

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

# UIC NEWS

For the community of the University of Illinois at Chicago



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VOLUME 33 / NUMBER 31

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# Congratulations

## Class of 2014



## An unexpected path leads to rewarding journey

By Matt O'Connor

Graduation: the word alone brings hundreds of thoughts to mind. Relationships, late nights, the past, the future.

At my high school graduation, I would never have thought I would be graduating from UIC with a degree in English after working for the campus newspaper for nearly two years.

Sitting in a sea of people at high school commencement, I was dead set on studying marketing at Indiana University Bloomington and owning my own business one day.

I moved to Bloomington, nearly five hours away, and had a less-than-stellar freshman year. I knew if I could get a business degree, I would likely have a good job awaiting me. Still, I always felt I was just going through the motions in class. My heart was never really in it.

So I found myself back at home in Gurnee at the College of Lake County, a community college, missing the freedom I took for granted but taking classes I truly enjoyed.

English would be my new path. I got involved with *The Chronicle*, the college's newspaper, and met people with similar interests. I decided writing is what I want to do, regardless of the career prospects.

I didn't know what to expect, transferring to UIC and living in the city. I moved into Thomas Beckham Hall not knowing my roommates, but I quickly found my place.

I called around to see where I could put my writing abilities to use. I started as a student contributor for *UIC News*, interned in spring 2013 and ultimately got paid to write. I met great friends, ventured throughout Chicago, found new venues and met interesting people wherever I went.

Since I went to three different schools in different settings, I didn't have the typical college experience. Throughout all the mind-changes and moving, I always kept an open mind, in whatever situation I found myself. Whether it's trying a new restaurant or interviewing someone for an article — you never know what can come out of a situation.



Photo: S.K. Vemmer

"When people ask me where I went to school, I'll confidently say, 'UIC,'" says Matt O'Connor, who graduates Sunday with a degree in English.

Graduation brings an entirely new set of challenges. Interviewing and writing for newspapers has provided me with great experience and put me in contact with people in different industries. My ideal job would be traveling to obscure corners of the world to cover the stories of those people who never receive attention, but have something important to say.

I've received a lot of advice and learned much along the way. Finding what I was good at wasn't exactly easy, but I en-

courage everyone to keep trying. When you find your talent, stick with it.

A professor once told me not to wait until you receive your diploma to start doing important things: do them now.

Living in the city and going to UIC has by far been my favorite college experience. There's never a dull moment in Chicago — and when people ask me where I went to school, I'll confidently say, "UIC."



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

# UIC ALUMNI Gala

OCTOBER 10, 2014

Please join the University of Illinois Alumni Association in honoring outstanding alumni at the 2014 Alumni Gala. This awards ceremony celebrates UIC alumni and friends for their vision, impact, accomplishment, excellence and service. The Alumni Gala celebration includes the presentation of the 2014 University of Illinois Alumni Achievement, University of Illinois Distinguished Service and University of Illinois Humanitarian awards and the UIC City Partner Award.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Naeema H. Al-Gasseer**, MS '87 NURS, PHD '90 NURS  
Assistant Regional Director, Eastern Mediterranean Region  
Representative to Egypt, World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Nasr City, Cairo

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Curtis Granderson** '03 CBA  
Outfielder, New York Mets; Founder and Chairman,  
Grand Kids Foundation; Corona, N.Y.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**John H. Laub** '75 LAS  
Distinguished Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Uni-  
versity of Maryland; Former Director, National Institute of Justice;  
Recipient of Stockholm Prize and Hans W. Mattick Award;  
College Park, Md.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

**Emanuel D. Pollack**  
Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs,  
UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Chicago, Ill.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

**Dr. Anthony S. Rinella**, MD '96  
Orthopaedic Spine Surgeon; Founder, Illinois Spine & Scoliosis  
Center; Co-Founder, Global Spine Outreach; Homer Glen, Ill.

**UIC CITY PARTNER AWARD**

**Dr. Michael Papka**, MS '94 ENG,  
Deputy Associate Director; Argonne National Laboratory;  
Lemont, Ill.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

"We will always be honored to call you UIC alumni," says Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares.

## UIC's true legacy: its graduates

### Dear UIC Class of 2014:

As our academic year draws to a close, the moment is right to review what makes UIC such an outstanding institution — our faculty, staff, alumni and you, our students.

As you walk down the aisle in your cap and gown, you can be enormously proud of your alma mater.

Our rankings continue to rise, along with our visibility. The *Times Higher Education* "100 Under 50," the world's best universities that were founded less than 50 years ago, listed UIC as No. 13 — one of only eight U.S. universities included. We're third in the U.S., after University of California, Irvine, and University of California, Santa Cruz, moving up six places from last year.

*U.S. News & World Report's* "Best Colleges" most recent rankings put UIC at 63 among public universities. We are also proud to be recognized among the schools whose graduates had the least amount of debt — and to be ranked among the top 10 national universities for ethnic diversity and in the top 30 for economic diversity.

This academic year we began the planning and construction of the first new buildings on campus since 2008.

The Advanced Chemical Technology Building, now in the design phase with construction expected to begin in spring 2015, will support cutting-edge interdisciplinary research in such areas as environmental science and immunology.

We just celebrated the opening of the Curtis Granderson Baseball Stadium, made possible by UIC grad and New York Mets player Curtis Granderson. The stadium will be home to Flames athletics and Chicago youth baseball.

UI Health's newest Mile Square Health Center, officially opened in January, is the first federally qualified health center in Chicago to offer both urgent care and a full array of specialty medical services. It is expected to serve many newly insured patients under the Affordable Care Act.

UIC is the new home for the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, a group of

25 university-based Latino research centers that promote policy-focused studies of U.S. Latinos in politics, economics, culture, art, history and immigration.

The Richard J. Daley Collection, documents and artifacts from the late mayor's six terms at Chicago's helm, became available for review in the UIC Library to the public and researchers.

With 1 petabyte (a quadrillion bytes) of disk storage, the new High Performance Computing Cluster expands UIC's research computing capabilities in many areas, including informatics and big data. These advancements will provide student training in cluster- and cloud-based computing to make our graduates even more attractive in the job market.

UI Labs received a grant of \$70 million from the U.S. Department of Defense to create a Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute in Chicago. UIC's role focuses on its strengths in computer visualization and developing a technical workforce. The institute will apply cutting-edge mobile, cloud and high-performance computing technologies to solving manufacturing challenges, from robotics to visualization.

These developments and accomplishments are part of our shared experience at UIC and the history we've witnessed together.

To our graduates, I extend my very best wishes for the future. We look forward to your continuing participation in the life of UIC. Please return to campus often to share your achievements. We will always be honored to call you UIC alumni. As our ambassadors, you are UIC's true legacy.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Paula Allen-Meares

Chancellor

John Corbally Presidential Professor

# COLLEGE CEREMONIES

## Honors College

7 p.m. Wednesday, UIC Forum

Former Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar is the convocation speaker. Edgar, a distinguished fellow with the university's Institute of Government and Public Affairs, made fiscal discipline and children's issues the cornerstones of his two terms as



Jim Edgar

governor. First elected in 1990, Edgar won reelection in 1994 by the largest margin ever for a governor. Four years later, he left office with the highest approval rating in state history.

During his tenure, Edgar eliminated the backlog in the state's bill payments, gave the state a surplus and reduced the size of state government. He won passage of historic legislation on the way Illinois schools are funded and overhauled the state's child welfare system.

Edgar has served in a variety of leadership roles, including president of the Council of State Governments, member of the executive committee of the National Governors' Association and chairman of the Midwest Governors' Association.

## Nursing

1 p.m. Thursday, UIC Pavilion

Barbara Safriet, former associate dean for academic affairs and lecturer at Yale Law School from 1988 to 2007, is the commencement speaker. She is visiting professor of health law at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon.



Barbara Safriet

She was a member of the Pew Health Professions Commission and health law consultant for the Rockefeller Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Commonwealth Fund, Association of Academic Health Centers, U.S. Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, U.S. Department of Defense, National Council of State Legislatures, American Hospital Association and American Nurses Association.

She has written and lectured on administrative and constitutional law, health care professionals' licensure and regulation, and health care workforce issues.

## Applied Health Sciences

2 p.m. Thursday, UIC Forum

Jackie Joyner-Kersey, named "Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century" by *Sports Illustrated*, will give the commencement speech.

Joyner-Kersey won six Olympic medals and four World Champion titles in the heptathlon and long jump events in four consecutive Olympics. She holds the world heptathlon record and Olympic and national records in the long jump.



Jackie Joyner-Kersey

She is a philanthropist and advocate for children's education, health issues, racial equality, social reform and women's rights. Joyner-Kersey is the author of *A Kind of Grace* and *A Woman's Place Is Everywhere*.

## Education

6:30 p.m. Thursday, UIC Pavilion

Barrington Irving, who at age 23 became the youngest person and first black pilot to fly solo around the world, is the commencement speaker.



Barrington Irving

Irving made the 97-day, 30,000-mile journey in a single-engine plane in 2007. He founded the nonprofit Experience Aviation and Experience Aviation Learning Center, which offers STEM-based programs for middle and high school students in the Miami area.

Barrington, who received the Florida Senate Medallion of Excellence, is a National Geographic Emerging Explorer.

He is planning his next trip around the world, the Classroom in the Sky, in October. During his journey, he will conduct air and land expeditions to engage students all over the globe.

## School of Public Health

7:30 p.m. Thursday, UIC Forum

Joy Reid, host of MSNBC's "The Reid Report," is commencement speaker.



Joy Reid

Reid is managing editor of *theGrio.com*, an online news and opinion website for African American audiences. She was a freelance columnist for the *Miami Herald* and editor of the political blog *The Reid Report*. She was online news editor for an NBC-affiliated TV station in South Florida and a host for Radio One.

During the 2004 presidential campaign, Reid was Florida deputy communications director for the 527 America Coming Together initiative. She was a press aide to President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign in Florida.

She is producing "The Fight Years," a documentary about boxing in Miami during the 1950s and 1960s.

## Social Work

9 a.m. Friday, UIC Pavilion

Sandee Kastrul, president and co-founder of i.c.stars, a Chicago nonprofit, will speak at commencement.



Sandee Kastrul

Kastrul founded i.c.stars in 1999 to provide Chicago inner-city youth with training in technology, leadership and business skills, preparing them for careers in information technology and community leadership.

She has worked in education for more than 20 years as a teacher and consultant, from early childhood to adult professional development.

She received the National Forum Black Public Administrators Community Service Award in 2012 and two awards from the



William Coats

Black Data Processors Association. William Coats, a 1971 alumnus whose career in mental health care included 20 years as associate director of the DuPage County Health Department, will receive the college's Pioneer Award.

## Urban Planning and Public Affairs

10 a.m. Friday, UIC Forum

Lisa Schrader, chief of staff to Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, is commencement speaker.



Lisa Schrader

Schrader is responsible for managing the day-to-day activities of city government, as well as long-term strategic planning for Emanuel's agenda. She has worked for the city since 2001, in roles that include deputy chief financial officer, deputy budget director and public information officer for the city's financial team. She was deputy chief of staff for Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Schrader worked for the Democratic National Committee's Texas research and communications team in the 2000 presidential election and the Better World Campaign in Washington, D.C.

## Medicine

2 p.m. Friday, UIC Pavilion

Bechara Choucair, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, will



Bechara Choucair

speak at commencement. Since his appointment in 2009, Choucair has implemented "Healthy Chicago," the first citywide comprehensive public health agenda. Under Choucair's leadership, the public health department became the first big-city public health agency to receive national accreditation.

He was medical director of Crusader Community Health in Rockford and executive director of Heartland International Health Center.

He is adjunct associate professor of family and community medicine at Northwestern University.

## Pharmacy

3:30 p.m. Friday, UIC Forum

Ron Weinert, vice president for accountable care services at Walgreens, will give the commencement address.



Ron Weinert

Weinert, a 1983 UIC alumnus, joined Walgreens as a pharmacist in 1987. He advanced from manager to supervisor for the Des Moines

district, moving to corporate headquarters in 1997.

He held administrative positions in patient services and government relations before becoming chief of staff to the president of Walgreens Health Services. He was vice president of health systems services before moving into his current position.

## Business Administration

9 a.m. Saturday, UIC Pavilion

Cary Kochman, head of the North American Mergers and Acquisitions Group at Citigroup, will speak at commencement.



Cary Kochman

Kochman, co-head of the Chicago Citi office, has 24 years of investment banking experience and has completed more than \$200 billion worth of transactions.

He led the mergers and acquisitions departments at UBS Investment Bank and Credit Suisse.

A 1986 UIC graduate in accounting, he received his J.D. and MBA at the University of Chicago.

Continued on page 4

# COLLEGE CEREMONIES

Continued from page 3

## Dentistry

10 a.m. Saturday, UIC Forum

William Knight, interim dean of the College of Dentistry, is the commencement speaker.

A member of the faculty since 2001, Knight was executive associate dean and assistant dean for clinical education.



William Knight

As interim dean, he is overseeing the renovation and construction of college facilities, refinements to the master's program in oral science and implementation of the fourth year of the college's Doctor of Dental Medicine curriculum.

## Engineering

2 p.m. Saturday, UIC Pavilion

Christopher Burke, professor of civil and materials engineering, will be the commencement speaker.

Burke founded Christopher B. Burke Engineering in 1986. The Burke Group, which includes affiliated companies, has more than 400 staff members with nine offices in Indiana and Illinois.

Burke teaches courses related to water resources and design.



Christopher Burke

He has funded UIC student scholarships, faculty teaching awards and a presentation competition for doctoral students. In 2006, he and his wife funded the rehabilitation of UIC's Water Resources Lab.

Honors he received from Purdue University, his alma mater, include an honorary doctorate, President's Lifetime Achievement Award, Distinguished Engineering Alumni and Outstanding Civil Engineering Alumni Achievement Award.

## Architecture, Design, and the Arts

7 p.m. Saturday, UIC Pavilion

Theaster Gates, artist and founder of the nonprofit Rebuild Foundation, is the commencement speaker.



Theaster Gates

Rebuild Foundation projects on Chicago's South Side include the arts incubator Dorchester Projects, Black

Cinema House and the Stony Island Arts Bank and Dorchester Artists Housing Collaborative.

He opened the Arts Incubator in Washington Park in 2013, which he developed as director of arts and public life at the University of Chicago. The renovated building is home to artist residencies, a design apprenticeship program, exhibitions, performances and talks.

Gates has exhibited and performed at the Studio Museum in New York City's Harlem, Whitechapel Gallery in London, Punta della Dogana in Venice and the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art.

## Liberal Arts and Sciences

10 a.m. Sunday, UIC Pavilion

Ertharin Cousin, executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme and a 1979 UIC graduate, and Shing-Tung Yau, professor of mathematics at Harvard University, will receive Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degrees



Ertharin Cousin

at commencement.

Cousin will also be the commencement speaker.

Appointed to her position in 2012, she

oversees a \$4 billion budget and staff of 15,000 employees who serve 100 million people across the globe.

Cousin was U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture and head of the U.S. Mission to the U.S. Agencies in Rome.

She was White House liaison to the State Department during the Clinton Administration.

She was executive vice president and chief operating officer for Feeding Amer-



Shing-Tung Yau

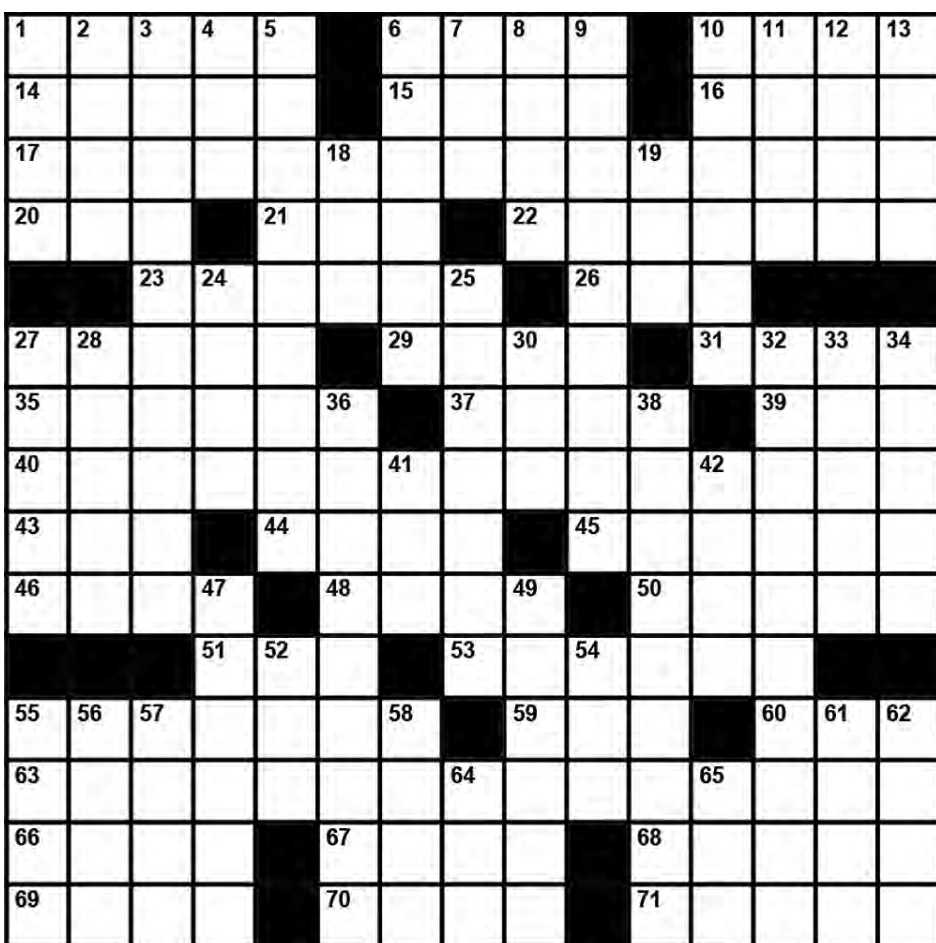
ica, leading the organization's efforts to help victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Yau, the William Caspar Graustein professor of mathematics at Harvard, is a dominant force in the field of differential geometry and its application to general relativity and string theory.

Winner of the Fields Medal, the pinnacle of achievement in mathematics, he is at the forefront of interdisciplinary research as one of the world's leading mathematical theorists.

He is also an education entrepreneur working to change traditional education in mathematics, helping to establish centers and institutes in China.

## Crossword: Waiting Room Distractions



### ACROSS

1. Cores
6. Tacky chic
10. Enhances
14. Courtyards
15. Sea position
16. Hawaiian tuber
17. Mags
20. Increase, with "up"
21. Poetic palindrome
22. WWII battle site
23. Crackers
26. Mandela's org.
27. Stimulant ingredients
29. Kuwaiti, e.g.
31. Land of leprechauns
35. Profits
37. Indonesian roamer
39. Australian runner
40. Rags?
43. Addition
44. Affectation
45. Cow fuel
46. Some beans
48. Campaigns
50. Some bays
51. Family dog, for short
53. Psychoanalyzed?
55. Cooling-off periods?

59. Bit in a horse's mouth
60. Ripen
63. Mags
66. Algonquian Indian
67. Brown shade
68. Fat units?
69. Frau's partner
70. Blabs
71. Nobel, for one

### DOWN

1. Perry Como's "\_\_\_ Loves Mambo"
2. Any thing
3. In Aruban fashion?
4. Cool
5. Vendor's mistake?
6. Linked series of writings
7. "Aladdin" prince
8. Exec's note
9. Gotcha moments
10. Immediately
11. "Two Years Before the Mast" writer
12. Attracted
13. Bean used to make miso
18. Time piece?
19. Time div.
24. Catch
25. Alain Robbe-Grillet novel, with "The"
27. "Who \_\_\_?"
28. Kind of molding
30. Aardvark's tidbit
32. Worthy of comment
33. Candidate's concern
34. Certain posers
36. Quail food
38. Disney workers
41. Fed. construction overseer
42. Brio
47. Sirhan Sirhan, e.g.
49. Fuse mishaps
52. Back when
54. Churchill's "so few," (abbr.)
55. Creep
56. Bird beak part
57. The America's Cup trophy, e.g.
58. Gull-like bird
61. Neuter
62. To be, to Tiberius
64. Paranormal ability
65. Line

Answers on page 10

Puzzle by Myles Mellor

# 2014 Silver Circle Awards

Since 1966, the Silver Circle Award has been presented to some of UIC's best teachers. Winners, who are honored at their college commencements, receive \$500 and their names join a long list of distinguished colleagues. But what makes the award especially meaningful is its selection committee: the graduating seniors.



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Joshua Clark

## Joel Brown

*Professor of biological sciences  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

Squirrel fanatic, world traveler, award-winning researcher and teacher. That's urban ecologist Joel Brown, professor of biological sciences.

"I've been privileged to win a number of teaching awards, but without a doubt having the Silver Circle by and from the undergraduates means a lot more than simply us faculty congratulating ourselves," says Brown, who receives his second Silver Circle this year.

Brown's other UIC honors include Researcher of the Year and the Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Finding the balance between teaching, training graduate students and maintaining research is something he finds challenging and rewarding.

"For me, the common passion is ecology and evolution," he says. "The goal, in a Research 1 institution, is that you're being taught by the people generating and creating the ideas. So let's make that happen — that's my job."

Brown says he tries to make his teaching one-third information, one-third thought-provoking and one-third entertainment.

"You learn more from an instructor when you feel like they're developing a relationship with you," he says.

Brown has written more than 150 publications, including two books. Using game theory and evolution, he developed a model called the "ecology of fear," which studies the interactions between prey, predator and their environment through the fear responses of prey species.

Brown grew up in California and studied economics at Pomona College. A summer job collecting zoology samples in the San Gabriel Mountains pointed him to his true passion.

Pursuing a Ph.D. at University of Arizona, he applied his economics background to animal ecology and evolution.

Brown says deserts are his favorite habitat, with UIC a close second.

"Each time I walk into the classroom, and I see a room full of students, it's a huge privilege, a huge responsibility and a huge opportunity."

## John D'Emilio

*Professor of gender & women's studies and history  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

Over the last four decades, John D'Emilio has established himself as one of the most respected scholars of gay and lesbian studies and the history of sexuality and social movements.

Among his many career accolades are Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships, the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame and Yale University's Brudner Prize for lifetime contributions to gay and lesbian studies.

As retirement approaches in May, he prizes the latest honor, his first Silver Circle Award, all the more because it is given by students.

D'Emilio says it's important that students feel comfortable joining the discussions that his courses produce.

"I tell them no one has died of embarrassment, as far as I know," he says. "The way we learn is by articulating, not by just absorbing."

His latest courses have included history of the U.S. in the 1960s, history of sexuality, and sexuality and community — his favorite.

The latter begins by covering LGBT issues and history from the 1950s to the present, eventually focusing on contemporary issues such as the relationship between sexual identities and communities of faith.

D'Emilio enjoys teaching subjects that students haven't gone over already in previous courses.

"It's all new to them," he says.

"They know there is a big parade on Halsted Street every June and many of them go, but they have no idea the reason it's held is because there was a major riot in Greenwich Village in 1969 that created a gay liberation movement. They are astounded."

D'Emilio plans to write and do research, but book reviews and conferences will not be part of his initial stage of retirement.

"I would like to spend the next stage of my life figuring out how to revolutionize the content of sex education in the United States."

## Lori Felker

*Visiting assistant professor of moving image  
College of Architecture, Design, & the Arts*

Lori Felker's students range from those learning basic film technology to advanced students who want to talk theory.

"In the arts, it can be all over the place. Some students are shy and don't participate, others want to direct," Felker says.

"I've been told I have a good ability to address lots of different students' needs and engage everybody."

She credits her varied background for that. She studied literature and medieval studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Notre Dame and Oxford, and German film history in Berlin.

"I started doing film studies as an easy class, and it totally pulled me in a different direction," she says.

She returned to western Pennsylvania, took night classes at Pittsburgh Filmmakers and began freelancing on feature films and commercials.

"I liked production organization and being on sets. Then I'd go home and make an experimental, hand-processed Super 8 film. So I was in both worlds at the same time."

To combine concepts in film, video and television, she is teaching the themes of transmission and collaboration.

"In the moving image world, classes are very separated between film and video," she says. "I've been talking about the signal and light — this transmission of energy and information to record something, to communicate."

Communication is a prominent theme in her films, some of which can be viewed at [vimeo.com/lorifelker](http://vimeo.com/lorifelker). Her current project is a "sort of documentary" on New York musician Von Lmo, "a slippery guy who doesn't always tell the same story."

"A documentary represents reality, but I'm doing this on someone who doesn't live in reality, or believe in truth or time," she laughs. "That's changing the way I put it together."

Felker sometimes shows her films in class because she can answer questions about the process and tools behind them.

"If a student says, 'How do I edit my video?,' I can open that up to editing in general: why are we making a cut here? Why make anything? What do you need to say?"

"It sounds corny, but it can be about life itself."

## 2014 Silver Circle Awards



Photo: Joshua Clark



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Mark Mershon

### Karrie Hamstra-Wright

*Clinical associate professor of kinesiology & nutrition  
College of Applied Health Sciences*

Karrie Hamstra-Wright, a three-time Silver Circle winner, enjoys seeing her students learn to ask the “why?” question.

“I like to see them come through our curriculum and connect the dots — they don’t regurgitate information back to me. They’re able to really reflect and see why something makes sense, or say, ‘I don’t agree with this.’”

This means “they are really learning to think as future clinicians,” she says.

Hamstra-Wright teaches applied anatomy, exercise injury management, modifications in exercise programming and, new this year, lower extremity overuse injury.

Most of her students plan to become physical therapists. The rest are a variety of pre-health students: pre-med or interested in chiropractic, occupational therapy or athletic training.

“Our students come to class pretty energized and excited about the content and it makes it so much fun,” she says.

“Most of my classes are applied, so students see directly the application to what they’re going to do. It makes it really exciting to teach them because they get passionate about it.

“I try to bring an energy to the classroom, because I love it, too,” she says.

“I like to have discussions and demonstrations as much as possible.”

Hamstra-Wright particularly enjoys seeing students from her 200-level applied anatomy class come back as seniors in her 400-level courses.

“I’m so proud of the way they can look at the current literature and analyze it,” she says.

“They are not going to go out into the field and just do things because it’s always been done that way.”

Hamstra-Wright encourages her students to practice on themselves, too.

“I’m a big proponent of that — we’re teaching exercise,” she says.

Hamstra-Wright has been at UIC for about 10 years.

“We have so much to offer to our students,” she says.

“The campus keeps getting better, more and more beautiful and there are more and more opportunities for undergraduate students — we have the whole city.

“It’s just a great place to teach.”

### Mitchel Hendrickson

*Assistant professor of anthropology  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

Mitchel Hendrickson is the only scholar in North America studying the archeology of the Khmer, but he’s found ways to connect with people who’ve never heard of the Far Eastern empire.

He teaches courses on the region, archeology and religion of the Khmer that are cross-listed in other departments like Asian studies and religious studies.

Because he has young children, he limits his field work to an intense six weeks each summer in Cambodia, trying to see as many of his colleagues there as possible.

“It’s important to make sure that all the information we obtain is conveyed back, not only to the institutions that we work with in Cambodia but to the Cambodian students — they are the next generation of Khmer archeologists,” Hendrickson says.

The Khmer Empire lasted from the beginning of the 9th century until the mid-15th century, including what is now Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

“To give you some idea of the scale of this empire — 12th century Angkor had a population of about 11,000. At the same period, the population of Paris was 12,000.”

Hendrickson teaches a core course in writing for all anthropology students that starts with the basics, then proceeds to academic and research writing.

“It’s not a course I expected to teach, but it has become a course that I really enjoy,” he says. “It’s essentially teaching them how to write and think.”

At the end of the semester, students produce their own research proposals.

“I know the students treat it like their ball-and-chain course, because they have to take it, but they find that by writing a lot, you learn a lot,” he says.

“I don’t think students realize that writing is a craft — you can’t just have a paper come out at the last minute,” he says.

“I learn a ton from teaching it — I’ve actually tried to write my own papers in different ways.”

This is only Hendrickson’s second year at UIC — and his second year as a teacher.

“I think I’ll be a very good teacher in about 10 years,” he says.

### Krista Jones

*Clinical instructor of health systems science  
College of Nursing*

“I want my students to commit themselves to life-long learning,” Krista Jones says. “I want to nurture their creativity and confidence.”

As the College of Nursing’s Population-Focused Nursing course coordinator, Jones teaches both undergraduate and graduate students.

Her dedication to underserved and marginalized populations has led to a wide range of clinical placements for her students.

She encourages her students to ask, “What is the whole story?” when they work with patients.

They’ve developed community-based projects to teach child care providers about poison control, family fitness programs to fight obesity, and educational modules for the Women, Infants and Children food assistance program.

***“When my students graduate I am as proud of them as I am of my own children.”***

Working with undergraduate public health nursing students in the Champaign District Health Department, Jones started a Facebook project to educate 15- to 24-year-olds about the symptoms, treatment and prevention of the sexually transmitted infection chlamydia.

The project received the Illinois Department of Public Health Award of Merit.

This is the second Silver Circle for Jones, an Illinois Board of Higher Education nursing fellow. She is president of the Champaign County Board of Health and Midwest director of the Association of Community Health Nurse Educators.

But she didn’t become a nursing instructor to receive awards, she says.

“Some of the proudest moments of my professional career have come from watching my students grow as individuals and professionals,” she says.

“When my students graduate I am as proud of them as I am of my own children. Nursing truly is a great profession and I’m glad to be part of it.”

## 2014 Silver Circle Awards



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

### Sam (Sung-Han) Lee

*Assistant professor of accounting  
College of Business Administration*

Sam Lee teaches the “languages of business” — accounting, managerial accounting and cost accounting — to both undergraduate and graduate students.

While he’s interested in the process of financial reporting and disclosure, his research focuses on how organizations publicize topics like management forecasts, sales growth and CEO compensation, including salaries, bonuses and perks.

“I found that introducing accounting as an interesting and useful communication tool motivated students, which in turn facilitated the most effective learning experience,” Lee says.

Lee came to UIC in 2007 with professional experience that includes auditing financial statements for KPMG Korea and working as an accounting officer for the South Korean army.

Lee predicts that his teaching philosophy, centered on encouraging self-development, will help students evolve as competent accountants.

“I often introduce myself as a guide for the students’ journey to explore interesting topics,” he says. “When students are encouraged and excited about coming to class, they achieve their full potential.”

Lee says he finds teaching at UIC offers challenges and areas for his own improvement.

“Students at UIC are not traditional students who only study during their four college years. Most are commuting students who study and work together. Professors need to go an extra mile to motivate students to study hard.”

Lee says his goal is to inspire students to improve the way they study.

“I cannot forget the smiles of many students when they broke through struggles and expressed gratitude for my advice,” he says.

### Lindsey McQuade

*Clinical assistant professor of chemistry  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences*

Organic chemistry: a tough course required for every student considering a health care career. A course that haunts their dreams, even decades later.

A course where a good teacher can make a real difference.

“I just try to remember that organic chemistry is really, really hard,” says Lindsey McQuade, who teaches organic chemistry and runs the O Chem labs eight hours a day, five days a week.

Since most of her students are not chemistry majors, she tries to teach in a way that makes sense to them.

“They need to do it to get through, but maybe they don’t have the same background or the same interest level a chemistry major may bring to class,” McQuade says.

“So I try my best to remember that you don’t always teach to the top student.”

Students have one four-hour lab session each week, in groups of 22 students. The labs encourage teamwork and create a sense of community, she says.

“A lot of the lab is more active learning, with students talking to each other and trying to figure it out for themselves. Sometimes I see people later on who used to be lab partners and they’re dating now or they’re friends.”

McQuade came to UIC two years ago after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford and graduate studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she focused more on research than teaching.

“But I always wanted to teach,” she says. “I like getting people to understand chemistry and get excited about it.”

“I really like the diversity of UIC students — there’s a very specific type of person that goes to schools like Stanford and MIT,” she adds.

“I like that I have students here who are coming back to school after already having a degree and doing something else, people who come from lots of different cultures and backgrounds.

“It makes teaching different because you really have to teach to everyone,” she says.

### Daniel Miltner

*Clinical assistant professor of curriculum & instruction  
and mathematics, statistics & computer science  
Colleges of Education and Liberal Arts & Sciences*

In remembering Daniel Miltner, who died unexpectedly March 25, his colleagues speak of his strong dedication to teaching — both theory and practice.

“Dan was an exceptional teacher, relentlessly trying to provide the best learning opportunities possible for his students,” says Alison Castro Superfine, director of the Office of Mathematics Education, where Miltner was assistant director.

*“He was an irreplaceable friend  
and colleague.”*

Miltner was selected for his second Silver Circle Award this year. Other honors include a teaching award from UIC’s Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

His family will accept his Silver Circle Award at the College of Education commencement Thursday.

“He was the heart of the mathematics education group in the math department, and an irreplaceable friend and colleague,” Superfine says. “His loss will be felt at UIC for a very long time.”

Miltner was involved with math instruction at every level, from elementary to doctoral. He taught high school in Silver Spring, Maryland, for five years before he came to UIC, where he earned a master’s and Ph.D. in math education.

He worked on a grant that took him into the Chicago Public Schools, helping teachers work with reform-based math curricula that encourage students to reason mathematically and connect ideas to what they already know.

Miltner was the math department’s peer tutor coordinator and a member of the mathematics education committee. He served on the UIC Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Teaching Performance Assessment Project.

He was a member of the Chicago STEM Education Consortium, the Chicago Public Schools Algebra Initiative and the Chicago Community College Reinvention Taskforce.

Writers: Jeff Boynés, Brian Flood, Jeanne Galatzer-Levy, Sam Hostettler, Matt O’Connor, Sharon Parmet, Anne Brooks Ranallo

## 2014 Silver Circle Awards



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

### Katherine Noll

Lecturer in psychology  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Katherine Noll still remembers that second-grade recess when she picked up a geography textbook and read about Eskimos and Egyptians — people very different from those living in her small town tucked in the mountains of northern Pennsylvania.

“From then on, I was really hungry to learn about people that were different from me,” says Noll, whose career includes more than 45 years of teaching, research and practice in psychology.

“Coming here, with this incredible diversity of students, I have loved it. There are names from every place in the world.”

Noll, who wins her second Silver Circle since arriving at UIC in 2007, says making the course material exciting and relevant is key to her teaching.

“They can learn it from the textbook, but they have to want to,” she says.

“My job as professor is to get them to want to.”

Noll credits her nurturing teaching style for building a strong connection with students.

“I want the world to be a better place when I leave it than when I came into it. Where better to start than with students?” she says.

“I care about them and let them know. I try to reason with them and try not to be punitive.”

In more than two decades of experience as a licensed clinical psychologist, she has seen just about everything.

“When I work with patients I try to get inside their head and figure out what it’s like to be in there,” Noll explains.

“Working with students and patients can be similar.”

She has taught six different courses at UIC, but abnormal psychology is her favorite.

“That is the thing I know better than anything else,” she says. “Name a disorder and I’ll give you a whole course on it.”

Noll and her husband Gary, a fellow UIC psychology lecturer and three-time Silver Circle winner, are retiring in May.

She looks forward to traveling, spending time with her grandchildren and ongoing volunteer activities with her church and the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

***“I try to get inside their head and figure out what it’s like to be in there.”***

### Nan Ratisoontorn

Lecturer in mechanical & industrial engineering  
College of Engineering

Making numbers tell a story may be the secret to Nan Ratisoontorn’s teaching success.

“No one likes to just see numbers and formulas on a board,” Ratisoontorn says. “I like to give examples, to tell a story. I try to find a reason that you should look at all those numbers.”

Ratisoontorn likes solving problems, figuring out the how and why to make things better. She tells her students that what they learn in her course, they can use in everyday life.

“I’m such a lazy person! I don’t like to walk,” she says, giving an example. She turned her walk to the CTA station into a “shortest path” problem: “Can I find a shorter way, a safer way to get to the same point?”

Ratisoontorn teaches operations research, where the goal is to optimize, to make something better, she explains — “a combination of mathematics, statistics and a little bit of business.”

For example, the daily newspaper.

“Everything has a shelf life; the newspaper’s is only 24 hours,” she says. “And yet, at the beginning of the day you have to know exactly how many to order. You can’t just pick a number, so how do you decide?”

Ratisoontorn came to Chicago from her native Thailand, planning to earn a master’s degree in computer science and return home, where a U.S. degree can help you get a job, she says.

But during her studies at the University of Chicago, she realized what she really wanted to do was teach. She changed her major when she finished her master’s and came to UIC for a Ph.D. in mechanical and industrial engineering, joining the faculty two years ago.

The most important part of teaching for her, she says, is listening to student feedback.

“For example, you may think the pace of your class is right, not too fast, not too slow, but it is good to hear from students.

“We are engineers,” she says. “We always say that re-engineering is a repetitive process — you have to do it all the time.”

### Alfred Thomas

Professor of English  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Alfred Thomas is a scholar of central European and Slavic literature, but his recent courses have focused on British literature from the medieval period to Shakespeare.

***“Open minds are my main goal.”***

“Perhaps because I have to think on my feet more than a tried-and-tested Shakespearean, the result has often been that the classes are more stimulating and experimental both for me and the students,” says Thomas, a first-time Silver Circle winner.

Students drawn to medieval literature and Shakespeare by “Game of Thrones” and the George R.R. Martin novels find there is much that modern society can learn from the past, he says.

“Take death, for example. We moderns are in total denial about it, but pre-moderns had to face up to its imminence and inevitability. We can learn from medieval and early modern people that death is a reality, something we must learn to accept rather than deny.”

Thomas, a native of England whose courses include “King Arthur in the Middle Ages” and “Shakespeare in Film,” aims to impart knowledge in an accessible manner.

“I have a dramatic streak, which helps in large survey classes and in Shakespeare seminars,” he says.

“I try to combine analysis of texts with dramatic readings. Students love that combination.”

Students in his courses are expected to be diligent, disciplined and open to new ideas.

“Open minds are my main goal,” he says.

“In a world dominated by facile news reporting and an obsession with celebrity, I aim to show students that these preoccupations are not only narrow but above all imposed upon us by a system that discourages independent thinking.”

Teaching and research are intertwined for Thomas, a 2010 University Scholar and author of five books. His forthcoming book, *Shakespeare, Dissent, and the Cold War*, originated as a seminar on religion and dissent in Shakespeare’s England.

“Almost all my books began life as seminars, and our students have frequently been an enormous source of inspiration to me as I developed my ideas.”



# STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

UIC's 27,500 students come from the other side of the world and from right next door. They represent every ethnic and racial group, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical condition and age. They are the face of our future, like these outstanding award winners.

## Getting involved on campus, abroad

By Christy Levy

During his four years at UIC, Hugh Vondracek got good grades, started a men's club soccer team, led a campus ministry program, guided students as a resident adviser and interned at the U.S. embassy in Turkey.

"Being able to do any one of those things isn't what I'm most proud of — it's that I've been able to do all of them, which really highlights how special UIC is," said Vondracek, who graduates Sunday with a bachelor's in political science.

"Students can be part of a diverse array of things."

Vondracek is this year's winner of the Donald and Leah Riddle Prize for Outstanding Graduating Senior. The prize, named for a former chancellor and his wife, is among UIC's top undergraduate honors.

Vondracek's passion for politics began in childhood.

"I like learning about and trying to understand how the world works," he said. "I've also been drawn to a vocation of service. Since I was little, I've thought that working in U.S. foreign policy is how I want to live that out."

Vondracek, who is minoring in international studies, spent 10 weeks in Turkey in 2012 through the U.S. State Department's Critical Languages Scholarship program for intensive language studies.

"You have five hours of class per day and two hours of homework and you're operating in a language that you don't speak," he said. "It was great, but really hard."

His experience helped him secure an internship in the economics sector of the U.S. Embassy in Turkey last sum-

mer, working with Turkish government officials.

"The political situation was really changing in Turkey last summer and it was really cool to be able to be there and talk with Turks about their perceptions," he said.

Vondracek heads to Scotland in the fall to begin a year-long graduate program in international relations at the University of Glasgow. He received one of only five merit-based tuition waivers granted each year for international students.

"I'll look for a job after that, and maybe a Ph.D. is farther down the road," he said.

His dream job is to work in the U.S. State Department's intelligence analysis unit.

"They take all these little bits of information being reported from all sorts of intelligence sources and make some sort of coherent understanding of what's going on," he said. "I want to help make smarter, more informed foreign policy."

Vondracek cofounded the UIC men's club soccer team during his sophomore year. He is a practice player this year for the UIC Flames women's soccer team, helping the players get ready for their inaugural season in the fall.

"It's been great being a practice player — there's consistent, high-level coaching," he said. "It's a really interesting way to represent the university."

His advice to future UIC students: take advantage of all that the campus and city have to offer.

"Pick any class that interests you and don't be afraid to say 'yes' more," he said. "Don't let your gut instinct tell you, 'I don't know if I can do it or if I'll have time.'"

"Explore the city and try new things."

christyb@uic.edu



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

Hugh Vondracek heads to Scotland in the fall for graduate school.

## Scholarships send students to learn language, culture in India, Oman

By Brian Flood

Two UIC students will spend the summer in India and Oman in intensive foreign language studies supported by the U.S. State Department's Critical Languages Scholarship.

The competitive award will place Neharika Akkoor and Bridget Hansen in fully funded 10-week language programs with cultural enrichment experiences.

Akkoor, a junior in the Honors College majoring in philosophy, will study beginning Hindi at the American Institute of Indian Studies in Jaipur, India.

She believes Hindi will be useful in the career she plans as a physician and a volunteer in India.

"It will be easier communicating with them, especially the elderly, who feel more comfortable communicating in their native language," said Akkoor, who is already fluent in three languages.

Akkoor will seek international grants for study abroad after she completes her bachelor's degree in May 2015. Under UIC's Guaranteed Professional Program Admissions in medicine, she will later return to UIC for medical school.

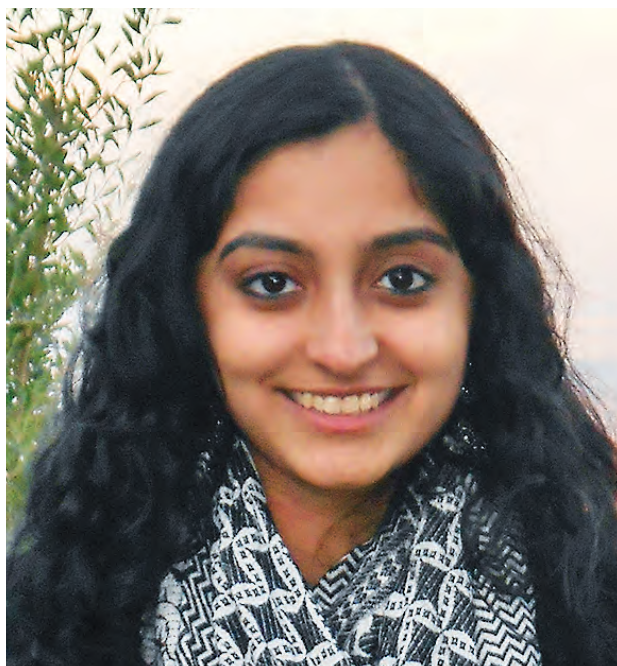
She's already had volunteer experience through Alternative Spring Break, a student-led service program that sends UIC students to sites across the country on winter and spring breaks.

Becoming a physician is "a combination of science and service," she said. "I don't think any other career really combines the two of those as much as medicine does."

Hansen, an Honors College junior majoring in anthropology and history, will study advanced beginning Arabic in Nizwa, Oman, through a program administered by AMID-EAST, an American nonprofit educational training and development organization.

Hansen said she enjoys learning challenging languages and unfamiliar subjects.

Since transferring to UIC in spring 2013, she has studied Arabic and the art and archeology of the ancient Near East, in addition to research conducted at UIC on a Hittite archeologi-



Neharika Akkoor (left) will spend her summer learning Hindi in Jaipur, India, while Bridget Hansen travels to Oman to study Arabic.



cal site in north central Turkey.

"All anthropologists are originally fascinated by the concept of the 'other' — people and cultures who are drastically different — but are ultimately driven by a deep sense of love and an innate need for knowledge and understanding," she said.

"I believe that anthropology is the best way in which we can understand others, and the Arab world in particular is very misunderstood in American society."

Before graduate studies and a career in anthropology, Hansen plans to seek post-graduate opportunities with the Peace Corps and Fulbright scholar program.

"Our consumer and entrepreneurial culture stresses individualism and competition, but I've always felt it was impor-

tant to be connected to people," Hansen said.

"Without deep connection and love, we will not survive as a species, and this starts by helping others and being compassionate."

Hansen was recently awarded an Honors College tuition waiver and the department of anthropology's Nasrin Mahani Scholarship. She is also a University Student Ambassador.

The State Department scholarships are part of the National Security Language Initiative to increase the number of Americans mastering critical-need languages. Recipients are expected to continue language studies beyond the scholarship and use their language skills in their professional careers.

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# First Rockford pharmacy class graduates

Sam Hostettler

The College of Pharmacy graduation will take a little longer Friday, as 35 additional students walk across the stage at the UIC Forum to accept their diplomas.

The students are the first graduates of the college's Rockford campus, which began classes in 2010 after an expansion of the building that houses the health sciences campus there.

The College of Pharmacy is viewed as a single institution with two campuses, Chicago and Rockford, said David Bartels, the college's vice dean.

Students in Rockford complete a curriculum identical to the one on the Chicago campus. Core classes are taught using state-of-the-art technology, shown simultaneously at both campuses. Laboratory sessions and electives are taught by faculty in Rockford.

Bartels said the new campus is thriving.

"It's operated very smoothly and gone the way we had anticipated," he said. "The technology has worked flawlessly. The students have received a great education."

The targeted enrollment for each class is 50 students, Bartels said, and subsequent classes have 44 to 52 students. Most hail from Illinois, but some are from California and the eastern U.S.

"Historically, 90 percent of students who enroll in the College of Pharmacy are from Chicago and the surrounding areas," Bartels said.

"Most of those in this area who are interested in pharmacy have gone to schools in surrounding states because they didn't want to go to Chicago. Many people are surprised to learn that



Photo: Richard Foertsch

Natasha Patel, Susan Nguyen and Xavier Torres study at the College of Pharmacy's Rockford campus. The first class of 35 students graduates Friday.

our program is exactly the same and are glad we're here."

The college participates in county fairs and visits local high schools and colleges to recruit, Bartels said.

The program began as a way to address the shortage of pharmacists in Illinois and the need to train pharmacists to practice in rural areas.

Besides the regular curriculum, the college offers a Rural Pharmacy Program, which includes training and mentorship focused on the health care needs of rural communities in Illinois. Pharmacy students train collaboratively with medical students in the College of Medicine's Rural Medicine program in Rockford.

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### Answers from page 4

P	I	T	H	S		C	A	M	P		A	D	D	S
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Published on Wednesdays during the academic year (monthly during summer) by the Office of Public and Government Affairs of the University of Illinois at Chicago.  
1320 University Hall (MC 288), 601 S. Morgan St., Chicago, IL 60607-7113.  
<http://www.uicnews.uic.edu>

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# ALUMNI

**The University of Illinois Alumni Association will honor these outstanding graduates at the 2014 Alumni Five dinner and awards ceremony Oct. 10.**

**Alumni Achievement Award**



**Naeema H. Al-Gasseer, '87 MS Nursing, '90 Ph.D. Nursing**

Assistant regional director, Eastern Mediterranean region Representative to Egypt, World Health Organization

Naeema Al-Gasseer joined the World Health Organization in 1998 as a technical officer in training and curriculum development. As senior scientist for nursing and midwifery at WHO headquarters in Geneva, she established global policies for nursing and midwifery development. She represented the WHO director general in Iraq from 2003-10.

In her current position, Al-Gasseer is responsible for strategic planning, management and partnerships for sustainable health development and emergency preparedness and response.



**Curtis Granderson, '03 CBA**

Founder and chairman, Grand Kids Foundation Outfielder, New York Mets

Curtis Granderson is only 33, but he has lots

of Grand Kids who benefit from his Grand Kids Foundation, established in 2007 to attract inner-city children to education and baseball.

An All-Star outfielder, Granderson has played for the Detroit Tigers, New York Yankees and New York Mets.

One of only 38 current professional baseball players with a four-year college degree, Granderson donated \$5 million to UIC for Curtis Granderson Stadium, which will serve UIC's baseball team and Chicago-area youth.



**John H. Laub, '75 LAS**

Distinguished professor of criminology and criminal justice, University of Maryland

As former director of the National Institute of Justice in the U.S.

Department of Justice (2010-13) and professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, John Laub has conducted extensive research on criminal justice, public policy, the history of crime and how and why offenders stop their criminal activities.

The co-author of two award-winning books on crime and criminals, he is a fellow of the American Society of Criminology, which he served as president. He received the 2011 Stockholm Prize in Criminology and the Edwin H. Sutherland Award from the American Society of Criminology.

**Distinguished Service Award**

**Emanuel D. Pollack**

Senior associate dean for undergraduate affairs, UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Emanuel Pollack oversees nearly 10,000 undergraduates in the UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, but seems to make an impact on every one of them.

Pollack is responsible for all aspects of undergraduate academic life, from admissions to degree completion. He is among the first faces new students see (at orientation) and among the last to say farewell (as marshal of the college's graduation ceremony). His focus is on student retention and success; during his nearly two decades at the college, its graduation rate has nearly doubled.

Pollack, who holds faculty appointments in biological sciences and medicine, was instrumental in founding neuroscience as an independently recognized discipline at UIC. A certified university mediator and Honors Fellow of the Year, he received the INSPIRE and Horizon League Sportsmanship awards.

**Alumni Humanitarian Award**



**Anthony S. Rinella, '96 MD**

Founder, Illinois Spine & Scoliosis Center Co-founder, Global Spine Outreach

Every year for the past 10 years, Anthony Rinella has left his Chicago-area medical practice to help children in Colombia and Poland who have spinal disorders.

Rinella and his team of surgeons, health professionals and volunteers offer major surgery to children with rare spinal conditions and train local medical personnel to perform the procedures.

Rinella's medical mission, Global Spine Outreach, makes four weeklong visits a year.

He received the 2010 De La Salle Award from Lewis University and the 2012 Walter P. Blount Humanitarian Award from the Scoliosis Research Society.

**UIC City Partner Award**



**Michael Papka, '94 MS Engineering**

Deputy associate director, Argonne National Laboratory

A computer science expert in large data analysis and visualization, Michael

Papka is deputy associate laboratory director for Argonne's Computing, Environment and Life Sciences Directorate. He heads the Argonne Leadership Computing Facility, where one of the world's fastest supercomputers dedicated to open science tackles problems in science and engineering.


As a senior fellow at the University of Chicago/Argonne National Laboratory Computation Institute, Papka conducts interdisciplinary research with multi-scale simulation data.


A computer science professor at Northern Illinois University, he is an advocate for greater emphasis on computer science in high school and middle school.

## Congratulations!

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# All-Star grad gives back to UIC, community

By Christy Levy

When Curtis Granderson graduated from UIC in 2003, he didn't say goodbye.

The Major League Baseball All-Star is an alumnus who gives back — not only to the university, but to his hometown Chicago.

Granderson, an outfielder for the New York Mets, has made many trips back to campus, but his biggest visit may have been April 17, when he threw out the first pitch at the grand opening of Curtis Granderson Stadium.

The stadium is the new home of Flames baseball, as well as Chicago youth sports organizations. Granderson's gift of \$5 million to help build the stadium is the largest known one-time donation from a professional athlete to his or her alma mater, according to *Sports Illustrated*.

"Without UIC, I wouldn't be standing here today," Granderson said at the opening celebration.

"UIC has played an integral role in shaping who I am as an athlete and as a person, so I'm confident that the facility will have a tremendous impact on our community. I've learned many important lessons growing up in Chicago, both in the classroom and on the baseball field, so it's a privilege to now help provide those same opportunities."

The stadium could reshape how universities in urban locations use their athletic facilities to contribute to the community, said Jim Schmidt, UIC athletic director.

"Curtis Granderson's contribution and commitment to this ballpark being a community asset has resulted in partnerships with Major League Baseball, Chicago Public Schools and organizations for inner-city youth throughout Chicago," he said. "This ballpark is about more than Flames baseball and more than UIC. It's an opportunity to impact the future of our city's youth."

Granderson's nonprofit organization, Grand Kids Foundation, promotes youth development through education, physical fitness and nutrition. He is an international ambassador of Major League Baseball, national ambassador for the White House's anti-obesity campaign, Let's Move!, and spokesperson for the Partnership for a Healthier America's Drink Up water initiative.

"I have been coaching for 30-plus years and I have dealt



Photo: Steve Woltmann

"UIC has played an integral role in shaping who I am as an athlete and as a person," says New York Mets outfielder Curtis Granderson.

with a lot of kids and Curtis is the most unique young man that I have ever been around," said UIC baseball coach Mike Dee. "He is unbelievably committed to kids. I could not be more proud of him; he is a first-class individual."

Dee coached Granderson, a UIC Hall-of-Famer, from 2000 to 2002.

"We are fortunate to have an alumnus like Curtis who is so much more than an athlete — he's a role model who is committed to serving youth in his hometown and beyond," Dee said.

Granderson continued to work on his degree in business at

UIC after the Detroit Tigers drafted him in June 2002.

In a 2010 national marketing campaign, "Behind Every Famous Person is a Fabulous Teacher," Granderson thanked one of his professors, David Koehler, a former faculty member in managerial studies, for pushing him to graduate.

Transitioning from student to MLB player was "pretty easy," Granderson said in a 2010 *UIC News* interview.

"I have to thank UIC for that," he said. "UIC is one of the most diverse schools in the country. When I started playing professional baseball, I was comfortable being with different players from all over the world."



Photo: Roberta Dupuis-Devlin

Curtis Granderson Stadium is the new home of Flames baseball as well as Chicago youth sports organizations. "It's an opportunity to impact the future of our city's youth," says Jim Schmidt, UIC athletic director.