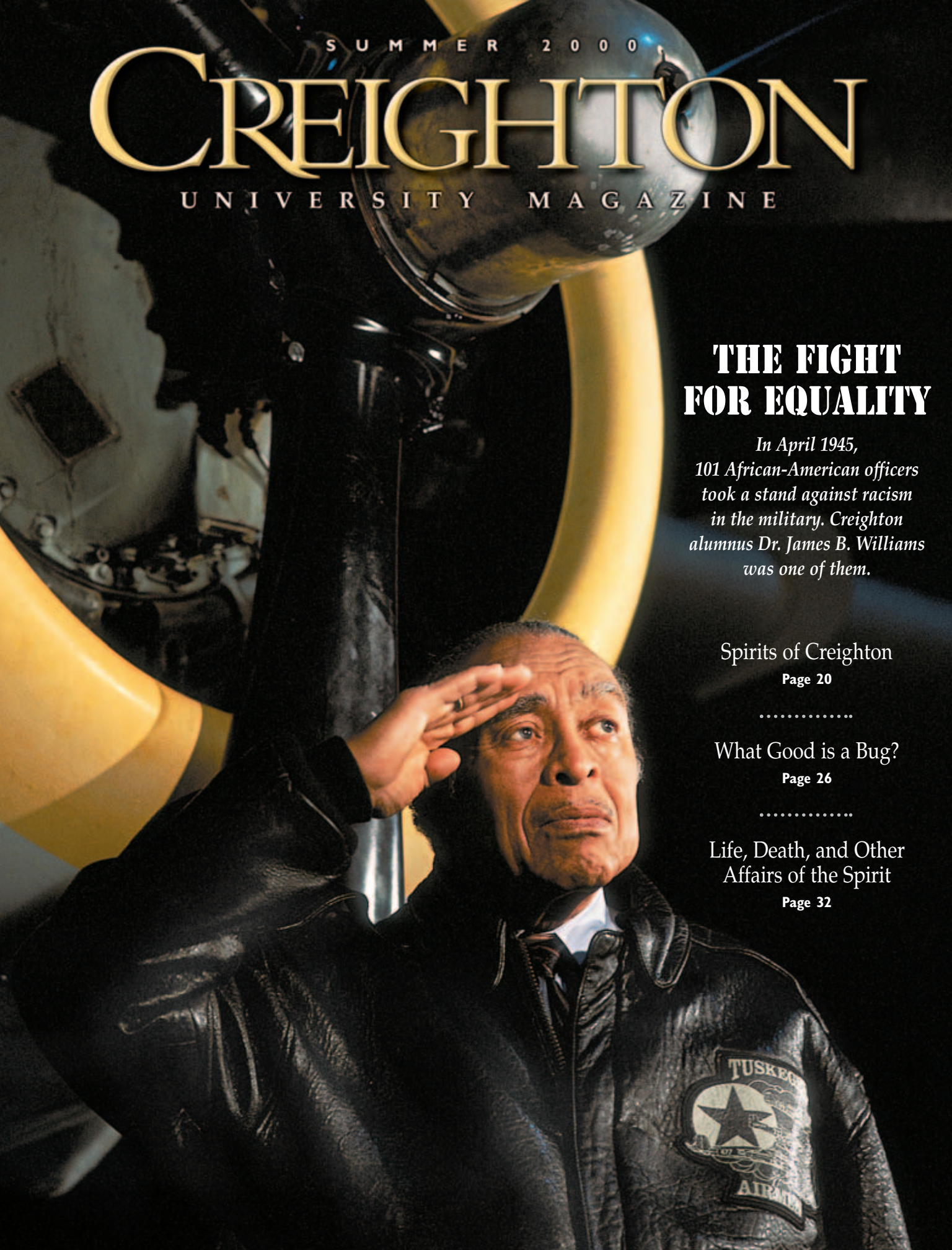
What Good is a Bug?

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Life, Death, and Other  
Affairs of the Spirit

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S U M M E R 2 0 0 0

# CREIGHTON

U N I V E R S I T Y M A G A Z I N E

## C O V E R S T O R Y

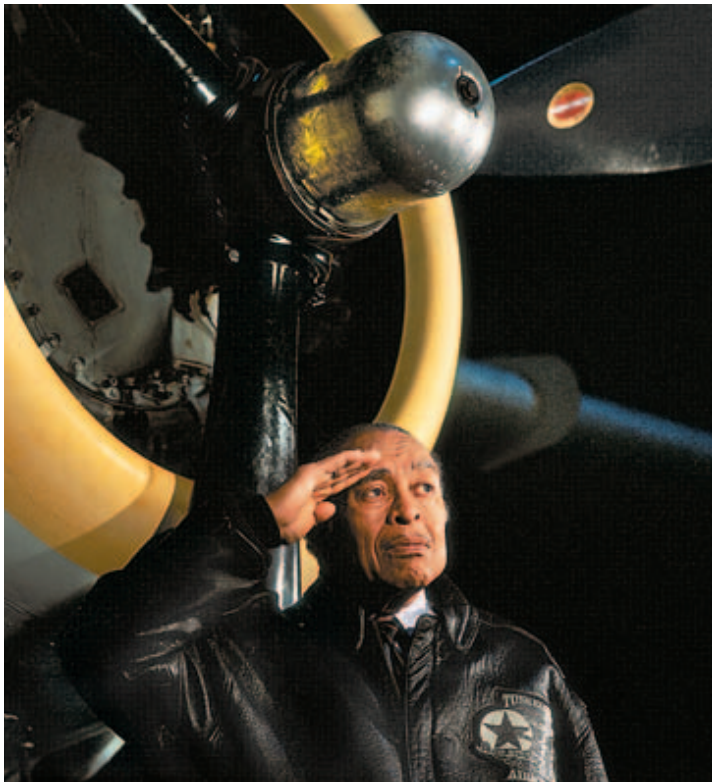


Photo by Monte Kruse, BA '83

**12 THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY** Creighton alumnus Dr. James B. Williams has waged war on discrimination throughout his life, both as a first lieutenant in the Army Air Corps and as a surgeon. In 1945, Williams was one of 101 black officers arrested for standing up against segregation in what became known as the “mutiny at Freeman Field.”

### ON THE COVER...

*Williams snaps a salute by the propeller of a B-25 bomber on display at the Strategic Air Command Museum near Omaha. Williams worked on B-25's as an engineering officer during World War II.*



**20 SPIRITS OF CREIGHTON** While they were students at Creighton, these men and women were honored for their initiative,

wisdom, honesty, tireless personal sacrifice and reverence for God. Find out what a few of these Spirits of Creighton are doing today.



**26 WHAT GOOD IS A BUG?** We trampling humans often see bugs as pests, as they nibble our crops and buzz in our ears. But Creighton biologist Theodore Burk sees another side to these diminutive denizens of our planet. In fact, he writes, bugs can be downright good.



Photo by Monte Kruse, BA '83

**32 LIFE, DEATH, AND OTHER AFFAIRS OF THE SPIRIT** Dr. Sue Schuessler, a visiting professor in Creighton's Sociology and Anthropology Department and African Studies program, spent a year in Zimbabwe studying the lives of a society often closed to outsiders — that of the traditional healer and the healer-in-training. Writer Brian Kokensparger tells her fascinating story.

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Creighton's program in spiritual direction continues to grow after 25 years and is attracting a diverse group of students.

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Creighton alumnus Lester "Doc" Carter, BSPHarm'58, has served Milwaukee's African-American community for more than 30 years.

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Barbara Braden, Ph.D., BSN'73, traveled to Japan, where her nursing protocols have received rave reviews.



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**THE BIBLE** Creighton theology professor Dennis Hamm, S.J., writes that Catholics, traditionally, haven't been big Bible readers. But he gives seven good reasons why they should start.

##### CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE'S PURPOSE

*Creighton University Magazine*, like the University itself, is committed to excellence and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms. The magazine will be comprehensive in nature. It will support the University's mission of education through thoughtful and compelling feature articles on a variety of topics. It will feature the brightest, the most stimulating, the most inspirational thinking that Creighton offers. The magazine also will promote Creighton, and its Jesuit Catholic identity, to a broad public and serve as a vital link between the University and its constituents. The magazine will be guided by the core values of Creighton: the inalienable worth of each individual, respect for all of God's creation, a special concern for the poor, and the promotion of justice.

## HATE LANGUAGE NEEDS ADDRESSING

I appreciate your cover article "Keeping Our Schools Safe" (Spring 2000). Dr. Tim Cook of Creighton's Department of Education discussed the steps needed to meet the demands of today's safety obligations, including zero tolerance for weapons, threats, fighting and bullying, including name-calling and labeling. Sadly, at a recent Governor's Conference on Violence in the Schools, the use of hate language (i.e., against gays, lesbians, others) was specifically excluded by the planning committee for inclusion in the Nebraska-based conference. Perhaps politically this is just too hot an issue. Are we afraid of what we are teaching our children? There are certainly no easy answers to violence in our schools. Unfortunately, we may be forced to look at issues that we'd rather not deal with. Yet to get to the root causes of violence, we must.

David Schoenmaker, Lincoln, Neb.

## CORRECTION

Dr. M. Sue (Wedemeyer) O'Dorisio's maiden name was misspelled in the Spring issue of *Creighton University Magazine*. She and her husband, Tom, received the Alumni Achievement Citation at December Commencement.

Letters to the Editor can be e-mailed to Editor Rick Davis at [rcd@creighton.edu](mailto:rcd@creighton.edu), faxed to (402) 280-2549, or mailed to *Creighton University Magazine*, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178. Letters may be edited, primarily to conform to space limitations. Please include your name, city, state, year of graduation (if applicable) and telephone number on all letters.

## Thank You for Helping Creighton to Prosper

This is my final president's column for *Creighton University Magazine*. I will use this opportunity to thank you once again for what you have done for Creighton University during my 19 years as president. We have accomplished much for the university, its students and its patients.

Almost 10 years ago, we set the goal to be the "outstanding Jesuit comprehensive University in the United States." I feel very confident that we have reached that level. Certainly things like the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings would indicate our success.

When *U.S. News* first began the rankings, our designation was "comprehensive." Over the years, that changed to "regional." But Creighton's ranking rose from seventh in the first year to No. 1 in our category for the last four years. All of you helped us reach this point, and you have my gratitude.

A vision for the Creighton of tomorrow is beginning to emerge from our planning process. A top priority clearly is additional space for science teaching and research, and the remodeling of the Rigge Science Building and Criss II and Criss III. We have a major opportunity for campus development if Omaha moves forward with development of the convention center/arena, which would be fewer than 14 blocks east of our main campus.

We have had good success in building the endowment, which now stands at \$210 million, up from \$16 million when we turned it over to external managers in 1984.

My greatest joy in the last 19 years has been the students. They are bright, they are enthusiastic, they are hard-working. Certainly as I look at my achievements, I don't want to be known for buildings, or even endowments. I want it known that I had a part in good kids getting a great education and having a great experience.

We are very fortunate to have Fr. John Schlegel, S.J., as our next president. He brings qualities that will ensure Creighton's move forward to excellence. He is a proven leader, an outstanding administrator, a good scholar, and very importantly, he loves Creighton. I turn over to Fr. Schlegel a healthy university. It is nationally renowned, it has a strong faculty, and it has an alumni body that is showing leadership and service as taught at Creighton. The University has bright and hard-working students, a balanced budget, a dedicated and talented staff and administration. Creighton is in good shape and will prosper in the years to come. Thank you for making this a great university.

God bless you.

*Michael G. Morrison SJ*

President



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## CREIGHTON STUDENTS EARN AWARDS AT MODEL U.N.

Creighton students won two awards at the International Model United Nations conference in Cairo, Egypt, March 7-12. Creighton received "best prepared delegation" honors, and College of Business Administration sophomore Brian Anzur was named "best male delegate."

Creighton was one of two universities from the United States to participate in the global conference, now in its 12th year. (The University of Virginia was the other.) The conference strives to help students develop knowledge and skills in four areas: learning the foreign policy of the country they represent, mastering the parliamentary procedure of the particular conference, public speaking, and conference diplomacy and consensus building to win votes while defending one's national interest.

"Model U.N.s successfully integrate learning and fun; they improve students' skills in doing politics and in communicating across cultures. Students grow in self confidence and make lifelong friends," said Kenneth Wise, Ph.D., associate professor of political science and international studies at Creighton, moderator of the International Relations Club and delegation coach.

Creighton's delegation consisted of senior Barbara Masilko



*Left to right ... LeAnne Mistysyn, Brian Anzur, Dr. Kenneth Wise, Jill Wittrock and Barbara Masilko.*

(head delegate) and junior Jill Wittrock, both of the College of Arts and Sciences, and junior LeAnne Mistysyn and Anzur from the College of Business Administration. More than 400 delegates participated in the conference, making it the largest Model U.N. held outside the United States. The title of the conference was "Towards Making Globalization More Humane."

## AROUND CREIGHTON

### Fr. Schlegel to begin Aug. 1

The Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., will begin his appointment as the 23rd president of Creighton University on Aug. 1. An inaugural date of Sept. 15 has been set.



### CU offers nation's first e-commerce/law program

With electronic commerce revolutionizing the way the world conducts business, the demand for legal expertise in e-commerce is expanding at the same rate.

Creighton's College of Business Administration and the School of Law are responding to that demand by creating the nation's first Juris Doctor-Master of

## REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION FOCUS OF SERVICE

In recognition of the new millennium and the Jubilee year, Pope John Paul II called for Catholics throughout the world to designate Ash Wednesday 2000 as a day of repentance for the centuries-long Christian discrimination against and persecution of the Jewish people.

Creighton's Center for the Study of Catholicism and the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue Group from Temple Israel in Omaha sponsored a Service of Repentance and Reconciliation at St. John's Church on March 8. More than 250 people attended the service.



Science in Electronic Commerce dual-degree program. The program allows students to earn separate Juris Doctor (J.D.) and Master of Science in Electronic Commerce (M.S.) degrees in less time than required to complete each degree separately and for less tuition.

The coordinated program is available immediately to students who are enrolled in both the School of Law and the College of Business Administration and its

Master of Science in Electronic Commerce program.

### Fr. Morrison honored

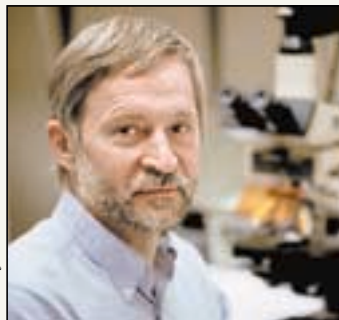
Fr. Michael G. Morrison, S.J., was chosen as this year's Nebraskan of the Year by the Downtown Lincoln Rotary Club #14. He received the honor on March 7. The criteria used in determining the Rotary Club's selection for Nebraskan of the Year are honesty, integrity and concern for others, service in charitable and civic causes, and leadership and

accomplishment in a field of employment.

Fr. Morrison was chosen for this year's award to honor his 19 years of service as Creighton's president. He was cited as exemplifying the warmth and friendliness for which Nebraska is known. Fr. Morrison greets students from all over the nation from a favorite spot on Creighton's central mall. The Rotary Club also noted that Fr. Morrison is an unsung goodwill ambassador for Nebraska.

## FRTZSCH CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH NASA

Bernd Fritzsch, Ph.D., has no desire to travel in space, but he has sent experiments on several space shuttle missions and is part of an international group of scientists who gather to share ideas and make recommendations about future scientific inquiry in space.



**Dr. Fritzsch**

Fritzsch, professor of biomedical sciences, conducts research on balance and hearing sensory systems. He wants to understand the effects gravity has on the development of

these systems, which need to have certain types of stimulation at critical stages to form normally.

Conducting research in space presents unique challenges. Of three experiments designed to be conducted on the space station Mir, none was completed.

"We still don't have a systematic understanding of the vestibular system," Fritzsch said. "We sent three sets of experiments on Mir. Everything in the book that could go wrong did.

"We used quail eggs. The experiment design was to have the eggs incubate in space so that the birds' vestibular systems would develop without the stimulation of gravity.

"The first set of eggs froze because of a power outage. The second set got too hot because of a power surge. The third set

incubated successfully, but after the quails hatched, the astronauts couldn't bring themselves to kill other living beings.

"Other researchers had the same thing happen with plants. A generation of plants reproduced one plant on the space station. The researchers wanted to know whether the second generation was fertile. The astronaut-scientists couldn't harvest the plant to do the required research because of the emotional ties to a living, green organism."

Scientists will have to take into account such emotional and psychological dimensions as they design experiments for long space flights.

One group looking into these questions is the Committee on Space Research (CoSpaR), an international scientific group that includes

members of NASA and the European and Japanese space agencies. Part of the group's mission is to discuss and plan space studies that will improve understanding about how living organisms evolved on Earth. Distinct environmental factors, such as the force of gravity, are important in understanding development of organisms from their genetic makeup to the ways they function in ecological systems.

Fritzsch has been invited to speak at the CoSpaR gathering this year to present research and pose questions about possible research projects to the group of scientists.

And although he is interested in science in space, he has no desire to conduct the experiments himself. He said, "I wouldn't climb on top of a ton of TNT with someone else in control of the trigger."

## ROMERO WORKING ON CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD

Jose Romero, M.D., was featured in newspapers in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain early this year as headlines touted a new drug called pleconaril as the "cure for the common cold."

Romero, associate professor of pediatrics at Creighton and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, has been involved in studies examining the drug for the past four years.

The drug's manufacturer, ViroPharma, expects to submit the drug for review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration later this year. Although touted as a way to shorten the duration of a cold by several days, the drug, said Romero and other health care professionals, has the ability to conquer other viral infections such as those that cause meningitis, inflammation of the heart and polio.

The drug fights a class of viruses called picornaviruses. All viruses have to infect cells to reproduce. The drug inhibits the virus' ability to infect healthy cells. This approach differs from that of antibiotics' actions on bacteria.

Antibiotics actually kill bacteria, but agents that kill viruses are too toxic to be used.

The drug has been used in about 100 emergency cases, and compelling anecdotes have resulted. Some health care professionals remain skeptical, however, because many of these viral infections are cured spontaneously.

Romero explains the drug's action this way: "The virus looks like a soccer ball," he said.

"Each side has a pit or canyon where the virus sticks to other cells. At the bottom of this canyon is a pore, where the drug can penetrate and block the virus' ability to get into other cells."

Romero oversaw a study of about 50 children to examine the drug's effect on enteroviral meningitis where the drug was found to be effective and safe in treating the viral disease that causes severe headache, vomiting, a stiff neck and fever.

He said, "This new class of drugs opens the way to develop a therapeutic, efficacious series of drugs using the same principles."



**Dr. Romero**

Photo by Kent Sievers

## RABBI KRIPKE, MANION HONORED AT MAY COMMENCEMENT

More than 1,200 students received degrees at May 13th commencement exercises. Creighton University also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Rabbi Myer S. Kripke, D.D., and the Alumni Achievement Citation to James L. Manion, MD'66.

Rabbi Kripke has been rabbi emeritus at Beth El Synagogue in Omaha since 1975. Prior to that, he served as rabbi at Beth El starting in 1946.



Kripke

Since 1976, he has been an adjunct professor at Creighton University, teaching an introductory course in Judaism. Rabbi Kripke has distinguished himself as a spiritual leader, Hebrew

interpreter, spokesman for Jewish causes and explainer of things Jewish to non-Jews. Rabbi Kripke has written columns for the *Jewish Press* in Omaha, and he has taught at educational institutions throughout the Omaha community. Rabbi Kripke and his wife, Dorothy, are graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. In 1997, the Kripkes gave \$7 million to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America to repair its 13-story tower which had been gutted by fire in 1966.

Manion, an anesthesiologist in private practice in Omaha, has a long history of helping others — both in his personal and professional life. He has been a leader in the Make-A-Wish Foundation

of Nebraska, Inc., an organization that grants wishes to children under age 18 who suffer from life-threatening illnesses. He was named Physician of the Year by the Metro Omaha Medical Society Alliance in 1997. He



Manion

also was awarded a certificate of appreciation by the Creighton School of Medicine for his role in the 1988 passage of Nebraska's motorcycle helmet law. He is a 1990 recipient of the Jefferson Award for Outstanding Service to the Community presented by KETV Channel 7 in Omaha. Manion is an assistant professor in Creighton's School of Medicine, Department of Anesthesiology.

## TAFFE ENDOWED CHAIR 21ST FOR CREIGHTON

The inaugural of the Gilbert F. Taffe, Jr., Endowed Chair in the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions was held April 6. The first endowed chair in the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, it is the 21st endowed chair at Creighton University.

Sidney J. Stohs, Ph.D., dean of the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, is the first holder of the chair. He joined Creighton as dean in 1990.

Stohs is an internationally recognized expert on oxidative stress and its role in the toxicity of diverse chemicals and has extensive experience in the study of antioxidants. In addition to his deanship, Stohs holds the academic rank of professor of pharmacy sciences and pharmacology at Creighton University.

The late Gilbert F. Taffe, Jr., BS'49, cared deeply about friendships, family and

Creighton University. His father, Gilbert Sr., and uncle, Clinton, both graduated from Creighton's School of Pharmacy, Gilbert in 1914 and Clinton a year earlier. The brothers at one time owned four pharmacies in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

After serving much of World War II in England as a member of the Air Corps support staff, Taffe attended Creighton on the G.I. Bill. He worked in his father's pharmacies part time until he graduated. He joined Mutual of Omaha in the home office in 1950. He primarily worked in Mutual's underwriting department until his retirement in 1983. He died on Aug. 29, 1998.

Taffe's memorial gift, made to honor his late father, will help to ensure that Creighton will continue to be associated with leadership in teaching, patient care and research in pharmacy and the allied health professions.

## CU AWARDS HONORARY DEGREE TO FERRIS

William Ferris, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), received an honorary degree from Creighton on April 4.

Ferris was the keynote speaker for the Second Annual John C. Kenefick Chair Humanities Luncheon. He was presented an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in recognition of his contributions to the humanities for nearly three decades.



Ferris

Before becoming chairman of the NEH in 1997, he served for 18 years as the founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Some of the programs he established while at the center include the annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, conferences on Elvis, civil rights and the law, and civil rights and the media.

Ferris has won the presidentially bestowed Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities and the American Library Association's Dartmouth Medal. He was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame and was recognized by *Rolling Stone* magazine as one of the nation's top 10 university professors.



## CU STUDENT WRITES MUSIC FOR DOCUMENTARY ON HATE-CRIME VICTIM

On Jan. 28, 1996, Thien Minh Ly — the 24-year-old son of Vietnamese immigrants — was brutally murdered while rollerblading on a high school tennis court near his parents' home in the Los Angeles suburb of Tustin, Calif. He had

been stabbed in the chest and abdomen as many as 50 times; his throat was slashed; and his head was stomped on.

The perpetrators were two white supremacists (one sentenced to death and the other to 25 years to life in prison), Gunner Lindberg and Domenic Christopher. Lindberg bragged of the killing in a vile, descriptive letter to his cousin. It began, "Oh, I killed a jap a while ago ..."

Creighton dental student Michael Yesenofski is very familiar with Ly's tragic story. As a senior at the University of Portland, Yesenofski joined two former classmates from Jesuit High School in Portland, Ore., to produce a documentary that details the life and death of Ly.

The video was directed by Trac Minh Vu, then a student filmmaker at Cornell University. Kerry Seed, then an English major at Montana State, served as assistant director. Yesenofski composed the original music for the 55-minute documentary and assisted with the audio.

The trio spent 12 days in Los Angeles in the spring of 1997 filming the documentary, which consists mainly of interviews with Ly's family and friends. All of those interviewed were asked to write a personal letter to Ly, which they read before the camera.

"We all had seen films that focused on the crime and perpetrators themselves, and we knew these films had a short-term impact. We wanted to take a different approach," Yesenofski said. "We wanted the audience to get to know Thien and his family personally, and see what the world lost when he was taken."

After filming was complete, Vu, Seed and Yesenofski faced the daunting task of piecing together 30 hours of footage into an hour-long documentary. They spent two weeks in August 1997 in a small, unair-conditioned editing suite in New York City completing the project on a paltry \$8,000 budget.

The result was *Letters to Thien*, a gripping look into the devastation wrought by this horrible crime. Yesenofski still gets chills watching the video.

"I have seen *Letters to Thien* many times over now, and I still cannot sit comfortably through it," Yesenofski wrote in the video's promotional material. "It still angers me, it still hurts, and I am glad that it hasn't stopped shaking me."

*Letters to Thien* has been shown on college campuses across the country, including at UCLA where Ly graduated in 1994 with degrees in biology and English. That showing was accompanied by a candlelight vigil.

Yesenofski, a biology major at the University of Portland, began dental school at Creighton this past fall. A love of science drew him to dental school, and Creighton's dedication to service and justice drew him to the hilltop campus.

He also continues to write music and, along with Vu and Seed, has formed Fusion Pictures. They are working on a new project called *House of Three*, a film that chronicles three generations of a Vietnamese family. But the trio won't soon forget *Letters to Thien*.

"When I see a news report about a hate crime, I don't just say, 'I can't believe it,' and move on. I genuinely feel sad and angry," Yesenofski said. "I know that there is a whole family and group of friends like mine who are going to be struggling and hurting."



*Above are images from the documentary film Letters to Thien. At the top is Thien's mother who describes how her son was murdered; the middle is a newspaper article about the murder, and the bottom is where Thien was murdered.*



Photo by Kent Sievers

**Yesenofski**



## ALUMNI HONORED WITH ALUMNI MERIT AWARDS

### College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences presented its Alumni Merit Award to **Heather**



Harden

**Marian Harden, BA'69**, on May 12. After graduating from Creighton, Harden earned her master's

degree in journalism from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. She currently is an account executive with Dean Witter Reynolds in Minneapolis. Harden worked for many years in broadcasting, including award-winning anchor stints in Green Bay, Wis., Atlanta and Minneapolis. She has been a tireless and successful volunteer in many charities, particularly with the March of Dimes and the Leukemia Society. Harden was recently

elected to the city council of Bloomington, Minn., the third largest city in Minnesota. She is the mother of two: Keegan and Brandon.

### College of Business Administration

**Bill McQuillan, BSBA'73**, president and CEO of City National Bank of Greeley, Neb., received the College of Business Administration's Alumni Merit Award on May



McQuillan

19. McQuillan, whose grandfather started the bank in 1930, joined his father, the late **Jim McQuillan, BSC'42**, as an executive at the bank in 1983. McQuillan is past chairman of the Independent Community Bankers Association, which represents some 5,500 community banks across the

country. He is past president and current director of the Nebraska Independent Bankers Association. He was elected to the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City in 1993 and was re-elected in 1996. He also is a member of Creighton University's College of Business Administration Advisory Board. McQuillan and his wife, Patricia, are the parents of four children: Pat, Brian, Christopher and Kimberly. Pat is a senior in Creighton's College of Business Administration.

### Graduate School

At a March 24 ceremony, **Richard K. Wilson, Ph.D., BA'75, MA'77**, received the Alumni Merit Award from the Graduate School. In 1982, Wilson earned his Ph.D. in political science at Indiana University. He has attained a

national reputation as a scholar of American politics. He currently is on the faculty at Rice University where he is chair of the political science department. Wilson held the position of political science program director at the National Science Foundation from 1996 to 1998. He is married to Creighton alumna **Patricia Dupras Wilson, BS'74**. They have a daughter, Megan.



Wilson

### School of Dentistry

**Gerald P. Mancuso, DDS'57**, received the School of Dentistry's Alumni Merit Award on April 14. After graduating from the School of Dentistry, he served for two years in the U.S. Army



Mancuso

Medical Corps. In 1959, he opened his Columbus, Neb., dental practice. Mancuso is highly regarded by his community and is well respected by his professional peers. A colleague noted that Mancuso expresses the depth of his faith often by treating the elderly and the poor for very reduced rates. Mancuso is active in the school system, St. Bonaventure Parish and both children's and adult sports. He and his wife, Carmen, have three sons: **Jerry, BS'82, MD'86; Michael, BA'84**, and **Stephen, BA'83**, who also is a dentist and works with his father.

## ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTS TWO

**Oneri Fleita III, BA'91**, and the late **Ralph William Langer, BUS AD'43**, were inducted into the Creighton University Athletic Hall of Fame on March 21.



Fleita

Fleita is known as one of the building blocks of Creighton University baseball. He was a member of the baseball team in 1987 and 1988 and is considered one of the key players of the Jim Hendry era at Creighton. Fleita was a career .397 hitter. In 1987, he was named to the All-Missouri Valley Conference (MVC) team. During his senior year, he was named captain of the team while earning an honorable mention All-American honor as well as being named the MVC Player-of-the-Year.

He currently is the coordinator of Latin American scouting for the Chicago Cubs. Fleita is married to **Susan Lynch Fleita**,

**BSBA'91**. They have two children, David and Maggie.

Langer was a member of the Creighton University men's basketball team from 1939-43. He played center for the Bluejays in 1942-43 on one of Creighton's most decorated teams. After being ranked No. 1 for most of the season, Langer led the Bluejays to an undefeated Missouri Valley crown, a berth in the National Invitation Tournament (NIT) and a 16-1 overall record. For that effort, Langer was named first-team All-American as well as being selected for the All-Missouri Valley Conference team.

He was married to Helen Patricia Langer and was the father of three children: Mark, Ralph "Bill" Jr. and Patricia. Although Langer passed away in October 1998, his accomplishments and memory will live on in the minds and hearts of Bluejays fans.

# Christian Spirituality Program Reflects on 26 years

By Rick Davis

While programs offering training in spiritual direction have proliferated in the last few years, Creighton University's Christian Spirituality Program remains unique.

Creighton offers the only graduate-level program in spiritual direction held only during the summer.

Since 1975, more than 600 students — laity, religious and clergy — have earned degrees through Creighton's program.

"The sense of community is very strong here," said the Rev. Richard J. Hauser, S.J., the program's director. "They (students) eat, pray, go to class and live in the residence halls together."

This summer will be the program's 26th year.

Students enrolled in the program engage in graduate-level study, personal prayer, faith sharing and apostolic work over three summers at Creighton, eventually earning either a master of arts degree and/or a certificate in spiritual direction. The certificate program involves one four-week term each summer; the master's program involves two four-week terms.

When the program was formed 26 years ago by former Creighton theology professor the Rev. John Sheets, S.J., it was one of only about 30 such programs in the country. (Sheets, who went on to become the auxiliary bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., is now retired and has returned to Creighton's Jesuit community.)

"Today, there are more than 300 programs offering professional training in spiritual direction," Hauser said.

But Creighton still remains a forerunner, with about 150 students currently active in its program.

The primary focus of Creighton's program has remained the same: to prepare graduates to do spiritual direction and to prepare them to give individually directed retreats in the Ignatian tradition.

But the program — administered through University College's Summer Sessions — also has evolved. Hauser describes today's program as "holistic, but not New Age," with talented doctoral-level faculty providing instruction that is "extremely rigorous."



*Fr. Hauser, left, poses with the program's founder, retired Auxiliary Bishop John Sheets, S.J., middle, and former director Fr. Eugene Donahue, S.J., during the program's 20th anniversary. Last summer, the program celebrated its 25th anniversary.*

"It's not for the faint-hearted," Hauser said.

In addition to the more traditional graduate-level theology courses, the program offers classes such as T'ai Chi, Joy Through Movement, Art and Spirituality, Spanish Mysticism, Spirituality and Sexuality, and Dreamwork.

"The strength of the program is its strong body, mind, spirit connection," said Linda Wood, who earned her master's degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton in 1999.

Wood, a former music teacher, had taken some Old Testament courses at Creighton and had thoughts of attending the seminary before she enrolled in the spiritual direction program.



"I never thought I would be a spiritual director," Wood said. "But I really loved it."

Wood currently is the Christian education director for Heartland United Methodist Church in Omaha. She also provides spiritual direction on a one-on-one basis.

Hauser said Creighton's program is attracting more lay people and non-Catholics than in years past.

"When the program first started, it was for priests, religious and Catholics. Now, many non-Catholics minister. It's rather remarkable," Hauser said.

He said that Protestants, especially, are becoming more interested in spiritual direction — recalling one recent class in which he had eight Protestant ministers. Wood agreed.

"The Catholic Church has a tradition of spiritual direction," Wood said. "In the Protestant Church, ministers are seeking spiritual direction. People are getting to know a little bit more about this."

Among Catholics, the desire for spiritual direction also seems to be growing.

The Rev. Tom Greisen, an associate pastor at St. Philip Neri Church and director of the Office of Spiritual Development for Lay Ministry for the Omaha Archdiocese, said parishioners today are hungry for spiritual guidance and reflection.

"Among the needs that lay people are identifying for themselves, the desire to grow spiritually always ranks really high," said Greisen, who completed Creighton's program in 1991.

"My sense is that one of the biggest obstacles to shared faith in Western Civilization today is busyness. People are running so ragged, there is not the opportunity for reflection.

"I deal mostly with families," Greisen said. "And the issues with them are: How do I foster a spiritual life in the busyness of husband, wife, mom, dad, plus career? How do I balance that all? What is the 'Face of God' in the midst of work and in the midst of family living?"

Greisen, who learned of Creighton's program from a fellow priest, said he became interested in it because of his own "hunger for a deeper, more meaningful, more lively relationship with God."



*Sister Ana Aba of Nigeria performs a traditional dance during a Mass at St. John's Church as part of last year's Christian Spirituality Program. Fr. Hauser said the program has an international flair: "In a class of 28 last year, I had six people from foreign countries."*

Photo by Kent Stevers

He said the program was "like a wave every summer of growth and insight. It was very, very good."

Hauser said that for many of the students the program helps them with their own spiritual growth.

"Most people come to be trained to help others," Hauser said, "but they discover they undergo a deep personal transformation, finding God at a deeper dimension. This energizes them to help others discover God at this same level in their own lives."

For more information on the program, call Summer Sessions at (402) 280-2424 or 1-800-637-4279 or visit the website at <http://www.creighton.edu/SummerSessions/html/csp.html>. Program Administrator Maureen Crouchley can be reached via e-mail at [mscrouch@creighton.edu](mailto:mscrouch@creighton.edu) or directly at (402) 280-2669.

## Fr. Hauser Scholarship Fund Established

Fr. Richard J. Hauser, S.J., has deeply affected the Creighton community and generations of students. He said once, "I'd die a happy man if my calling as a theology professor and Jesuit priest would warrant the epitaph: He helped us recognize God's presence in our lives." To honor Fr. Hauser's extraordinary work in Christian spirituality, Joseph M. Coleman, BSBA'82, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Alumni Club spearheaded the Richard J. Hauser, S.J., Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The Fr. Hauser Scholarship will enable Creighton students majoring in theology to train in youth ministry or elementary and secondary Catholic school education. Moreover, scholarship recipients will go on to live, work and teach by Fr. Hauser's example. Gifts to the scholarship fund can be sent to Creighton University's Office of Development, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE, 68178-0115 or call toll-free for more information at 1-800-334-8794.







# THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

By Rick Davis

*"The underlying philosophy of segregation is diametrically opposed to the underlying philosophy of democracy and Christianity, and all of the dialectics of the logicians can not make them lie down together."*

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
From a Nov. 4, 1956, sermon

*Editor's note: James B. Williams, MD'51, MSM'56 (surgery), FACS, was interviewed for this article last October, when he returned to Creighton University's campus to receive the School of Medicine's Alumni Merit Award.*

— April 12, 1945, Freeman Air Field, Seymour, Ind.

1st Lt. James B. Williams arrived at the base legal office, knowing his military career and possibly his life hung in the balance.

"Jim, I want you to read this and sign it," said his commanding officer, Maj. John B. Tyson, pushing Base Regulation 85-2 in front of him.

Williams, a young African-American engineering officer, would eventually go on to earn two degrees from Creighton University, open a medical clinic in Chicago, become the Windy

City physician for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and meet with President John F. Kennedy in an effort to integrate the nation's hospitals.

But on that fateful Thursday in April 1945, he was in a room facing nine other officers, including Maj. Tyson, staring at a neatly typed document titled: "ASSIGNMENT OF HOUSING, MESSING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR OFFICERS, FLIGHT OFFICERS AND WARRANT OFFICERS."

In an official tone, the regulation stipulated that certain supervisory personnel were assigned to use one officers' club and trainees another.

But Williams knew the document's intent was to keep the black officers from entering the white officers' club, tennis courts and swimming pool. All the white officers on base were considered "supervisory personnel," while all the black officers were labeled

HEADQUARTERS  
FREEMAN FIELD  
Seymour, Indiana

12 April 1945

SUBJECT: Disciplinary Action

TO : All Concerned

1. Pursuant to authority conferred by the 69th Article of War, the following named commissioned and flight officers are ordered into arrest to transit from Freeman Field, Seymour, Indiana to Goddard Field, Kentucky, and arrest in quarters upon arrival at Goddard Field until further notice, effective 0800 hours 12 April 1945.

NAME	RANK	SERIAL NO.	SIGNATURE
Arthur L. Ward	1st Lt.	0564177	
Donald D. Davis	2nd Lt.	02075544	
James B. Williams	1st Lt.	0807664	
Paul L. White	P/O	T-136700	
David A. Smith	2nd Lt.	0585809	
Charles E. Wilson	P/O	T-42507	
William C. Perkins	2nd Lt.	01003123	
John E. Wilson	P/O	T-136703	
James Doyle, Jr.	2nd Lt.	0319096	
Franklin Scott	P/O		

*1st Lt. James B. Williams, listed third from the top, was one of 101 black officers at Freeman Air Field placed under arrest in 1945 for refusing to sign a regulation that would have kept the officers' clubs on base segregated.*

“trainees” (no matter their experience or rank).

Williams also knew that, seven days earlier, 61 black officers had entered the “white officers’ club” in a peaceful protest. They were arrested and ordered back to their barracks. The incident prompted the base’s white commander, Col. Robert R. Selway, to draft the regulation.

“I read it, but I can’t sign it,” Williams told Tyson.

“If I don’t have the same rights as you as an officer, then I shouldn’t be one,” he said.

Tyson, a white pilot, was the commanding officer of the 619th Bombardment Squadron, 477th Bombardment Group. Williams considered him a good friend.

Tyson now ordered Williams to sign the regulation. Williams again refused.

“You’re under arrest to quarters,” exclaimed Tyson.

Williams knew that, under the 69th Article of War, disobeying a superior’s direct order during wartime was punishable by death.

“I thought that what we were doing was proper, and I figured it was the only way to approach the segregation that was throughout the military,” Williams said.

The following day, Williams and 100 other black officers who refused to sign Regulation 85-2 were lined up on the tarmac at Freeman Field, not knowing what would happen next.

Some black enlisted airmen tried to take pictures of the scene, but white military police officers confiscated their cameras and destroyed their film. One clever photographer did manage to secretly snap some pictures from a camera he had hidden in a shoe box. One of his photos appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier* — one of the nation’s leading black newspapers — under the headline “These 477th Bombardment Officers Bombard Jim Crow.” (Jim Crow laws were established in the South to enforce racial segregation.)

The 101 black officers were placed on a C-47

### These 477th Bombardment Officers Bombard Jim Crow



SOME OF THE ONE-HUNDRED-AND-ONE officers recently arrested at Freeman Field, Ind., because they attempted to enter an officers' club from which Negroes had been barred. Here they are with their personal belongings lined up on a ramp. As their names were called they were placed on a C-47 Transport Plane and carried to Godman Field, Ky., for confinement. Photographers of the outfit—the 477th Bombardment Group—were on the scene and snapped pictures—the majority of which were destroyed on the scene by order of Col. Selway.

However, the above and a few others were saved. The officers are first and second lieutenants and flight officers. In the back ground one can see a bus that was the only one used to bring the officers from the barracks to the plane—the others were trucks as you can see to the right of the photo. Meanwhile it is reported, but not officially confirmed, that Col. Selway's command at Godman and Freeman fields will be lifted—pending conclusion of an investigation.

*This is one of only a few pictures of the arrested black officers lined up on the tarmac at Freeman Field awaiting transport to Godman Field, Ky., as it appeared in the Pittsburgh Courier. Most of the cameras were confiscated by military police on the scene. The above photo was taken from a camera hidden in a shoe box.*





Photo courtesy of Dr. James B. Williams

*Williams, far right, reunites with other members of the Tuskegee Airmen at a 1992 reunion.*

transport plane and flown to Godman Field, Ky., a training facility located adjacent to Fort Knox. There, they were met by about 75 MPs armed with submachine guns and loaded onto prisoner transport vans.

"We were being transported just as if we were prisoners of war," retired Lt. Col. James C. Warren, another of the black officers arrested at Freeman Field, wrote in his book *The Tuskegee Airmen: Mutiny at Freeman Field*. "The German POWs, walking around without guards, were laughing at us."

The officers were held under house arrest at Godman, relegated to base barracks.

Williams, a native of Las Cruces, N.M., had attended segregated grade and high school. He had taken four years of college (majoring in pre-med) and was teaching in Clovis, N.M., when he was drafted into the military in 1942. While teaching in Clovis, Williams took a night class in airplane mechanics "to occupy the time" and, with the war raging in Europe, "to be prepared in any field that was necessary."

With his pre-med background, Williams was assigned to the medical corps at Camp Pickett, Va., and was selected to attend Medical Administrative Officers Candidate School. But with dreams of becoming a pilot, he went to the Pentagon and requested a transfer to the Army Air Corps (the precursor of the U.S. Air Force). The transfer was approved, but instead of being sent to Tuskegee, Ala., for flight training, Williams was appoint-

ed an aviation cadet and sent to Boca Raton Club, Fla., for basic training. From there, he went to Yale University for technical training, where he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Corps.

Williams was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first black aviators to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. Tuskegee fighter pilots racked up impressive records escorting American bombers over Germany during World War II. Author Robert A. Rose, who chronicled their success in his 1976 book *Lonely Eagles*, wrote that Tuskegee pilots never lost a bomber to enemy aircraft during 200 escort missions. No other fighter group would claim such success.

But the 477th Bombardment Group would never see action. The white superior officers of the mostly black bomber group saw to that. Declassified phone transcripts, detailed in Warren's 1995 book, show top brass seemingly more concerned with keeping segregation on base than with preparing troops for combat.

The black servicemen at Freeman Field couldn't turn to the community for support. The town of Seymour, Ind., was rumored to be a headquarters for the Ku Klux Klan. Most merchants in Seymour refused to serve blacks, including those from the base.

"You couldn't even get a Coke or a hamburger (in Seymour)," Williams said. "About the only facilities that were available to us were the ones on base, the two officers' clubs — one designated for white officers and one for blacks."



Photo courtesy of Dr. James B. Williams

*Williams, front row, second from right, poses with members of his technical training class at Yale University, where he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Corps.*

After five days under house arrest at Godman, each of the 101 officers was brought before a panel of officers from the Army Air Force Inspector General's Office, which was conducting a high-level investigation into the case.

"Normally, all you have to do when you're arrested

Photo courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Library



*Williams was a member of a National Medical Association delegation that met with President John F. Kennedy in 1963. The delegation urged an amendment to the Hill-Burton Act that would prevent discrimination in hospitals built with federal assistance. Williams is sixth on Kennedy's right.*

is give your name, rank and serial number, and say, 'I have counsel,'" Williams said.

But the first lieutenant was determined to speak during his hearing.

"I sat down and we talked," Williams said. "I tried to explain to them why they would never, ever be able to fight a war with a segregated army."

The black officers, fortunately, had Army Regulation 210-10, Paragraph 19, on their side. Although not written to address segregation, it stated that all Army officers be admitted to all officers' clubs on all stations, posts or bases in the Army.

On April 23, 1945 — 10 days after they were first

brought to Godman Field — the black officers were released and returned to Freeman Field. Only one officer was found guilty of any wrongdoing — Lt. Roger C. Terry, who later was found guilty of "jostling a superior officer" while trying to enter the club. (He was sentenced to forfeit \$50 per month for three months.) However, each officer had a two-page, type-written reprimand placed in his official military file.

"It basically stated that we were a disgrace to the race and to the country," Williams said.

The letters of reprimand remained in the files of these officers for 50 years until removed by the Air Force in 1995. The Air Force also set aside the court-martial conviction against Terry.

On Aug. 12, 1995, then Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman presented the official documents to Williams and some of the other officers, finally vindicating them. At the same ceremony, then Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Rodney A. Coleman described the Freeman Field incident as a "bellwether for change with respect to integrating the U.S. military." He said the black officers had taken "a giant step for equality" 10 years before Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus. The Armed Forces were integrated in 1948 by President Harry S. Truman.

"It was a big risk doing what we did," Williams said. "Fortunately, for the good of the country and for our good, it turned out well."

Williams returned to Freeman Field, and, shortly thereafter, the 477th was placed under the command of Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., an experienced black officer and a West Point graduate.

The following year, Williams moved with the 477th to Lockbourne Army Air Field in Columbus, Ohio. There, Williams began taking physics classes at night at Ohio State University to complete his pre-med requirements. Williams left the military in 1946 and returned to New Mexico, where, in 1947, he earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from New Mexico State. Now bent on a career as a physician, Williams was accepted to



Creighton's medical school. He earned a medical degree from Creighton in 1951. And, a year later, he was accepted into Creighton's surgical residency program, earning a master of science in medicine (surgery) degree in 1956. In 1957, Williams passed the American Board of Surgery examination on the first attempt, the first Creighton-trained surgery resident believed to have done so. Williams received additional surgical training at the Royal Victoria Hospital at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Williams eventually moved on to establish a medical clinic on Chicago's South Side with his brothers, Jasper, a 1953 Creighton School of Medicine graduate and a board certified obstetrician/gynecologist, and Charles, a board certified internist. Williams became president of the Cook County (Ill.) Physicians Association. And, on Aug. 1, 1963, he was one of several physicians with the National Medical Association to meet with President Kennedy to urge an amendment to the Hill-Burton Act that outlawed discrimination in hospitals built with federal assistance.

Williams, who had to have special clearance to enter the White House because of his involvement in the Freeman Field incident, drew the attention of Kennedy.

"He came over and kidded me and said, 'If you don't fight for your rights, you won't get any,'" Williams said.

Williams was well aware of the discrimination taking place in Chicago-area hospitals. When Williams was first put on staff at Illinois Central Hospital, "they were putting black patients in the basement." (In 1992, Williams was named chief of surgery at the hospital, renamed Doctors Hospital of Hyde Park, and, in 1996, the hospital's surgical suite was named in his honor.)



Photo by Monte Kruse, BA '83

*Williams stands outside the Williams Clinic, which he founded with his brothers, Jasper, MD'53, and Charles on Chicago's South Side.*



Photo by Cheryl St. Michel

*Williams accepts the Creighton School of Medicine's 1999 Alumni Merit Award with his wife, Willeen, and children, Brenda Payton Jones and Dr. James Williams II, BS'79, at his side.*

Williams felt the sting of racism when he joined the staff at Chicago's St. Bernard Hospital in 1957 as its first African-American surgeon. (He eventually served as the hospital's chief of surgery from 1971-1972.)

"When I first walked into the surgical suite, one of the doctors, a urologist, made the remark, in front of about seven other doctors who were in the room, that, 'Well, the environment around here is getting awfully dark. I'm going to have to find me some other hospital to go to,'" Williams said.

A few years later, Williams was asked to rush to surgery. A patient was bleeding to death on the operating table. When Williams arrived, a priest was giving the patient her last rites. The chief urologist, the one who had insulted Williams, had come upon some complications while taking out the patient's kidney stone, and now he couldn't stop the bleeding.

"I scrubbed and was able to control all bleeding," Williams said.

Williams saved the patient's life. And the urologist?

"He didn't say a thing, and neither did the priest," Williams said. "The priest just walked out.

"Interestingly enough, the urologist's son was one of those who talked me into going to the march on Washington when Martin Luther King gave his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech," Williams said.

Williams served as King's physician when the civil rights leader was in Chicago.

"His attorney was our attorney; that's how I happened to get involved with him," Williams said. Williams said he only made about three calls on Dr.

## QUICK ACTION SAVES BABY

It was a quiet, late Sunday afternoon in Chicago, May 1976. Creighton alumnus James B. Williams, MD'51, MS'56, was having dinner with his family, when he received a call from his brother, Jasper, MD'53.

A woman, eight months pregnant, had been shot in the abdomen during a struggle with robbers outside her South Side apartment, Jasper told him.

Dinner would have to wait. Williams hurried out the door and rushed to St. Bernard Hospital.

There, the mother, Denise Ruffin, was conscious but in shock.

Ruffin had been hosting a family birthday party for her 3-year-old son, when some neighborhood youngsters informed her that her uncle was being robbed.

Ruffin and two of her sisters, armed with a big stick and a baseball bat, rushed outside and confronted three of the mugger in a nearby alley.

During an ensuing fight, one of the robbers pulled out a .38-caliber pistol and shot Ruffin point-blank in the upper abdomen. She crumpled to the ground. The assailants fled, having robbed Ruffin's uncle of 90 cents.

Ruffin was rushed to St. Bernard. The bullet had ripped through her abdominal wall and

penetrated her uterus. Immediate surgery was necessary. Even then, the odds of saving the unborn baby were slim.

Jasper, the mother's gynecologist, performed an emergency Cæsarean section. He then handed the limp 3-pound, 12-ounce baby to

and colon, grazed his kidney, passed through his chest (collapsing his right lung), and lodged in the soft tissue behind the humerus in his right arm.

"I could see the hole in the chest, where the bullet came out," Williams said. "It was a pretty good-sized hole."

A hospital spokesman compared the bullet to a baseball tearing through an adult.

Williams started CPR, and the baby began to breathe. He then performed surgery on the baby's thorax to control the bleeding, closed the wound in the chest and inserted a chest tube to re-expand the right lung. He also removed the bullet from the right arm.

The newborn was then rushed to the Premature Intensive Care Center at the Illinois Research Hospital of the University of Illinois School of Medicine, where Williams was on the teaching staff. Tiny Kevin Ruffin was released from the hospital six months later into the arms of his now-healed mother, a miracle of modern medicine and quick-acting physicians.

"The baby was the first baby in the world, reported in medical literature, to survive a gunshot wound to the abdomen and chest in utero," Williams said.

A testament not only to the resolve of the newborn, but to the exceptional, swift care of two dedicated Creighton doctors.



*Williams shows a .38-caliber bullet, the kind that ripped through Kevin Ruffin's unborn body, next to the infant.*

James, the Creighton-educated surgeon.

"When I first saw him, I thought he was dead," Williams said. "He had no heart beat, no breathing."

The .38-caliber bullet had entered the baby's right flank, slammed through his tiny liver

Photo courtesy of Dr. James B. Williams

King, but it was enough to warrant some attention from the FBI.

"I knew my phones were tapped," Williams said. "I would pick up the phone and I would hear this click. J. Edgar Hoover (the director of the FBI at the time) hated King with a passion."

Williams and his wife, Willeen, made it a point to hear Dr. King whenever he spoke in Chicago. King also accepted Williams' invitation to speak to the Cook County Physicians Association. "He was such a very articulate minister," Williams said.

Now 80, Williams has retired from the medical profession. He and Willeen have homes in Chicago and New Mexico. Their daughter, Brenda Payton Jones, is a columnist for the *Oakland Tribune* in Oakland, Calif., and



*Dr. James B. and Willeen Williams.  
The two have been married for 49 years.*

their son, Dr. James Williams II, BS'79, is a colorectal surgeon in Albuquerque, N.M. The soft-spoken but determined physician has seen plenty of progress in civil rights, but he also knows the battle for equality is far from over.

"We still have people at some hospitals who say they would never train any blacks in specialties such as, for example, surgery," Williams said. "Today that exists."

In the words of Dr. King:

"We have come a long, long way, but we have a long, long way to go."


— *About the author: Rick Davis is editor of Creighton University Magazine. He can be reached via e-mail at [rcd@creighton.edu](mailto:rcd@creighton.edu).* 

Photo by Monte Kruse, BA'83



Photo courtesy of Dr. James B. Williams

*Willeen Williams shakes hands with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., during one of King's visits to Chicago. Behind her in line is Dr. Williams' mother, Clara, and Dr. Williams. Williams served as King's physician when the civil rights leader was in Chicago.*



# Spirits of



By Eileen Wirth, Ph.D.

*Editor's note: This is the first in an occasional series on Creighton University's Spirit of Creighton Award winners.*

They are leaders and givers — doctors, lawyers, teachers and priests.

When they were at Creighton, they ran student government and Campus Ministry service trips. They were R.A.'s in the dorms and evaluated the faculty. They oriented the freshmen and occasionally agitated for changes.

In later life, they have continued serving God, their communities and Creighton.

They are the annual Spirit of Creighton Award winners — a male and a female graduate who exemplify the values of Creighton University and its founders. What's happened to them? What are they doing now? The answers are as

varied as the winners, linked by a common thread of service.

Lisa Zimmerman Flyr, who won the award in 1990, is passing on her passion for serving the poor to another generation. Flyr, an educa-

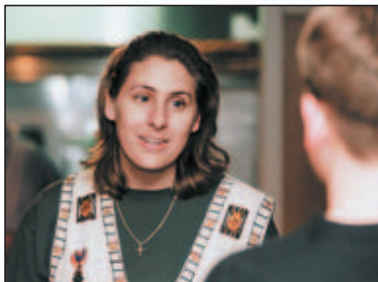


Photo by Kent Sievers

*Lisa Zimmerman Flyr*

tion major, teaches seventh- and eighth-grade math classes at Omaha's St. Cecilia's Elementary School. She takes students in her homeroom on service trips to Francis House, an Omaha homeless shelter, twice a week.

"We serve dinner and clean and do other service," said Flyr. "I take

four students each time. By the end of the year, anyone who wants to go has gone. It creates an awareness that they are really lucky."

Flyr said the trips help dispel stereotypes of the homeless. Students learn that some homeless people are "nice and polite and some are rude, just like the people in our cafeteria."

Flyr first went to Francis House while she was at Creighton — part of her involvement in Campus Ministry. After graduation, Flyr joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and worked with children in a homeless shelter in San Diego for a year. She returned to the Midwest to teach and has been at St. Cecilia's since 1995. She often supervises Creighton students when they are doing their teacher aiding or student teaching there.

"Creighton changed my life," she said. "I went to a public school

# Creighton



and I had planned on going to the University of Northern Iowa, but I decided to go to a Catholic university. To be able to put an outstanding education in a Christian context was amazing to me."

Spirit of Creighton winner the Rev. Timothy Lannon, S.J., is assistant executive vice president of Marquette University. He received the award in 1973 despite confronting the administration with 10



**Rev. Timothy Lannon, S.J.**

demands for improvements when he was student government president. Lannon, and other student government leaders, urged students and parents to withhold a tuition increase unless

the demands, which included a recreation center, were met.

Because of this episode, Lannon said he was a bit surprised but extremely pleased to win the Spirit of Creighton Award.

"The award was one of my greatest joys. It was an expression of being acknowledged for my work and service," he said. Lannon worked as an admissions counselor for Creighton for a year before entering the Jesuits.

"In the back of my mind, I had thought about being a priest but I didn't think I was holy enough until I met the Jesuits," he joked. "Creighton has a terrific environment that supported me. My vocation is due to Creighton and God's grace."

Lannon's career has included serving as president of Creighton Prep from 1988-1995. He received a doctorate in educational adminis-

tration from Harvard University.

One of Lannon's four fellow winners in 1973 (the only year more than two have been selected) is still at Creighton — Student Retention Director Mary Higgins. Like Lannon, she worked in student government and remembers it as confrontational.



**Mary Higgins**

"Our role was to make waves," she said. "We were not that rational and reasonable. We were committed to trying to make changes. The fact that Creighton recognized someone who was trying to be part of change is a tribute to the administration."

Higgins pushed for the establishment of women's varsity athletic

Photo by Kent Sievers

Photo by Mike Gryniewicz



teams and played on the first softball team. She became its coach in the mid-1970s, then served in athletic administration until becoming retention director in 1997. As retention director, she works to help students with problems resolve them and remain at Creighton.

"Creighton is woven deeply into my life and my family's life," she said. Her parents went to Creighton. Her husband, Patrick Kennison Jr., received his B.A. (1971) and law (1975) degrees from CU. She was married at St. John's Church, and her children were baptized there. "My kids have grown up here."

"These are the kinds of connections you can't replace," Higgins

said. "It is fantastic to work in an environment that is very caring and challenging."

Several major Omaha business leaders received the award when they graduated.

This group includes John Maginn, who recently retired as executive vice president of Mutual of Omaha, and his successor, Richard A. Witt. Maginn, the 1961 winner, said he was "bowled over" by the award. Like many winners, he was active in student government, which at the time included a wide range of functions including running freshman orientation. It was in this capacity that he received a lesson in service from University President Carl Reinert, S.J.



Photo by Kent Sievers

*John Maginn, left,  
and Richard A. Witt*

Maginn said he was unloading heavy crates of glass pop bottles for a freshman orientation picnic when "along comes a burly Jesuit asking, 'Can I help you?'" Maginn was startled and responded, "Father, I didn't think presidents of universities were supposed to help move pop cases." Reinert smiled and answered, "Anything to help."

## SPIRITS OF CREIGHTON THROUGH THE YEARS

The following is read at commencement prior to conferral of the Spirit of Creighton Award:

*"Creighton University in 1949 began conferring the Spirit of Creighton Award upon young men and women who represented to an extraordinary degree the best qualities of Creighton University's founders. ... The recipients are being honored for their initiative, wisdom, honesty, tireless personal sacrifice and reverence for God."*

### SPIRIT OF CREIGHTON AWARD RECIPIENTS

1949 Walter D. James Jr., *School of Law*

\*

1951 John R. Hyde, *School of Medicine*

\*

1953 James E. Merriman, *School of Law*

\*

1955 William T. Holthaus, *School of Dentistry*

1956 John P. Duffy, *School of Medicine*

1957 Pierre W. Keitges, *School of Medicine*

1958 Stephen T. McGill, *School of Law*

Jeanne B. Waller, *College of Arts and Sciences*

\* A search of University records shows no Spirit of Creighton winners for 1950, 1952 or 1954.



Maginn said that he has never forgotten Reinert's example. Creighton and numerous other organizations have benefitted. Maginn has served on the Investment Committee for the University's Endowment since 1983 and as head of the Advisory Board for the College of Business Administration. He also has advised the Omaha Archdiocese, Creighton Prep, the Servants of Mary and other groups on investments in addition to helping raise the money for St. Leo's Church. His wife, Carol (Varnes), BA'62, is a Creighton alum as is their son, Matthew, who is currently taking e-commerce master's degree classes.

"Creighton University was my

finishing school for life. It also gave me the basic foundation for everything I've accomplished," Maginn said. Next fall, he will teach a course on investments for the College of Business Administration.

Witt, a 1974 winner, also was active in student government and helped start faculty evaluations. He had "heard rumblings" that he might get the award. At graduation, his father was poised to take a picture in case it happened. His mother sat in the crowd.

"When I was announced, a lady leaned over and said to my mom, 'Don't you wish that was your kid?'" he said. "Mom just smiled."

Witt said that his post-Creighton volunteer service has focused

mainly on church activities. He is a music minister and EME at St. Stephen the Martyr Church and also has worked in ministry to children.



Photo by Monte Kruse, BA'83

*Dr. Joseph Stavas pictured with his daughter, Natalie*

Some winners have come from the professional schools such as Dr. Joseph Stavas of Lincoln, Neb., a 1982 honoree from the School of

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| <p><b>1959</b> Donald R. Prinz, <i>College of Business Administration</i><br/>Judith M. Krajicek, <i>College of Business Administration</i></p> | <p><b>1965</b> Randall J. Moody, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Carol Ann and Nancy Ann Barta, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> |
| <p><b>1960</b> W. Gerald O'Kief, <i>School of Law</i><br/>Geraldine M. Brady, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>                           | <p><b>1966</b> Frederick L. Gates, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Suzanne M. Curran, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>           |
| <p><b>1961</b> John L. Maginn, <i>College of Business Administration</i><br/>Mary Ann K. Voeller, <i>College of Business Administration</i></p> | <p><b>1967</b> John B. Balousek Jr., <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Patricia M. Rice, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>          |
| <p><b>1962</b> Patrick E. Brookhouser, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Marianne Gau, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>            | <p><b>1968</b> Richard P. Jeffries, <i>School of Law</i><br/>Margaret A. Kennedy, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>                       |
| <p><b>1963</b> John G. Langdon Jr., <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Roberta J. Eckerman, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>        | <p><b>1969</b> Frank J. Dowd Jr., <i>School of Dentistry</i><br/>Heather M. Harden, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>                     |
| <p><b>1964</b> Robert L. Winters, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Jeanne C. Slaninger, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>          | <p><b>1970</b> Henry R. Herrera, <i>School of Medicine</i><br/>Kathleen J. Majewski, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p>                    |
|   | <p><b>1971</b> Elaine M. Peterschmidt, <i>School of Pharmacy</i><br/>No male recipient</p>  |

Medicine. Stavas is a radiologist whose practice is headquartered at St. Elizabeth Hospital but extends to smaller communities in southeast Nebraska.

Stavas has shown his gratitude to Creighton by co-chairing the Creighton 2000 Campaign in the Lincoln area. He also serves on the medical school's Alumni Advisory Board and is active in church work, Boy Scouting and coaching the soccer and softball teams on which his five children have played. His daughter, Natalie, is a freshman in nursing at Creighton.

"Creighton instilled in me the idea that we have all been given a gift from God," he said. "Community service is one method of being

able to model the Christian faith and a value-centered lifestyle of service."

Younger winners also manifest this view, even during the years when they are actively building their careers.

Ed Dziedzic, a 1997 winner and former advertising manager of the *Creightonian*, is an account executive with a major advertising agency in Minneapolis working on the Polaris snowmobile account.

Dziedzic continues one of his favorite Creighton activities —

singing at church. He cantors weekly at his parish and coordinates liturgies for retreats. He also serves on the board of the Metropolitan

Boys Choir of Minneapolis-St. Paul and has volunteered for the United Way. At Creighton, he sang regularly at St. John's Church and has sung at 27 weddings.

Dziedzic always drops by Creighton's College Fair in Minneapolis to help recruit prospective students because he has such fond memories of CU.



*Ed Dziedzic receiving his award from Fr. Morrison in 1997*

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| <p><b>1972</b> Edward D. Hotz, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Catherine A. Boesen, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> <p><b>1973</b> Timothy R. Lannon, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Gary R. Batenhorst, <i>College of Business Administration</i><br/>Mary K. Higgins, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Anne L. Dyer, <i>College of Nursing</i></p> <p><b>1974</b> Karen E. Kelly, <i>College of Nursing</i><br/>Richard A. Witt, <i>College of Business Administration</i></p> <p><b>1975</b> Thomas A. Grennan, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Mary C. Martinetto, <i>School of Pharmacy</i></p> <p><b>1976</b> Mary Margaret Bradley, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Robert N. Vero, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> <p><b>1977</b> Jeanne L. Farrell, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Bert W. Winterholler, <i>School of Dentistry</i></p> | <p><b>1978</b> Michaela M. Marcil, <i>College of Business Administration</i><br/>Dominic F. Frecentese, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> <p><b>1979</b> Julie L. Asher, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Ray A. Lyons, <i>School of Dentistry</i></p> <p><b>1980</b> Lisa G. Swinton, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>Paul E. Kaminski, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> <p><b>1981</b> Mary L. Disis, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i><br/>William J. Nelson, <i>School of Dentistry</i></p> <p><b>1982</b> Mary Jo Hanigan, <i>School of Nursing</i><br/>Joseph M. Stavas, <i>School of Medicine</i></p> <p><b>1983</b> Ellen M. Townley, <i>School of Nursing</i><br/>Kevin N. Monroe, <i>College of Business Administration</i></p> <p><b>1984</b> Jacquelyn D. Miller, <i>School of Dentistry</i><br/>Jeffrey P. Johnson, <i>College of Arts and Sciences</i></p> |
|---|--|



"I remember my good friends and having good opportunities," he said.

"Creighton was very much like a family. The professors were so willing to work with you. They gave you an opportunity to grow."

Robyn Davis, who received the award in 1994, calls her time at Creighton "extraordinarily special."

"Creighton welcomed me into its community with open arms. The faculty, staff and other students encouraged me to make changes to and speak out about issues that I felt were important to MY University community."

Davis said that she learned that "one need not completely and single-handedly right a wrong in



*Robyn Davis*

order to make a meaningful contribution to its amelioration."

At Creighton, Davis was Alpha Sigma Nu president, a *Creightonian* reporter and active in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the Creighton University African-American Student Association. After graduating from CU *magna cum laude*, she received a J.D. from the Univer-

sity of Virginia. Today, she is an associate with a law firm in Kansas City.

She says she encourages young people "who are looking for a good, value-centered and well-rounded education to consider Creighton." Her fondest memories are of her relationships with professors like Ashton Welch, Ph.D., and Thomas Krettek, S.J., who "endowed me with the notion that change is possible" and "empowered me with the confidence to know that I could serve as the catalyst for such change." ■

— *About the author: Eileen Wirth, Ph.D., is chair of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Creighton. She can be reached via e-mail at emw@creighton.edu.*

1985 Janet M. Berning, *School of Nursing*  
Thomas J. Merkel, *College of Arts and Sciences*

1986 Terese A. O'Neil, *School of Nursing*  
James J. Crandall Jr., *School of Dentistry*

1987 Anne M. Duffy, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Daniel J. Huesgen, *College of Arts and Sciences*

1988 Mary Margaret Lawler, *Graduate School*  
Robert J. McQuillan, *School of Medicine*

1989 Kathryn J. Ault, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
David A. McGuire, *School of Nursing*

1990 Lisa A. Zimmerman, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
William R. Meduna, *College of Business Administration*

1991 Mary T. O'Kief, *School of Nursing*  
Melvin "Paul" Palalay, *School of Medicine*

1992 Shirley J. Kern, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
G. Scott Wall, *School of Dentistry*

1993 Jana L. Braklow, *School of Nursing*  
Christopher L. Shaffer, *School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions*

1994 Robyn N. Davis, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Steven J. Kern, *School of Medicine*

1995 Courtney L. Carlson, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Trenten P. Bausch, *School of Law*

1996 Jennifer K. Naughton, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Richard H. Ralphson, *College of Arts and Sciences*

1997 Christie A. Michels, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Edward T. Dziedzic, *College of Arts and Sciences*

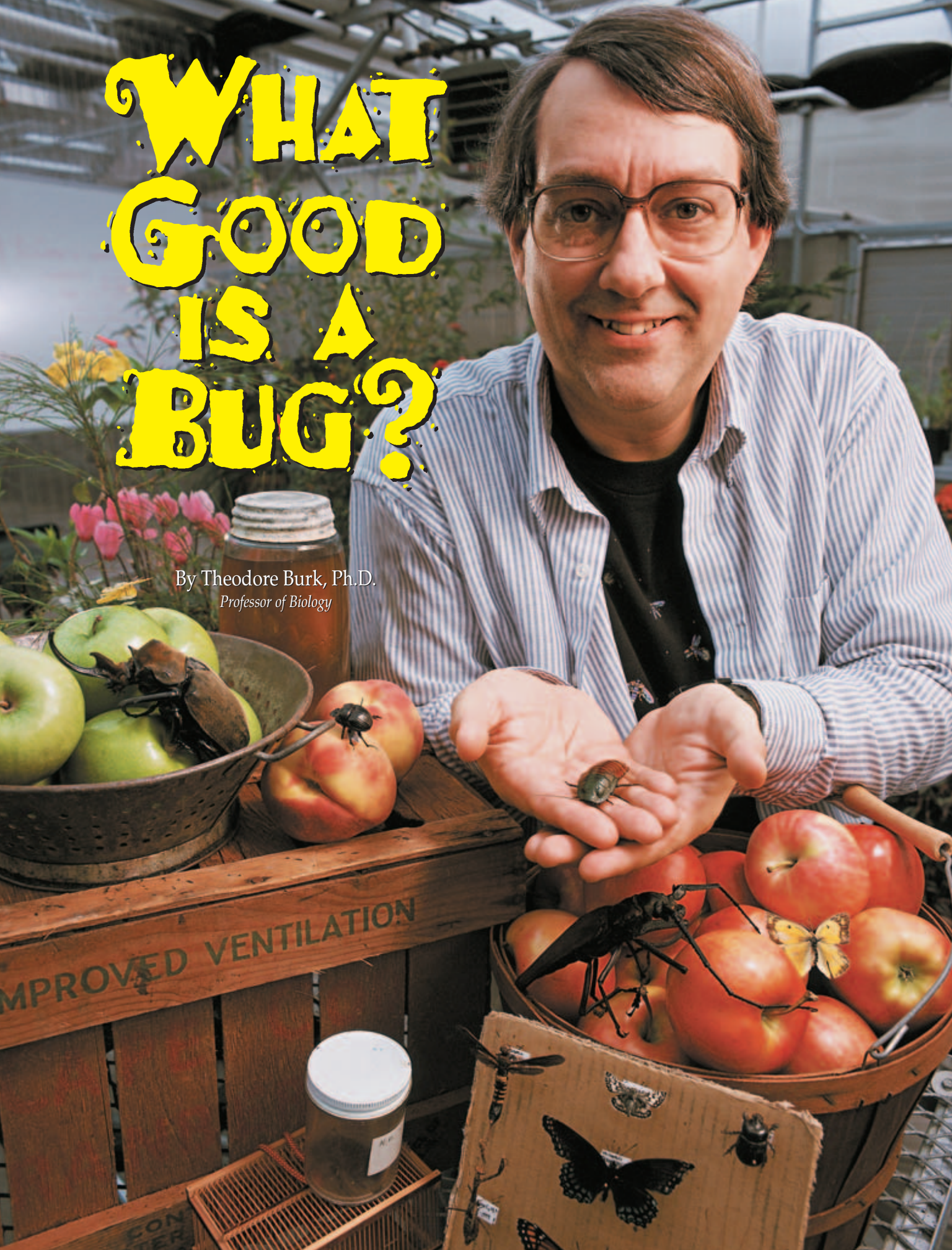
1998 Margaret A. Walker, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Steven C. Haskett, *College of Arts and Sciences*

1999 Dawn A. Imada, *College of Arts and Sciences*  
Eric S. Eastmo, *School of Medicine*



# WHAT GOOD IS A BUG?

By Theodore Burk, Ph.D.  
*Professor of Biology*





# WHAT GOOD IS A BUG?

I am an entomologist, a scientific student of insects. As biologist Edward O. Wilson has said, everyone goes through a “bug phase” when young, but a lucky few of us never outgrow that phase. We entomologists are used to the puzzled looks and bemused smiles of the rest of humankind, who wonder why we suffer from such arrested development and how we can justify a life spent exploring the lives of the small and six-legged. After all, aren’t “bugs” just a collection of pests, destroyers of crops and spreaders of plagues, of no use to anyone?

What good is a bug?

In fact, our lives are enriched and supported in many ways by the insects around us. Believe it or not, bugs have some good points and actually play critical roles in our very survival on Earth.

Beyond that, they live complex lives that are fascinating to behold.

Insects, animals of the phylum *Arthropoda* and class *Insecta*, constitute over half of all the species of organisms known.

About 900,000 species of insects have been identified, named and described so far, with about 10,000 species added to the list every year. Nine hundred thousand species is about 20 times the number of all the vertebrates combined. Even so, students of biodiversity agree that the number of insect species known at present is a small fraction of the number that actually exist: Estimates of the true number run as high as 80 million. I believe there are about 10 million species of insects — even that number implies that 90 percent of insects have yet to be discovered.

Now that undoubtedly sounds like a lot of bugs; most readers would probably say, “far too many!” And some insects do deserve their bad reputations. Insects are our greatest competitors for the fruits of the earth — one-third to one-half of all crops grown for human consumption are instead eaten by insects, in the field or in storage. Many of the great scourges of humankind are spread by insect vectors, such as bubonic plague by Oriental rat fleas, typhus by body lice and malaria by

Anopheles mosquitoes. There are, each year, 200 million cases of malaria and 2 million deaths worldwide. Insects invade our homes and sometimes, as in the case of termites, even destroy them. Cockroaches are not only smelly, messy intruders but also one of the greatest provokers of allergies and asthma. More humans die from the stings of bees and wasps than from any other form of animal attack (about 100 deaths a year in the U. S.). Some insects devastate our forests and backyard trees: Gypsy moths defoliate thousands of square miles, and elm beetles spread the fatal

Dutch elm disease. I could

go on, but this is a familiar list of evils.

One way to sum all this up is to quote an estimate from Dr. Gilbert

Waldbauer’s 1998 book *The Handy Bug Answer Book*, which states that, just in the

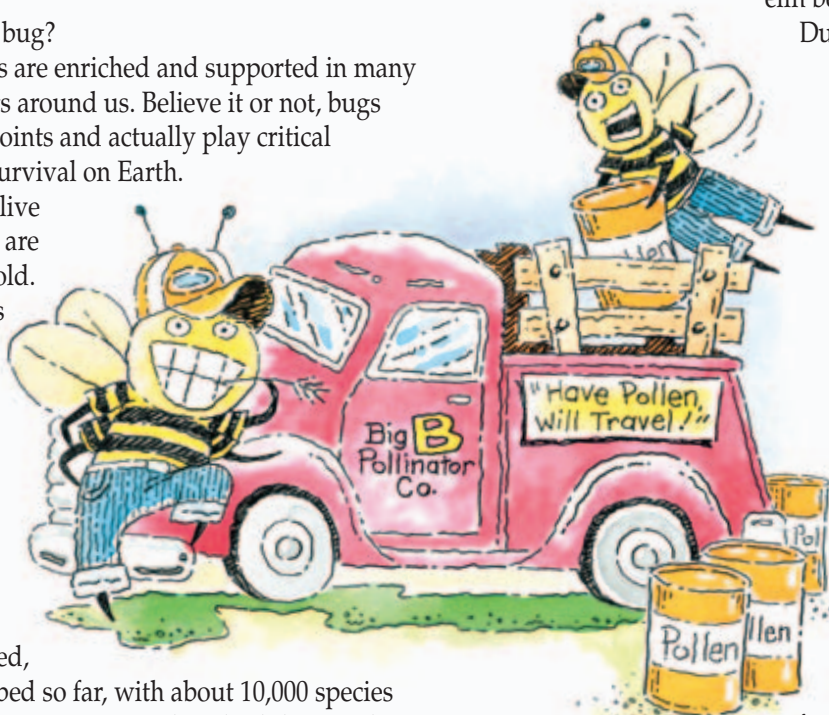
U. S., insect pests cost us about \$20 billion per year.

However, to see “what good is a bug,” we also must consider that direct benefits to the

American economy from insects, as stated in Waldbauer’s book, amount to

well over \$30 billion per year, and a narrow economic reckoning fails to take into account many unquantifiable yet crucial benefits that insects provide. Let’s begin to present the good side of the insect story by looking at some of the tangible things insects provide for us.

In an economic sense, the greatest good that insects do for humankind is to pollinate many of our crops. About 15 percent of our diet comes from foods that result from insect pollination. Among these are chocolate, coffee, tea, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, onions, sunflowers, figs, peaches, cherries, strawberries, blueberries, oranges and apples, among many others. The total value of insect pollinators to American agriculture is over \$20 billion per year. The transportation of honey bee colonies from overwintering areas in the southern United States to fruit orchards all over the country is a



# WHAT GOOD IS A BUG?

vital activity in modern American agriculture. In dollar value, the honey produced by bees is much less significant than the fruit-setting pollination service they perform. However, American hives produce over 40 million pounds of honey each year, worth more than \$125 million.

Other human foods are derived from insects. The manna from heaven of the Bible is still consumed in the Middle East: It is a confection made from the honeydew (sugary excretions) of plant-sucking aphids. Beetle grubs prepared in a special sauce were a royal dish in ancient Annam, and are still a popular food in much of Asia and the Pacific. Over 50 species of insects, from grasshoppers to butterflies, are sold for food in the marketplaces of Mexico. It's amusing that Americans will voraciously consume "all the shrimp you can eat" or pay \$10 a pound for lobster, but turn away in disgust from eating an insect; after all, an arthropod is an arthropod! To a world population surpassing 6 billion people, insects may provide an important source of protein in the future. Even today's American consumers eat more insects than they suspect. It is economically impossible to remove all insects or insect pieces from modern processed foods, so the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration specifies limits on the amount of insect material deemed allowable. For example, 100 grams of frozen broccoli is permitted to contain up to 60 aphids, while an equal amount of peanut butter is permitted to contain up to 30 insect fragments.

Insects



*A sacred scarab dung beetle forms manure into a ball. Females lay their eggs in the balls, which they bury in underground burrows. The balls are then eaten by the hatched larvae.*

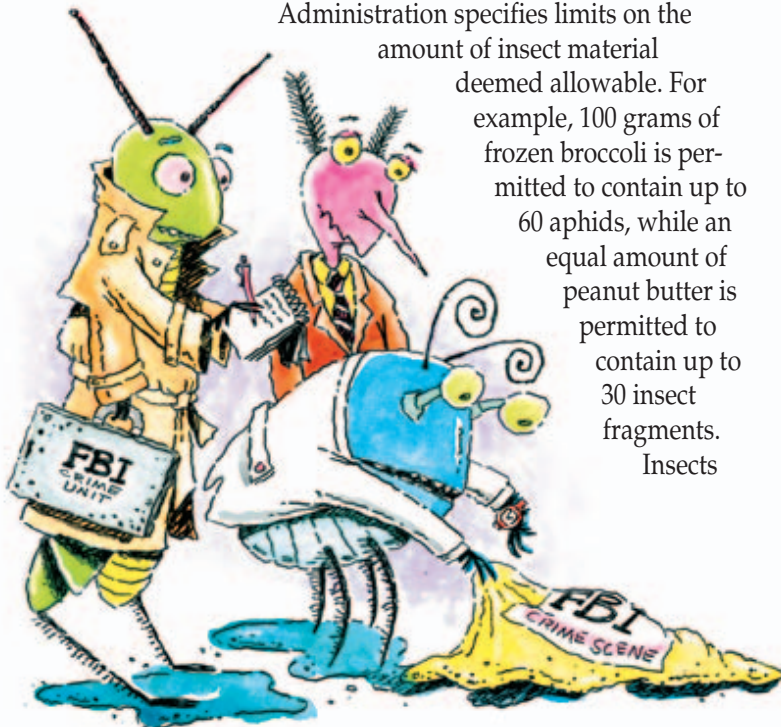
Photo by Dr. Edward S. Ross

provide other economically significant products. Cochineal, a beautiful deep red dye, is prepared from the crushed bodies of a Mexican scale insect. The furniture varnish shellac is prepared from lac, a resin secreted by several Asian species of scale insects. More familiar to most people is silk, prepared from the threads that comprise the cocoons of the silkworm moth, *Bombyx mori*. The silkworm moth is the only truly domesticated insect; it no longer exists in the wild and cannot

reproduce itself without human assistance. Silkworm caterpillars are fed on mulberry leaves until they spin their cocoons and pupate. Then the cocoons are steamed to kill the pupae and soaked in boiling water to loosen the silk strand. The loose end of the strand is carefully located and attached to a reel. When unwound, the entire cocoon is revealed to consist of a single strand that may be up to 3,600 feet long. Several such strands are twisted together to provide the silk threads for fabrics. World production of raw silk is more than 75 million pounds per year, worth about \$1.5 billion; finished silk clothing is of course worth far more.

Some human uses of insects are more exotic, even bizarre. One medical technique used to clean antibiotic-resistant infected wounds is "maggot therapy." Maggots of several species of flies eat dead, putrefying flesh but not healthy tissue; they are thorough feeders that clean away every bit of dead tissue from a wound. And in recent years, police departments and the FBI have been turning to "forensic entomologists" for help with their investigations. When the body of a victim of violent crime is located, a key piece of needed information is the time of death. An entomologist, identifying the different species of insects present in the corpse, and knowing how soon after death they arrive and how long they take to develop under the prevailing temperatures, can give criminal investigators very accurate estimates.

Insects are now widely used in agriculture to fight pests. One of the earliest successes of such "biological control" involved the importation of the Vedalia ladybug beetle from Australia to California to control the invading cottony cushion scale insect that was threatening the citrus industry. Hundreds of species of parasitic, predatory or herbivorous insects have since been





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introduced to control pest insects (such as Mediterranean fruit flies and Colorado potato beetles), as well as noxious weeds such as musk thistles in the Midwest and melaleucas trees in the Everglades. However, even such “good insects” can have a negative side; researchers at the University of Nebraska recently showed that a beetle introduced to eat musk thistles is also chewing away on an endangered native thistle.

Talking about the use of insects to control pests is a good way to move from insects’ quantifiable economic benefits to the more numerous and important ways in which insects provide crucial “ecosystem services.” Just as insects are important pollinators of human crops, they also are by far the most significant pollinators of flowering plants in natural ecosystems. Since 80 percent of all plants are flowering plants, and insects pollinate about 80 percent of them, more than 60 percent of all plant species (about 160,000 species in all) depend on insects for reproduction. Without insect pollinators, most terrestrial food chains would quickly collapse.

Insects also are the most important consumers of wild plants. In a typical terrestrial ecosystem, the combined weight of insect plant-eaters is greater than the combined weight of the more conspicuous vertebrate herbivores such as bison, deer or antelopes. But insects also are the most important natural enemies of insect plant-eaters. About half a million insect species (and 40,000 species of their arthropod relatives, spiders) are predators and parasites who live on and in the bodies of other insects.

Other animals eat insects, too, making insects a vital link in the food chains of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. Anyone who enjoys watching songbirds, or hunting or fishing, should stop and give thanks to the countless insects whose bodies were turned into robins, wrens, ringnecked pheasants or rainbow trout. Even mosquitos, whom many humans would designate the most useless of insects, have aquatic larvae that serve as important consumers of algae and abundant food for fish.

Insects fill other crucial ecological roles. If not for them and their various partners in the clean-up brigade,

the surface of the earth would soon be covered with dung and dead organisms. Flies and burying beetles are among the first to arrive and dispose of the unsightly, smelly carcasses of dead animals. (One such beetle is the American Burying Beetle, on the U. S. Endangered Species list, whose largest existing population is found in the prairies of central Nebraska). A square yard of forest litter may contain 30,000 insects patiently decomposing away the remains of the forest’s plants and animals. Some insect decomposers specialize on the bones, dry skin and hair left behind by other scavengers (ever wonder how clothes moths made a living before people provided closets full of sweaters?). Insects such as flies, termites and dung beetles (including the sacred scarabs of ancient Egypt) quickly and efficiently remove mountains of animal waste. An indication of the critical role of insects in dung removal comes from the revealing tale of what happened to the pastures of Australia when cattle and sheep from the Old World were introduced. The native dung beetles, having evolved to deal with the hard, dry pellets produced by kangaroos, were



*A bee gathers pollen and nectar from a flower. Bees are probably the most important insect pollinators.*

overwhelmed by the masses of quite different material produced by introduced livestock. The accumulating material covered the ground and choked out the vegetation, severely degrading the land and lowering agricultural productivity. Ultimately, entomologists saved the day by introducing dung beetles from Europe and Africa.



## WHAT GOOD IS A BUG?



Photo by Dr. Edward S. Ross

*A swarm of monarch butterflies clings to a tree branch at one of its overwintering roosts along the California coast. Major swarms also assemble in the mountains of Mexico.*

Insects are important components of the biota of the soil. While earthworms usually get more credit, insects such as ants and termites also are significant soil processors. In one abandoned farm field in Michigan, ants brought 750 pounds of soil to the surface per acre per year. Such burrowing and churning not only aerates soil, but also speeds up litter decomposition and mixes soil nutrients thoroughly, increasing soil fertility.

I hope that some of this is beginning to soften your hearts toward insects a little, but I have to admit that, for all their economic and ecological virtues, what fascinates me are not the benefits that insects provide but rather the details of their amazing lives. Sagas worthy of Greek mythology are played out all around us every day by these amazing animals. As an example, consider the life of the monarch butterfly.

The monarch is probably the most-loved insect in America (not that there is much competition!). A bill has even been introduced into Congress to make it the official national insect. Despite belonging to a tropical family of butterflies, it invaded temperate North America to utilize milkweed plants. These familiar weeds are poisonous, but monarch caterpillars use behavioral and

physiological adaptations to overcome these poisons, and even store them in their own bodies to protect themselves from their own predators. When they molt to become butterflies, monarchs retain the poisons and develop the bright orange colors that warn potential predators of their chemical defenses.

As essentially tropical butterflies, monarchs can't survive cold winters, so they migrate in autumn to overwintering roosts to rest and wait for spring to return to temperate North America. West of the Rocky Mountains, monarchs migrate to several hundred small coastal groves in California from the San Francisco Bay area south. East of the Rockies, as was discovered only in the 1970s, monarchs migrate to a few mountainside locations in Mexico's Transvolcanic Range, southwest of Mexico City. Ten thousand feet up in the pine forests, they wait in a semi-dormant state from November to February each year. There are only a dozen or so aggregation sites, each a few acres in size, and the butterflies are present in incredible densities — tens or even hundreds of millions per site, transforming the pines from the natural green to a bright orange. During the autumn migration, each butterfly follows its own pathway



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hundreds or thousands of miles from its birthplace in the U. S. or southern Canada to the roosts in Mexico, using orientation mechanisms that are not well understood (but probably involve orientation to the sun and Earth's magnetic field). The behavior is totally instinctive, since monarchs produce several generations each summer and each migrant is therefore three or four generations removed from its ancestors that migrated the year before. It is truly amazing that an animal weighing less than one gram has the brainpower and stamina to perform this epic trek.

This remarkable phenomenon is under serious threat. Developers are turning the California roosts into condominiums and shopping malls; Mexican roosts are being harvested for timber. Recent studies have shown that half the monarchs that make it to Mexico come from a narrow belt in the American Midwest stretching from eastern Nebraska to western Ohio, and recent advances in agriculture may cause new jeopardy for monarchs in this heartland area. Genetic engineers now produce strains of corn that are highly resistant to widely used agricultural herbicides, probably meaning greater use of these chemicals to kill weeds in cornfields. But these herbicides also kill monarch-nurturing milkweeds growing in ditches adjacent to cornfields. Other genetic engineers have put genes into new strains of corn that code for caterpillar-killing toxins originally produced by the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*. A recent study showed that these



*A silkworm caterpillar is shown inside its cocoon. The silk strands on the outside of the cocoon are unreeled to produce fine fabrics.*

Photo by Dr. Edward S. Ross

toxins are present in corn pollen that can be blown into areas adjacent to corn fields, sometimes landing on milkweed leaves. Monarch caterpillars that ingest such pollen are killed as efficiently as are the intended targets — corn earworms and other corn-eating caterpillars. The seriousness of these threats to the monarch is still being assessed.

Even though I characterized the monarch as America's most-loved insect, I'd be willing to bet a lot of money that most Americans don't know its story and are indifferent to its fate. But some people's attitudes are changing. Butterfly watching is becoming as popular today as birdwatching was 50 or 60 years ago. Zoos and museums are finding insect zoos and butterfly houses (in which visitors amble among tropical vegetation and hundreds of free-flying butterflies) to be popular and profitable attractions. Nature documentaries about insects draw good ratings. More people all the time are planting insect-friendly plants in their yards and going easy on the use of pesticides on their garden vegetables and flowers. But we still have a long way to go to appreciate insects fully. Despite the fact that insects outnumber humans 100 million-to-1 and outweigh us 6-to-1, many *Homo sapiens* persist in believing that the Earth exists exclusively for us. Entomologists know better, and that is why we persist in efforts to bring our six-legged subjects to the attention of students and the public. We are convinced that when one becomes

attuned to all of the planet's lifeforms, a full appreciation of the incredible web of life that surrounds and sustains us is achieved. Then the miracle of life that continually presents itself to us becomes apparent. A day will come, we entomologists hope, when no one will outgrow their "bug phase" or ask "what good is a bug?"

(To learn more about insects, Burk recommends *The Handy Insect Answer Book* by Gilbert Waldbauer, or *Bugs in the System* by May Berenbaum, sources of many of the statistics presented in this article.)

— About the author: Theodore Burk, Ph.D., can be reached via e-mail at [tedburk@creighton.edu](mailto:tedburk@creighton.edu). ■





The drummers pound on, as they have for most of the past two days. Flickering flames throw shadows on the wall. Wearing animal skins and a leg rattle, the medium dances vigorously in front of the drums. Villagers and attendants, all in ceremonial dress, clap and sing to keep the energy flowing. The dancer slumps over and falls to the floor, breathing with great labor. Yet no one seems the least bit worried.

A spirit has come.

This ancestral spirit wants to talk to the *Khiwa* (a Bantu word for

*Life, Death,  
and Other  
Affairs of the Spirit*

## The Story of Sue Schuessler's Research in

# ZIMBABWE

By Brian Kokensparger

Europeans, as all whites are called). The woman from Kansas presses herself as inconspicuously into the background as possible. But there is no hiding this stranger from the spirit; there is no hiding her anywhere she goes in Zimbabwe.

She approaches on knees, face parallel to the ground, hands clapping in respect and deference, in the required posture of respect and submission. Her prior education as a Fulbright scholar and Ph.D. candidate has not prepared her as much for this moment as she had hoped. Nothing could have. When she is finally able to look up at the spirit, it looks about 10 times larger than the medium — and 10 times more intimidating.

"Why have you come?" As is the custom, she must speak and hear through an intermediary, who

is trained to assist and inform the medium of all that happened. Her answers must pass the rigorous testing of an omniscient spirit. Lying is unthinkable. But will the truth be good enough to allow her to stay? Or will she be sent away from the round hut? Sent out into the dark African night?

She answers, as calmly as possible, "I want to learn about your people, so that I may increase understanding between your people and mine." The ancestor barages her with more questions. The

spirit touches her skin, feels her hair. Then water is brought in; the ancestor wants to watch her drink water. After a few intense moments, the ancestor pronounces his verdict: She is *Muntu* — a "person."

All this to be a person? In Zimbabwe, being considered a "person" is not so much about being a human, as not being a non-human. Being *Muntu* is part of being family, being one of them, and therefore, being a part of a close-knit family structure. And to Sue Schuessler, her entire research project, her dissertation and the quality of her day-to-day life for the next year depended upon being *Muntu*. From that point on, she was connected.

A few days before, Schuessler, who served this year as a visiting professor in Creighton University's Sociology and Anthropology Department and African Studies program, stepped off a plane in Zimbabwe. Since she had no real contacts (people



*A traditional healer  
is possessed by an  
ancestral spirit.*





sleeping body, there was one more sleeping body. Each night, she unrolled her sleeping bag in a small granary storage room in the house, which was always packed to capacity

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*Schuessler carries the infant child of one of the **twasas** — healers-in-training — in one of the country's rural areas. Schuessler lived among a group of traditional healers for a year as part of her research.*

with at least two others. She shared the bathroom with 28 (sometimes more, rarely less) other inhabitants. One small outdoor spigot supplied all the water. Private space was not scarce — it simply did not exist.

When not in Nkulumane, or out in the fields collecting *Muthi* (herbs to be processed and used in healing rituals), Schuessler accompanied the healers and *twasas* (healers-in-training) to Gogo Siziba's family farm in a rural area over five hours away. Her first encounter with the sheer excitement of Africa came

inside the country who could help her receive placement for field research), her entire project was in peril. She was alone. She appeared on the doorstep of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healer's Association (ZINATHA), Zimbabwe's regulatory institution for healers, asking to be placed with a healer for research purposes. For several days, she was told "come back tomorrow." She was beginning to panic.

It was there that she learned her first lesson about spiritual life in Zimbabwe — if you don't have magic, you don't have anything. She produced a bit of magic — a piece of paper from Dr. Gordon Chavanduka, the president of ZINATHA, endorsing her efforts and requesting to see her field report at the conclusion of her study. Finally, Gogo Siziba — senior healer, and one of the most respected healers in all of Zimbabwe — was waiting for her when she walked in. Schuessler had a placement. She was on her way to Nkulumane, a high-density township just outside of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second-largest city.

Schuessler arrived at her main place of lodging. High-density housing meant just that: If there was space to cram in one more



*An ancestral spirit, speaking through the intermediary healer, declares that Schuessler is Muntu or a "person." Schuessler had to be accepted before she could live with the healers.*





*Gogo Siziba (Na Ze), left, and Ma Ndlovu, one of her twasas, interact in trance as part of a graduation ceremony.*

with her first visit there:

"We had arrived in Lower Gwelo at about 2 a.m., after our transport vehicle had broken down many times on our trip. I was still feeling amazement at how many people were climbing down from the truck each time we had to stop to fix it. All of us women sat on the side of the road, while all the men gathered around the truck to help fix it. My fear was that they would blame me; that maybe they would think that their ancestors did not like having a white going with them for a ceremony. We finally reached Lower Gwelo, and at the compound which was our destination, many people were dancing around a large bonfire. After some ceremonial business had been conducted, the dancing, singing and drumming began in earnest in one of the round mud houses with grass thatched roofs. By first light, or the earliest traces of dawn, the ceremony was in full swing. I glanced out the door and saw the light-colored sand everywhere. I saw other round mud houses with thatched roofs. I could see donkeys ... I looked back at the drummers and dancers; the rhythms

were strong and exciting, and I could feel them vibrating throughout my body. Someone's spirits came, and she went into a trance. She became strong, fierce and threatening. The spirit which had entered her was probably an ancient Zulu warrior. I was scared; the spirits did not know me very well yet, and I attracted attention, as I was probably the only *Khiwa* in all of Lower Gwelo. I most definitely was the only *Khiwa* in that whole district; some people there had never even seen a white person before. Even Tawanda, my research assistant and the medium's nephew, was scared as he stood with me and wondered whether he would have the courage to protect me if the Zulu warrior spirit attacked me. I was scared, but I was very, very excited; I suspect my adrenaline was really flowing. I felt the fear, felt the excitement of the drumming and dancing, felt the amazement at the new scenes lighted by the first traces of dawn, looked around and saw Africans, no

other whites, and saw the strange ceremonial clothing — yes, it was with great excitement that I thought 'I'm really here! I'm really in Africa!'"

Most of her time there, however, was spent in the small house in Nkulumane which served as a clinic for traditional healing activities. On all weekdays except Wednesday (which was set aside as a day of rest for the spirits), patients came to the house to be treated for a variety of ailments. Many of the symptoms appeared to be AIDS-related. The fear of contracting AIDS often crept into Schuessler's mind when she came into daily contact with the ever-present blood spills common in any Third World clinical setting.

Despite her best efforts to keep a clean sleeping area, the rats and cockroaches kept her awake at night, while helping themselves to the loose scraps of grain. The urine from infants sleeping nearby often soaked into her sleeping bag.



*Goat meat bubbles in a pot of boiling oil. As a test, the twasas must reach into the pot without getting burned and eat a piece of the meat.*

But Schuessler could have chosen differently. A field researcher visiting Africa must choose a level of immersion from a number of precedents and models. She chose a total-immersion experience, spending all her time in the family setting. Her choice meant for her a more rigorous and fatiguing





*Ma Ndlovu, left, one of Na Ze's twasas, graduates after a year of training. She is joined at the ceremony by an elder in her lineage and her sister, right, a fully-qualified healer.*

year, but one also enriched by a multitude of experiences she would not have encountered otherwise.

Where being *Muntu* gave her a passport into the life of a healer, being a woman and a *Khiwa* offered most of the same obstacles that African women experience in day-to-day life. As a woman, Schuessler often had difficulty moving about and doing the things with the freedom to which she had been accustomed. She normally had to be accompanied by a man — usually her research assistant — for her protection. “Being a woman, to some degree, made me be more submissive ... but because I was an American with a certain amount of education, I had more power than the average African woman, but still not as much as the average African man.”

Being a *Khiwa*, Schuessler surprisingly felt very little animosity directed toward her, at least publicly. During rituals, when the ancestors came and spoke through the healers, she was equally surprised at their candor. She some-

times suffered the brunt of a century of white oppression. However, her status as a *Khiwa* also helped her transact business with the government more quickly and effectively than her non-white hosts. Certain parts of Bulawayo that were only frequented by whites were more open to her; she could purchase food, medicines and other items that were not affordable to most black Zimbabweans.

Schuessler was gaining valuable data, and progressing well toward fulfilling her research objectives, until life — and death — stepped in to send her host family into a spiral. Schuessler's plans to study healing rituals were stymied by the illness — and eventual death — of Baba Sa Zenzile (Sa Ze), the husband of Gogo Siziba (Na Ze), her mentor. “My research had to take a back seat — it had to — it would not have been appropriate for me to pursue it. But I actually learned more about the people — what they are like, their views of life and death. It lifted a number of veils for me that would not have otherwise been lifted.”

A Therapy Management Group, primarily composed of Sa Ze's elder family members, oversaw his treatment. They prescribed certain rituals and *Muthi* that they thought would be helpful. Being a professional healer, Sa Ze's wife, Na Ze, knew that some of the rituals and

*Muthi* prescribed would not help, or could even make him worse. But due to family pressures, she had to remain silent.

In addition to traditional healing, Sa Ze was taken to church officials and Christian faith healers in a desperate attempt to find something that would work. Schuessler described her trip to a house for a healing service: “The (church) official poured Holy Water over Sa Ze. The following week he went back to work, but by Sunday he was feeling worse again.” She added, “We continued to pursue a cure for Sa Ze. The next week we went to ... a Christian faith healer from the Zionist Independent Christian Churches.”

The Therapy Management Group finally agreed to let Sa Ze go to a hospital for treatment, which Schuessler found woefully understaffed and depressing. “I took Baba Sa Zenzile to the hospital



*Na Ze performs a ritualistic dance to summon an ancestral spirit.*





*A purification ceremony is performed atop some boulders, as a frothy mixture is poured over the head of one of the twasas.*

in Bulawayo. The first time, tests determined that he was dehydrated and anemic. When someone is severely dehydrated and anemic in the United States, that would be reason to hospitalize. But in Zimbabwe, they do not have the resources to give IV's, etc. They told us we could do more for him at home." She was able to use her status as a *Khiwa* to purchase better cuts of meat and medicines for him.

"The second time we took him — what horrors. People were lined up in the hallways outside the 'emergency room' — so many people — people who were dying! Sa Ze was too weak to sit up, but there were no more beds. Though he was too weak to swallow, they tried to make him take a pill, and of course, he choked. Nearby, a man was lying on the floor, weakly lifting his head every so often to violently retch and vomit. Doctors walking along just made sure they walked around him rather than over him; that was the limit of the

attention the medical people paid to him. I'm sure that the inattention was not lack of compassion or the result of apathy, but they had so many dying people to attend to."

The ultimate low point occurred during the same visit. "We heard a woman in line become hysterical; then we saw that her child had just died while waiting in line to see the doctor. Reading or talking about such horror is unpleasant, and one feels bad. But experiencing it with someone you have come to love who is dying is another. How can one see such things and not be a changed person? Changed how? I don't know yet, but changed."

Caswell Makusha, or Baba Sa Zenzile, died at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 4, 1996. Schuessler described the mourning activities: "Wailing, chanting and singing continued night and day in the sitting room until Tuesday afternoon. The singing had some mixture of songs but most of them were Christian hymns. I drove the truck with the coffin, his mother, his eldest brother and Na Ze's oldest brother-in-law. A big bonfire was burning and a couple of hundred people from the rural areas had gathered around the fire. Singing continued all night; I fell asleep in Na Ze's round house with Zenzile (Sa Ze's daughter) in my lap."

Because the family had grown to trust and accept her, she was asked to stay for the remainder of her planned research time, which accounted for most of the grieving period. She played an active role in all the grieving rituals, beginning with the funeral procession. Schuessler

offered to lead the procession by driving the truck which carried the casket. Again, her status as woman and *Khiwa* left her in an ambivalent position: Being a woman, she was not considered strong enough to ward off the strong spirits that would inevitably attempt to disrupt the procession; but being a *Khiwa*, she would be less affected by them. In the end, Sa Ze's elders decided that she should drive.

As the time for Schuessler's research period drew to a close, she knew her efforts — and most of her financial resources — were not spent in vain. "I remember the first time that Benjy (one of Na Ze's first *twasas*) came over to the house in Nkulumane. I was sitting on the ground out in front of the house — he came over and stared and stuttered — finally, he stuttered — 'This is amazing, I've never seen anything like this before, I never thought I'd ever see such a thing — a *Khiwa* sitting on the ground with us Africans here in Nkulumane. There's hope yet for relations between Africans and Europeans.'"

Those who have met Schuessler know a woman of respect and grace. It's not surprising, therefore,



*Na Ze (standing) supervises as Ma Gumbo (center, kneeling), another fully-qualified healer, and Ma Ndlovu work on a paralyzed girl in the bush. Ma Gumbo cut the girl with a razor blade, along key "energy" lines, and then inserted medicine into the cuts.*





*Na Ze pauses for a moment with her husband, Sa Ze. Sa Ze died during Schuessler's visit.*

that she left as appropriately and gracefully as she arrived. "When I was leaving, we went back to the rural areas so that I could say goodbye to Sa Ze's mother and to her spirits. I took some snuff and sprinkled it on the floor with a circular motion and thanked their ancestors for having given their permission for me to be there for the past year, the guidance they had given me, all they had done for me and I pleaded for continued guidance so that my work could represent that which we should know."

*Muntu. Khiwa. Researcher. Family-member. Friend. Mourner. Ambassador.* Schuessler was all these during her yearlong visit to Zimbabwe. In her short time at Creighton University, she also has touched the lives of her students and colleagues just as markedly as she touched those with whom she shared life, death and other affairs of the spirit.

— *About the author: Brian Kokenparger is a free-lance writer for Creighton University Magazine. He can be reached via e-mail at [bkoken@creighton.edu](mailto:bkoken@creighton.edu).*

## Sue Schuessler's Visit to the Sacred Shrine

*"Social anthropologists and other European students of African life and thought in Rhodesia will agree that the mere fact of having gained admission to the ancient shrines in the Matopo Hills may already be counted as a major achievement of research diplomacy and a rare proof of African trust and goodwill. Only a few have been accorded this honour."*

— From J. F. Holleman's Forward to *The God of the Matopo Hills*.

By this and other similar accounts, Sue Schuessler should never have been allowed to enter the sacred shrine. Only the holiest Africans are allowed there. It is a place where these select few deliver the people's supplications to the gods, and receive new messages to take back to the people. Those entering offer snuff packets and plead for forgiveness and guidance to bring rain in times of drought.

And Zimbabwe was in a drought. Some claimed that the gods were angry with the national leaders, who were disavowing traditional ways. Politically, it was a bad time to ask permission for anything.

"No, you can't take a white person there," said the town officials.

"No, the *Khiwa* will not be allowed to visit the shrine," said the High Priestess' highest-ranking assistant, before they could even get out of the vehicle. They did, however, talk the assistant into allowing Schuessler to meet the High Priestess.

The High Priestess looked deeply into Schuessler's eyes, and saw what none of the others had seen — a goodness and holiness that transcended political and racial barriers. "She's welcome to enter the shrine," said the High Priestess.

"We walked a long way. We had to climb over boulders to get through that small entrance," Schuessler recounts of her journey to the shrine, located deep in a hidden cave. "So after all that, we went in. It was very tight and cramped. The medium/priest who accompanied us pleaded with the ancestors and *Mwali* (the high-god) to help Gogo Siziba in her work and to help the group. We kneeled in a semi-circle facing a huge pile of little snuff packets that people had brought over time as offerings to *Mwali*. Then one by one each of us said what was in our hearts, to the ancestors and to *Mwali*."

It is pointless to attempt to capture the sheer ecstasy of her experience in words. It has transformed her and will remain with her for the rest of her life.

The Zimbabweans believe that if you are corrupt or impure, when you attempt to enter or leave the shrine you will fall off the boulders and disappear. Only good people can make it safely over the boulders.

Sue Schuessler made it just fine. 📍



*Schuessler*

# The Corner Druggist

by Rick Davis

*Pharmacy graduate Lester Carter is an institution in his Milwaukee community where he has run Carter Drug Store for 32 years and encouraged neighborhood high school students to continue their education*



Photo courtesy of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

*Lester Carter in his drugstore at the corner of 24th and Burleigh streets in Milwaukee.*

**Milwaukee** — Dee Terry didn't want to chat; his stomach hurt. But relief was on the way. He had just picked up some medication from Lester "Doc" Carter, BSP Pharm '58, owner of Carter Drug Store on the city's northwest side.

"He doesn't lead you the wrong way," Terry said, as he stopped briefly in one of the corner drugstore's narrow aisles. "I'm glad we have someone like him around. You don't find them every day, you know."

"He takes the time to talk to you," said Percy Hayes Sr., a loyal customer for 25 years. "And every time he's told me to take something, it's worked."

Located at the corner of 24th and Burleigh streets, in a predominantly African-American neighborhood, Carter Drug is an institution in Milwaukee. The store's owner,

Carter, has been filling prescriptions here for nearly 32 years, working seven days a week.

"He never sits," said his wife, Irene, who also works at the store.

Carter Drug is the city's only black-owned drugstore and the only independent pharmacy within a 30- or 40-mile radius.

"In our area, we're like an island," Carter said.

Chain stores and other pressures have put many independent druggists out of business. "When we first came here, we had 13 drugstores within walking distance," Carter said. "Now they're all gone."

"The key to my survival has been the good training I got at Creighton University," Carter said.



Carter credits Creighton for his strong background in herbal medicine, as well as his grounding in traditional pharmacy. The recent resurgence in natural remedies has been a boon for business.

"My training in herbal medicine is not going to waste," Carter said. "I think it has put us head-and-shoulders above all our competitors. Our business has flourished."

Carter also has developed his own remedies. His Mr. C's Skin Lotion treats the razor bumps that some African-American men experience after shaving. It is used at three of Milwaukee's largest clinics and by recruits at the Milwaukee Police Academy. He also created an ointment for scalp ringworm, after an outbreak of the disease among the city's elementary school students.

Carter was born and raised in Omaha. His parents were butchers at the Armour meat packing plant. Carter, an only child, grew up in a rough neighborhood near 25th and Patrick streets.

"You either had to be a good fighter or a runner," Carter said. "I was a street fighter."

The family eventually moved to a safer neighborhood, but Carter found himself far behind academically when he began at North High School — where he was one of only five black students.

"I couldn't even tell time," Carter said. "All I knew how to do was fight."

After high school, Carter enrolled at Creighton University. "It was a disaster," he said. "I wasn't ready for that." But Carter forged a friendship with William A. Jarrett, dean of the College of Pharmacy. "He took a liking to me," Carter said.

Carter dropped out of Creighton and volunteered for the Navy, serving during the Korean War as a shipboard medic. Meanwhile, Jarrett had not forgotten his friend.

"He sent me a brochure from Creighton every single month," Carter said.

Carter was discharged from the service on a Friday and started classes at Creighton again on a Monday. Carter said he quickly became frustrated with the rigors of academic life, especially with chemistry and physics. "I thought, 'There's no way I can do this.' I went to drop my classes, but it cost \$15, and I didn't have the money."

Maybe it was divine intervention.

Carter was daily shuttling two nuns from the main campus to the pharmacy college on Davenport Street in a \$100 car that, literally, had to be pushed off the sales lot. ("The salesman told me it drove great

downhill," Carter joked.)

"The nuns prayed that the car wouldn't stop, and they prayed that I would pass my classes," Carter said. Their prayers were answered; Carter passed his classes and the car broke down just once.

"If it hadn't been for them, I never would have done it," said Carter. "I was so happy, I felt like I had climbed Mount Everest."

Carter worked at Cris Rexall Drug Store in Omaha for about 10 years, rising from soda fountain clerk to head pharmacist. In 1963, he was featured in *Ebony* magazine as one of the country's top black pharmacists. (The same issue chronicled Martin Luther King's historic march on Washington.)



*Carter and his wife, Irene, have been recognized for their community service.*

Photo by Rick Davis

Carter moved to Milwaukee in 1967 at the urging of a friend and, a year later, purchased the corner drugstore.

Carter has taken Milwaukee and the neighborhood he serves to heart. Once a young "street fighter" himself, Carter has taken several neighborhood "thugs" under his wing, put them to work and turned them around.

Barbara Munson, a loyal customer who once worked at the store, said Carter is always willing to lend a hand, especially when it comes to youth. He has paid for neighborhood high school students to visit colleges across the country, encouraging them

to continue their education.

"He has really been instrumental in helping a lot of young people around here," Munson said.

Carter points to a nearby vacant lot across the street. Construction of a new community center will begin there this spring and, thanks to the Carters' support, will include the Lester and Irene Carter Adult Learning Center.

Carter has been recognized for his community service by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, the Milwaukee chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and Wisconsin Sen. Russ Feingold.

Milwaukee's mayor proclaimed Nov. 7, 1991, as Lester and Irene Carter Day.

His community service extends to doing a weekly health segment on a local radio station and hosting seminars and creating brochures on health and wellness.

Does Carter, who turns 69 in August, ever think of retirement?

"To do what?" he said. "Where else can anybody hope to work and have more fun than I have?"

# Polk Serves the St. Louis Community

by Rick Davis

**St. Louis** — Creighton alumna Cheryl (Hill) Polk, BA'84, has developed quite a reputation here through her work as an American Red Cross executive and as a leading fund-raiser for political and community organizations.

"People joke, 'Not only does she want your money, but she wants your blood, too,'" Polk said.

Polk is director of donor services for the American Red Cross' Missouri-Illinois region, overseeing more than 400 employees and a budget of \$25 million.

She also is very active in the community and behind-the-scenes in politics.

Polk has helped raise close to \$4 million for organizations such as the United Way and Girl Scouts, and she is the St. Louis/Missouri campaign chairwoman for presidential hopeful George W. Bush.

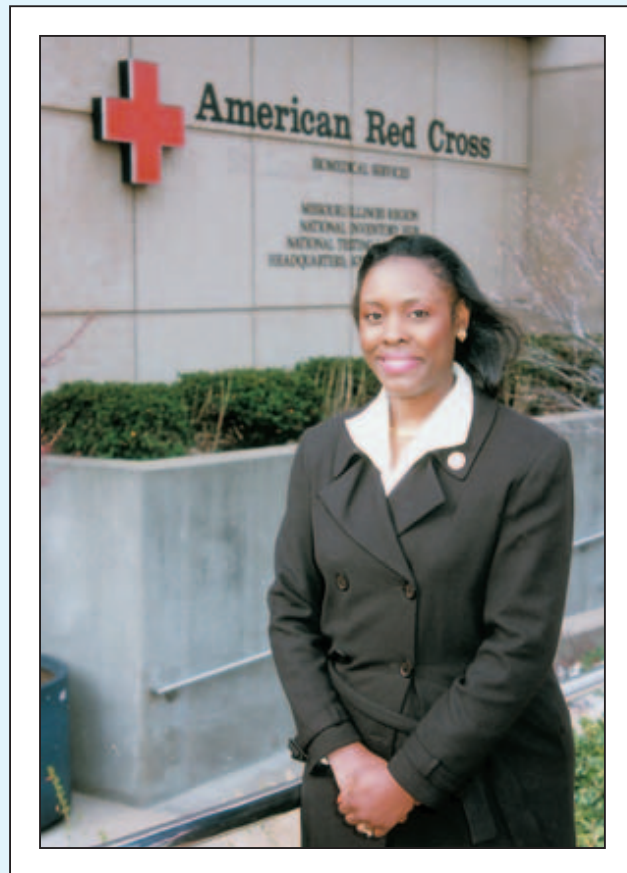
"The fact that little Cheryl from Omaha, Nebraska, is the St. Louis/Missouri campaign chair for George W. Bush is unbelievable," Polk said over lunch.

Polk met Bush during a fund-raiser in St. Louis, when she and her husband, Creighton law graduate Charles E. Polk Jr., JD'86, sat at the same table as the Texas governor. After talking about her fund-raising strategies, she said that Bush replied, "I need you to help me."

While saying she's not interested in seeking political office herself, Polk is active in the Missouri Republican Party. She supported the successful U.S. Senate campaigns of John Ashcroft and Christopher Bond.

Polk grew up in Omaha, the daughter of the Rev. Raymond Hill, pastor at New Light Baptist Church, and Viola Hill. She is the third of seven children.

"We were not wealthy, but everything we needed



*Polk is director of donor services for the American Red Cross' Missouri-Illinois region.*

they provided," Polk said.

Polk went to Omaha North High School. She was extremely active in school, was captain of the cheerleading squad and got good grades.

She became the first person in her family to attend college when she was accepted to Creighton University. She hoped to become a research scientist, but soon found herself struggling.

"I did horrible that first semester," Polk said. "It was such an eye-opener for me."

Polk said her parents remained supportive, and she sought help from Creighton's Student Support Services.

"They really helped me," Polk said. "Without their encouragement and the leadership of Lloyd Beasley (former director of Creighton's Educational Opportunity Programs), I would not have made it

Photo courtesy of the American Red Cross



through. It is why I continue my relationship with the University. They have to know the impact that they are making upon the lives of their graduates."

Polk desperately wanted to continue her education to set an example for her younger siblings, all of whom went on to earn college degrees with honors. Her sister Felicia Dawson was a first-year law student at Creighton this year.

"I told them, 'I did all the struggling for you,'" Polk said.

While at Creighton, Polk — who has a love for theater — performed in a worldwide tour production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. (She eventually majored in journalism and interned as a reporter at KETV Channel 7 in Omaha.)

She also showed a penchant for fund-raising. She worked with two fraternities to organize a fund-raiser to refurbish the apartment of an elderly woman who was living alongside students in the Palms apartment complex (now Kenefick Hall).

"We cooked (fried chicken) dinners at Palms and sold them door-to-door," Polk said. "We made a lot of money."

Polk received the Outstanding Leadership and Community Service Award from Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey for her efforts.

After graduating from Creighton, Cheryl worked as a flight attendant for Eastern Airlines while her soon-to-be husband, Charles, finished law school at Creighton. The two were married in St. John's Church on campus in 1985.

The couple moved to St. Louis in 1986 after Charles earned his juris doctor degree. Charles is now a partner with the law firm of Doepken, Keevican & Weiss.

Cheryl, who was doing consulting work, joined the Red Cross in 1998 as director of donor services for the

***"It's important to be involved in the community. You should help other people, especially when they're not in the position to help themselves."***

— Cheryl Polk

Missouri-Illinois region. The Red Cross supplies almost half of the nation's blood supply by working with more than 4.5 million donors and 3,000 hospitals through its national network of 38 blood donation regions.

The Missouri-Illinois region is one of the largest. It is responsible for collecting about 300,000 units — or 37,500 gallons — of whole blood annually. To reach that

goal, the region must collect about 1,200 units, or 150 gallons, of whole blood per day through its eight donation centers and 22 mobile units.

Soon after she started with the Red Cross, Polk developed the Charles Drew Community Blood Donation Campaign, asking African-Americans to donate more blood. She already has been recognized across the country for her efforts.



*Left to right ... Cheryl Polk, George W. Bush and Charles Polk Jr. Cheryl is the St. Louis/Missouri campaign chair for Bush's presidential campaign.*

"Most African-Americans are O or B blood type," Polk said. "And those are the types that are in the most demand."

Working at the Red Cross has not stopped Polk from getting involved with other community groups. She serves on the boards of several organizations, including the Central Institute for the Deaf; Girls, Inc.; the Girl Scout Council of Greater St. Louis and the Missouri Historical Society. She has received the American Philanthropic Association Community Service Award and has been featured in *Ms.*, *Working Woman* and *Essence* magazines.

"It's important to be involved in the community," Polk said.

"You should help other people, especially when they're not in the position to help themselves."

It's a lesson, she said, she learned from her parents.

"It's just the way I grew up," she said.

It's also a lesson she hopes to pass on to her three children: Clarissa, 12; Catherine, 9; and Charles III, 6.

"If I am able to provide the same upbringing that my parents provided me, I will have lived right," Polk said. "It would be a tremendous accomplishment."

## KEARNEY HONORS WIFE WITH \$1 MILLION GIFT

There is no love quite like that between a husband and wife. This is evident in the incredible marriage of Lee and **Connie, JD'87**, Kearney. Married for 37 years, their union has lasted "for better or worse, in good times and in bad," and is an excellent example for all couples.

Recently, Lee illustrated the love and adoration he has for his wife by giving a \$1 million charitable lead trust to Creighton University's Legal Clinic in her name. He made the contribution in honor of Connie's extraordinary work at the clinic, which provides free legal services to underprivileged people in the Omaha community.

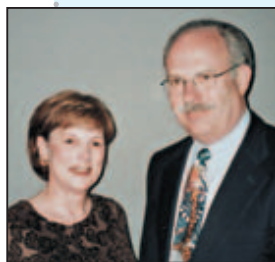
Lee expressed his pride in Connie's work, especially her involvement in the Legal Clinic.

"I am really proud of her accomplishments in serving the poor and disadvantaged people in the community," Lee said.

He feels strongly that "this effort needs to continue," and hopes this gift in his wife's honor will help make that possible.

The director of the Legal Clinic, Catherine Mahern, spoke highly of Connie and her work at the clinic.

"Connie Kearney is one of the most intelligent, generous and compassionate people I've had the pleasure of knowing," Mahern said. "Working with her in the legal clinic was a valuable experience for me, our law students and our clients."



The Kearneys

## CREIGHTON PHYSICIAN HONORED THROUGH GRATEFUL PATIENT PROGRAM

They take care of you when you are ill, and lend a thoughtful ear when you need a caring confidant. From the birth of babies to the eldest in communities, they take care of everyone. They are family physicians.

The late **Dr. F. Audley Hale, MD'43**, was an excellent example of the family physician. A dedicated man who treated thousands of patients, Hale, who died in 1997, was not only a physician, but also a trusted friend. He showed genuine concern for his patients' well-being and was available to them for emotional, as well as physical, care and support.

After 20 years of being cared for by Hale, G. Van Oldenbeek decided to do something special in memory of his Creighton-educated physician through the University's Grateful Patient Program. The Grateful Patient Program allows individu-

als who believe in Creighton's mission, and are especially grateful to a specific department or physician, to make a gift to

the School of Medicine or its medical center. Gifts may be given to specific departments or in honor of a physician.

Van Oldenbeek decided to participate in the Grateful Patient Program by creating an endowed scholarship fund in his



Van Oldenbeek

physician's name. The scholarship will be a permanent symbol of Hale's caring spirit.

Van Oldenbeek recently spoke of Hale, saying, "I was always grateful for his genuine concern for patients. Because of this, I wanted to honor his memory and establish a testimony to his good work. My gifts have ensured his name will live in perpetuity through an endowed scholarship at his *alma mater* — the Creighton University School of Medicine."

## BELOVED PROFESSOR GIVES TO CU IN MANY WAYS

For **Dr. Kathryn Thomas, BA'68**, Creighton University truly is home. Since her baptism at St. John's Church, she has been a member of the Creighton family. Thomas furthered her Creighton connection by attending the University for her undergraduate education, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Latin. Though she attended another Jesuit institution for her graduate work, she returned to Creighton for the duration of her teaching career.

A beloved professor of classics, she has served as chair of the Department of Classics and Modern Languages as well as associate vice president of academic affairs and director of the Honors Program.

Thomas has not only been a tremendous benefactor to Creighton through her serv-

ice as a professor, she also has made generous financial contributions.

She established a charitable remainder annuity trust, with Creighton as the beneficiary, after her parents passed away. She cared for both of her parents until their deaths, and knew they wanted their life savings to go to something worthwhile.

For Thomas, Creighton was the perfect fit. She shares her parents' belief in philanthropy and giving back to the community, and she knew, "that's what they would have wanted."

Thomas also has established an endowed scholarship fund in her parents' names through her estate planning, another example of her caring spirit and her love for both her family and Creighton.



# Why Catholics Haven't Been Bible Readers

## (And Why Now Is A Good Time To Start)

By Dennis Hamm, S.J.

*Professor of Theology*

True or false? Roman Catholics were never encouraged to read and study the Bible until around 30 years ago. Strange as it may seem, that is a true statement. And there are perfectly good historical reasons for this. First, until Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th century, the text of the Bible was available only to the few (monks and scholars, mainly) who had access to the rare manuscript copies that, until then, were the only vehicle for that text. The majority learned what they knew of the biblical tradition through sermons, hymns, paintings and stained glass windows. Even after Gutenberg, few people knew how to read, and few of those readers knew Hebrew, Greek or the main language of translation, Latin. So for all those centuries the Church did not encourage personal reading and study of the Bible for the simple reasons that the scarcity of Bibles and the ability to read made lay Bible study a non-issue.

Then, in the 16th century, just when printed books were becoming a little more affordable and available, and vernacular translations were emerging, the Protestant Reformation popularized an approach to the Bible that had to be countered by the Roman Church. Luther's *sola scriptura*, with its encouragement of private interpretation and downplaying of tradition, provoked a strong response from the Council of Trent. The Council reaffirmed the truth that the Bible comes from the Church, not the Church from the Bible. The Bible had always been interpreted in the context of the believing community, under the guidance of the teaching authority of the Church, what we call the magisterium. Consequently, the Church discouraged the individual study that could lead to the private interpretation of Scripture.

While that move was a good and necessary thing in itself, it brought about an unforeseen result: For the next 400 years, Catholics were stuck in that defensive posture (relative to Protestantism). We got strong in some other, important ways. Our catechisms helped us learn the essence of our tradition. We emphasized what needed emphasis — the community of worship and importance of the sacraments, the rhythms of the liturgical seasons. But when it came to the Bible, most of us remained biblically illiterate. Nor was Scripture study a major concern in the training of priests.

Vatican II restored an appropriate emphasis on Scripture for the life of the Church. The Council mandated a revision of the Lectionary giving a fuller representation of both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and further mandated that preaching at Mass take the form of homilies that are truly biblical. Like so much else in Vatican II, this was not an introduction of novelty but a return to sources.

Consequently, whatever excuses we had for neglecting the Bible in the past, there are now at least seven good reasons (leave lists of 10 to David Letterman) for acquiring biblical literacy:

1. Printed editions of the Bible are cheap enough for you to have your copy. (Try The Catholic Study Bible. )
2. Over a three-year cycle, you are hearing passages from most of the Bible, and it helps to have sufficient familiarity to hear those readings in context.
3. The training of priests is catching up with the vision of Vatican II, and so we are hearing more biblically based homilies, and need to know the Bible to hear them well.
4. Catholic Bible study will inoculate you against the myopia of creationism and the fever of millennialism.
5. Catholics and Protestants are talking again, and the other two-thirds of the human race rightly expects us to know our Scriptures when they ask us how we view God and the world.
6. There are more biblical scholars alive today than in all previous centuries combined. They are producing wonderful resources (books, maps, videos, websites, dictionaries, CDs, encyclopedias) to help us read the biblical texts in context.
7. Our faith is forever joined to the imagery of Scripture. Our worship and our private prayer is necessarily nurtured or stifled by our knowledge or ignorance of the Bible. So our spiritual health as Christians requires that our religious imaginations be regularly and routinely cared for and nurtured by the language and imagery of the stories and prayer of the Bible.

Get a copy of The Catholic Study Bible and try reading a chapter a day (starting anywhere) for a year, and see if you aren't encouraged by your growing biblical literacy. **C**

