

CORNERSTONE

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FALL 2010



SPECIAL ISSUE

PHILANTHROPY



The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is a cornerstone of learning and research at George Mason University. The college is committed to providing a challenging education to undergraduate and graduate students, expanding the frontiers of knowledge through research and contributing intellectual leadership to the community.

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CORNERSTONE

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Cornerstone is published annually by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University. *Cornerstone* is intended to keep alumni, the Mason community, and the public informed about the activities, growth, and progress of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Articles reflect the opinions of the writers and not those of the magazine, the college, or the university.

We welcome your questions and comments at chssmag@gmu.edu.

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Dear Alumni:

I hope you will enjoy and gain insight from reading this special issue of *Cornerstone*, which we have dedicated to philanthropy. Now more than ever, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the university depend on the generosity of donors. I want to let

you know, from a personal point of view, why I ask for your financial contribution.

The university's purpose is to serve students. Teaching a student body diverse in many respects such as class, culture, and ethnicity, the faculty and staff work to help each student realize his or her dream, whether it centers on economic, intellectual, or a mixture of goals. I am willing to solicit financial investment in Mason because I believe that what the university does deserves your assistance. I believe this so deeply that my family and I donate to Mason, and I hope you will, too.

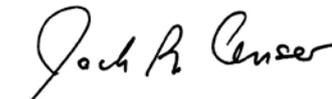
The strength of the university lies in the ability of its faculty members, supported by the staff, to bring education and advancement to the lives of so many. I am always amazed when I see the enormous number of students at graduation that a faculty of several hundred can help give wings to the goals of so many, and, I hope, do this with a personal touch.

Continuing this endeavor depends more and more on donations from alumni and friends. With state funding drastically cut during difficult economic times, tuition payers bear more and more of the burden. But this

approach has its limits, even though we at the university have supplemented it by drastic belt tightening. These financial pressures have begun to deny some potential students the opportunity to attend school. Moreover, the inability to raise salaries or replace retirees threatens the teaching power and prowess necessary to serve students. So we turn to you, our supporters, to help us enroll or retain that student at Mason, keep or replace that gifted teacher, or simply make sure that both student and professor work in a quality environment.

You can see examples of the power of giving described in the stories in this issue. Students such as Christina Markish give their time and passion. Donors such as Debbie Boehm-Davis give in ways too many to count. Thousands of alumni give to the college every year, with big and small gifts of time or money or passion. This is something to be proud of.

Giving to Mason serves a vital purpose, and such generosity can also directly benefit the donor. The gifts back to the giver are the smiles of students and the gratitude of faculty. Or perhaps it's the pride in being part of the community. My motivations to give to Mason are many. Certainly included in that motivation is being part of the generational goal of handing down the experience and knowledge of the past to equip the students of the future with the tools necessary to innovate and go further. We need your help, that's certain. You won't, I believe, regret giving it.


Best regards,
Jack Censer, Dean

ADVISORY BOARD

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has an active and engaged advisory board. The board meets quarterly as a group and individually with college representatives throughout the year. Service on the board means consists of giving back to George Mason University wisdom, wealth, and work. The college leadership has been encouraged by the board's ideas and suggestions for creating a strong learning environment and active home for faculty researchers.

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College Awards First-Ever Robert T. Hawkes Professorship

By Rashad Mulla



*Marion Deshmukh
Hawkes Professorship
Recipient*

If there's one thing that longtime history professor Robert Hawkes's former students and faculty colleagues can agree on, it's that the 37-year veteran of George Mason University deserved a legacy. That legacy is a named permanent professorship in Hawkes's memory at Mason.

The Robert T. Hawkes Endowed Professorship was established shortly after Hawkes retired from the university in 2006 to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching. Hawkes passed away in March 2008.

Marion Deshmukh, a professor of history who herself has been at Mason for 40 years, is the first professor to receive this honor.

"I am honored and touched to receive this award," Deshmukh says. "He was one of the most beloved professors here. Students lined the halls to wait to see him. To many, he was a father figure they really respected."

The professorship will rotate and a new candidate will be selected every five years. The professorship consists of a

stipend and is awarded to those with a history of excellent teaching experience.

"An excellent teacher makes a difference in the lives of his or her students," says Brian Platt, chair of the History and Art History Department. "Bob always went above and beyond in connecting with students, and he remembered what was going on in their lives. It really gave them the sense that he cared about them."

One of these students, Robert Paxton, BA History '79, says Hawkes was the best professor he ever encountered at Mason. Going into an introductory level history class taught by Hawkes, Paxton had not yet declared a major. By the time the class was finished, he was a history major.

"For students like me who wouldn't talk in class, he would pull things out of you and even make you find things you didn't know you could do," Paxton says. "He always seemed to be available for students and was always glad to talk to you, even if he didn't always agree with your point of view."

Former Student Praises Deshmukh

The first-ever Robert T. Hawkes Endowed Professorship was awarded to well-respected Mason history professor Marion Deshmukh.

Deshmukh's research on German art, politics, and history has appeared in multiple scholarly publications. But the reason she was selected for the Hawkes prize, says one former student, is that she is exceptional in the classroom, just as Dr. Hawkes was.

"She was receptive, helpful, and never had a negative word to say to students," says Tracy Dove, BA History '87, who works at the Swiss

embassy in Washington, D.C., and previously worked as a professor, news producer, and columnist in the United States and Europe. "People weren't afraid to talk to her. She focused on teaching and being there for everybody. I know I had a lot of good professors back then, but I can't think of anyone who stood out as much as her."

"If she plans to retire soon, she will need to clone herself three or four times, so other students get a chance to have her as a teacher," says Dove.

Stephen Karbelk, BA History '92, recalled Hawkes's signature slow drawl as he spoke to the class, teaching history of the U.S. South for what seemed to be the hundredth time. But he taught every class as if he were teaching it for the first time, full of passion, Karbelk says.

"First and foremost, he was a teacher, and he never lost that commitment to the students and commitment to George Mason University," Karbelk says. "There is no way I would be as successful as I am had I not spent time with Dr. Hawkes."

Students enjoyed Hawkes's emphasis on good writing and his knowledge of George Mason, the university's namesake, Karbelk explains. But both Karbelk and Paxton spoke of how they continued to speak to Hawkes, even years after graduating.

Benedict Carton, associate professor of history, met Hawkes in 1997, and their families became friends. Although they talked frequently about the school and education, they spent time together at the home of Hawkes's parents, in southern Virginia.

"Robbie chased my children around and around for 25 minutes, until they told him to stop," Carton says. "He loved life's wonder. He showed my boys how to clean fish, and he sat on the porch with my mother and talked about education."

Hawkes is missed by friends, family members, students, and colleagues, but Jack Censer, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, believes the professorship is a good first step to honor the late professor's legacy.

"Bob was embedded in the university," Censer says. "He was a prince beyond imagination."



ROBERT T. HAWKES, 1942–2008

On Giving Back

By Maria Seniw



Deborah Boehm-Davis
Donor

Just more than 25 years ago, Deborah Boehm-Davis joined George Mason University's Psychology faculty, after doing applied cognitive research at NASA and General Electric. Over the course of more than two decades, Boehm-Davis has excelled as a researcher and a teacher. Now, she continues her research while chairing Mason's Psychology Department.

When Boehm-Davis arrived on campus in 1984, Mason was not widely known and was still deciding what kind of institution it wanted to be. But Mason's entrepreneurial spirit was already present, says Boehm-Davis, who describes the feeling as "a notion that we were changing the character [of education]."

It was during these developmental years that the Psychology Department formed many of its shared values and priorities. A strong commitment to teaching developed and has remained a focus of the department. The department's supportive faculty creates an ideal environment for students. Years ago, the average age of a Mason undergraduate student was 27. Classrooms full of students with real-life experience led to an understanding that

learning can be collaborative, and this synergy carries forward even as the university's student profile becomes more traditional. Boehm-Davis has seen the early direction of the department continue.

Boehm-Davis glows with pride when discussing all that the department has accomplished. When asked what could make it better, she says that the answer is simple. The faculty, students, and research are excellent, but private support can make them better. One of the biggest struggles the department faces is in providing adequate funding for undergraduate and graduate student research. The graduate stipends are sometimes only a fraction of what other institutions offer, making it difficult to compete with peer universities for top students. Despite the funding challenges, many top tier students do choose Mason because of the faculty's reputation; for instance, the industrial/organizational psychology graduate program is ranked sixth in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Last spring, Boehm-Davis and her husband, Stuart, made a major gift to establish the Psychology Scholarship Endowment for Student Success. The purpose is to fund





the department's greatest resources, its students. They chose to name the endowment for the department, rather than themselves, in the hope that others would feel inspired to contribute, as well. If others follow their lead, then the department may be able to achieve its goals of strong teaching and student support through a collaborative giving effort.

Boehm-Davis worries that her donation alone is not enough to meet those needs, which include adding to stipends and finding aid for students in crisis. The current resources for these programs have been stretched very thin. As a chair, she has become more aware of the impact that charitable gifts can have.

"We've had students who couldn't make their rent and many who have a variety of private hardships. Even small amounts make a huge difference," Boehm-Davis explains. The department has excelled at making the most of all private support. Last year, the faculty reached out to the graduate students by asking them to outline their needs for funding to complete the research for their theses and dissertations. By combining support from private donations with resourceful spending that involved sharing and exchanging equipment, they were able to meet most of the students' needs. And for some students, the application process alone made them eligible to receive matching external funds.

Mason has come a long way since 1984. Boehm-Davis says that she grew up at the university, and it is safe to say that the university grew up with her. She thinks one of the best changes might be in the campus atmosphere; today, it is more vibrant and alive. Although there were pockets of this energy when she first came to Mason, that excitement now permeates the university.

Throughout all the change, Mason's commitment to education and students has been unwavering. Just the other day, Boehm-Davis received an e-mail from one of her students saying that not a day went by that he did not use something Boehm-Davis taught him.

HOW DO CHSS ALUMNI MEET?

On-campus lectures and events chss.gmu.edu/events

Dean's Tailgate..... January 15, 2011, Noon
Game Time 2 p.m.

Alumni Weekend..... October 1–3, 2011

Vision Series cfa.gmu.edu/vision

Center for the Arts cfa.gmu.edu

Basketball games gomason.ctsv.com

PARENT GIFTS

Parents made gifts to George Mason University to honor the accomplishments of the following graduating seniors in May 2010. We hope that these newly minted alumni will carry on this wonderful tradition of philanthropy.

David L. Clager, History

Alexandra E. Daniel, Psychology

Kristofer D. Knickerbocker, Economics

Philip J. Knox, Economics, magna cum laude

Katherine G. Lambrecht, Psychology

Lisa C. Payne, History, magna cum laude

Jovan K. Petty, Communication, cum laude

Charles R. Wilkers, Communication

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Public Service: A Highlight of College Years

Christina Markish '10 Wins First Dean's Public Service Award

By *Evan Baum*

To recognize the important work done by student volunteers, in fall 2009, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences prompted its prospective graduating students to document their public and community service activities. Students who had volunteered 100 hours or more while at Mason received a new honor, the Dean's Distinction for Public Service. They were recognized at May 2010 Convocation.

More than 100 students received this honor in its inaugural year. From among them, Christina Markish (BA History '10) was selected as a stand-out, having made significant and outstanding contributions to her community. We sat down with Markish to find out what drives her to be such an amazing volunteer:

How did you first decide to get involved in volunteering while you were a student at Mason?

I believe that every person who has the time to dedicate to volunteering should volunteer. Ever since I was a kid, I have been a volunteer. I was a girl scout, I volunteered with my friends and family around the community, and I was in Learn and Serve and Interact in high school. I then continued to find more volunteer opportunities available in fields I was interested in when I came to Mason. I joined a sorority my sophomore year, and that opened the door for even more volunteer opportunities. I love to be involved and stay busy, and volunteering is the perfect way to spend my free time because I know I am making a difference.

With which organizations did you volunteer while a Mason student? What were some of the projects and responsibilities you held as a volunteer for these organizations?

While at Mason, I volunteered with Autism Speaks, a national non-profit organization, that is dedicated to raise funds and awareness on the

growing statistics of children being diagnosed on the autism spectrum. I spent time learning new marketing skills and working with people in the community who have been affected or know someone else who has been affected by autism. I was involved with many of their fund-raising events on my own and through my sorority, Alpha Xi Delta.

I also volunteered for the George Washington Foundation, working in the archeology lab with different artifacts they excavated from the ground of Washington's boyhood home. I cleaned, cataloged, and labeled the artifacts.

What compels you to volunteer with an organization? What makes the organization a good fit for a volunteer?

A person needs to be passionate about an organization or a cause to be a dedicated volunteer. They need to want to be there, and they need to find something they truly love about the organization and working with the organization for it to be a good fit. I am passionate about history and loved the George Washington

Foundation because it allowed me to work hands on with history every day. I also loved Autism Speaks because I met so many amazing people, and I knew I truly was making a difference in the community. Working with children and being a good role model for them is another one of my passions. I loved the opportunity I had to volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club.

What characteristics define a good volunteer?

A good volunteer needs to be dedicated and passionate about the cause. If people are passionate about what they are volunteering for, then they will accomplish a lot. Volunteers are the foundation for many organizations, especially non-profits. Without them, many organizations would cease to exist. Having passionate volunteers keeps an organization alive and allows it to bring its services to the public.

Of all the experiences you have had, which volunteering moment stands out the most?

I have a few volunteer moments that really stand out for different reasons. One was the Walk Now for Autism Speaks in Washington, D.C. Seeing nearly 10,000 people on the national mall walking together for a common cause was an unbelievable experience.

I also enjoyed volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club. We played games with the children, and when we went to leave, none of them wanted us to go. They all clung to us as we tried to leave, hugging us and begging us to stay.

Finally, at the George Washington Foundation every day was an amazing experience. Working in the lab and seeing all the visitors come up to the window with their children who were standing on their tip-toes trying to see what I was working on was great. Their eyes would get so big as they looked at the artifacts I was



“Find something you’re passionate about and don’t hold back. Take advantage of all the volunteer opportunities available in the area and get as much out of them as you can.”

—CHRISTINA MARKISH

cleaning. I hope that the experience for one of those children looking through that window may one day inspire him or her to pursue a passion for history.

How have you applied what you have learned as a volunteer in different aspects of your life?

I have learned patience and become more understanding of different living situations around me. My volunteering last summer even led to a full-time job after I graduated. The position at Autism Speaks was offered to me a month before I graduated. I am so excited to continue to pursue one of my passions and be even more deeply involved with the organization. I have the pleasure of working with volunteers every day, and I truly appreciate their dedication.

How have you continued to stay connected with the organizations with which you have volunteered?

A month before graduation, I received an e-mail from my old boss with whom I kept in touch from my volunteer job at Autism Speaks the previous summer. She offered me a position right after graduation. When I got the day off one Monday, I e-mailed my old boss from the archeology lab and spent the day volunteering there cleaning artifacts.

When you are not doing volunteer work, what do you do?

I work full time in D.C. In my free time I love to hang out with friends

who are still in the area and visit my family. I stay active by running in different races, playing on a kickball team, and playing soccer and tennis in my free time. I love to read, and I am currently reading *Pillars of the Earth*. I enjoy painting and love the outdoors—camping, fishing, etc. I intend to apply to graduate school this spring.

What advice would you offer to other Mason students who are looking to start volunteering?

Find something you’re passionate about and don’t hold back. Take advantage of all the volunteer opportunities available in the area and get as much out of them as you can. The most important thing is to have fun and do what you love.

How do you aspire to use your Mason education in the future? Where do you see yourself in five years? Twenty years?

I am hoping to continue to pursue my love for history by attending graduate school and focusing on early American history. In five years, I hope to have my master’s degree, and I hope to continue to pursue even more educational opportunities. Twenty years from now, I hope to still be doing what I love and dedicating my free time to volunteering in the community. I want to continue to work with history and with children, and to continue making a difference in the community while having fun.

Donation Establishes Center for Consciousness and Transformation

By Rashad Mulla

On its establishment in spring 2009, the Center for Consciousness and Transformation, a teaching and research-focused institute in New Century College, promised to explore new avenues in the study of individual and group consciousness, using a wide variety of disciplines. After an active year that saw various lectures, seminars, and programs, many more activities are right around the corner. Now, the center is a full-fledged interdisciplinary research center, bringing together faculty from various departments at Mason.

Don and Nancy de Laski, long-time supporters of the university, donated \$10 million toward creation of the center last spring. At the time, it was established as an innovative interdisciplinary unit that would conduct new scholarly research on human potential, reach out to untapped audiences and partners, and fill unmet academic and social needs at Mason. One year later, the promise is being met. The center has held a variety of lectures featuring faculty members and experts, and has been active in establishing relationships with students and the local community.

Lois Tetrick, industrial and organizational psychology faculty member and center director, said that the center is innovative in its very existence and has built a track record to prove it.

“[The center] serves as the spark in providing educational innovations in curricular and co-curricular activities that reach all members of the Mason community,” Tetrick says. “This community includes students, faculty, and staff, and embraces individuals from different disciplines and perspectives who are interested in learning from others about the connections between awareness, mindfulness, learning, leading meaningful change in ourselves and others, and well-being.”

In perhaps its most significant accomplishment, the center established a minor in consciousness and transformation, a 16-credit curriculum that requires students to take three New Century College courses and allows 9 credits of electives from various departments, such as Psychology, Religious Studies, and Art and Visual Technology. In fall 2010, students will get the opportunity to join the Living Learning Community on Mindful Living, a program offered to students who want to learn

about themselves and how they relate to the world on a deeper level. This program is available to students in all majors and involves living together in a residence hall and taking part in various programs collaboratively.

Periodically, the center hosts discussions and presentations by Mason faculty and other experts. In October 2009, sculptor Rebecca Kamen and composer Susan Alexjander came to the School of Art to discuss their collaboration on an art exhibit. In December 2009, the center sponsored a lecture by Mason psychology professor Todd Kashdan who discussed the meanings and causes of happiness. In April 2010, Mason neuroscientist Giorgio Ascoli, from the Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study, discussed the science behind consciousness.

Such varying subjects and discussions have become commonplace for the center. So, too, has its ability to reach out to the local community. The center holds programs on and off campus for the local community, as well as Mason faculty, students, and staff. The center also is partnering with Fairfax County to develop a workshop to help the recently retired transition to their new lifestyle.

“This workshop explores preparing for a meaningful retirement and is prepared for individuals who are 50 [and older] who are beginning to think of moving on to the next chapter,” Tetrick says. “[The workshop] addresses topics that are often overlooked in retirement planning, such as well-being, relationships, encore careers, and drawing on one’s strengths and passions to orchestrate meaning in one’s life.”

Tetrick sees the center growing exponentially in the coming years.

“In the long run, we intend to extend this community globally, reflecting the diversity of Mason and the worldwide interest in understanding consciousness and transformation,” says Tetrick.

Nance Lucas, associate dean of New Century College, lays out even wider goals.

“There are many exciting initiatives planned for the upcoming year and beyond in the Center for Consciousness and Transformation,” she says. “Our vision is to impact 10 million people in 10 years. We’ll achieve this through our continued outreach around the world.”



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AND ITS ROLE IN
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