

# UNLV

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2010

HAPPINESS  
IN NUMBERS:  
Reflections from the  
late Keith Schwer

THE NEW  
GUYS:  
Athletic director  
Jim Livengood and  
football coach  
Bobby Hauck

# THE FUTURE IS NOW

UNLV tops extraordinary fundraising goal despite tough times

Why the campaign doesn't solve higher ed budget woes

Scholarship makes community service integral to experience

First grad challenges all those who came after him to step up





## Game face

The success of the Runnin' Rebels under coach Lon Kruger has been a boon for fans, and for fundraising. The Mendenhall Center practice facility will be built entirely with private funds from a group of donors that includes Robert Mendenhall, Maury Gallagher, Bill Paulos, Bill Wortman, and Hope Anstett. The center will be attached to the Cox Pavilion and will include two basketball courts, an academic and film room, and locker rooms, as well as athletic training and equipment areas. Read more about the future of Rebel athletics on Page 8 and about the impact of donations on Page 20. [Photo by R. Marsh Starks]





**ON THE  
COVER:**  
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Engelstad  
Scholar Frank  
Fuentes, pictured  
at Three Square  
Food Bank.  
[Photo by Aaron Mayes]

## Ready to invent the future

**20** A tough economy doesn't stop UNLV from reaching its extraordinary goal of raising a half billion dollars.

## Desert discovery

**12** When alumnus Jim Holland finished his thesis, "climate change" was hardly a buzzword. Thirty years later, the work was dusted off to help researchers predict the evolution of Southern Nevada's desert ecosystem.

## Happiness in numbers

**16** In an interview shortly before his death, economist Keith Schwer shared his thoughts on Nevada's future, making decisions, and hitting curveballs.

## The ROI of education

**32** Trailblazer challenges all the UNLV grads who came after him to reinvest in education (this means you).



# Budget cuts continue at UNLV

In February, a special legislative session was called to deal with Nevada's continued budget shortfalls. After much hard work by legislative leaders to minimize the damage done to education, UNLV's budget for the next year was cut another 6.9 percent. This comes on top of a series of cuts over the last three years. Altogether, the cuts have resulted in a 30 percent reduction in state funding. Here, President Neal Smatresk shares his views on what these cuts mean.

## How bad is the budget situation?

It is not an overstatement to say that higher education in Nevada has been devastated by the economic downturn. The cuts themselves are staggering, and the speed at which we must make decisions does not leave room for lengthy deliberation. There is no other major university in the country that has been hit this hard, this fast.

## How will UNLV cope with these cuts?

In the past two years, UNLV has avoided slashing the academic budget by freezing vacancies, imposing work furloughs, offering early retirement programs, and cutting operations budgets and staffing. Professors have taken on more classes. Our students have seen an increase in their fees, and we're offering 1,000 fewer class sections than we did a couple years ago.

Our administrative costs are extraordinarily low. In fact, UNLV's institutional support — which includes such things as administrative services, executive salaries, and fiscal and public relations operations — is about 4 percent of total expenditures, or a third of what it is at peer universities.

We've gone as far as we can go with trimming here and there. Now we must eliminate whole departments, lay off many of the people who work in them, and limit our offerings to students.

## How will departments be selected for elimination?

We are following a process prescribed by our bylaws that allows for consultation across



President Neal Smatresk answers media questions at a student-organized protest of state budget cuts in February.

campus. By the end of April, we expect a review committee to deliver a prioritized set of recommendations for program elimination and other savings or revenue-enhancing measures. Those recommendations will be reviewed by the deans and vice presidents, our student governance groups, and the Faculty Senate before we make final recommendations to the Board of Regents.

As a starting point, we identified the 20 programs that have the highest costs per student to administer. This list is scary. It contains some well-regarded programs that are key to this state's future development. In general, these programs cost more to operate than UNLV receives through state and tuition dollars. While eliminating low-cost programs is another option, cutting them would affect many more students while doing little to fill UNLV's budget hole.

We now have a shorter list of recommendations for elimination. The review committee is now prioritizing this list based on factors such as the need our state has for graduates in that area, a program's national ranking, and how we might serve affected students through other departments.

The budget crisis has caused a lot of turmoil both on and off campus. What we all must focus on now is how we can provide a

strong education to our students and pursue scholarly growth so that we emerge from this as a stronger institution.

## What will happen to the students and faculty in the programs to be eliminated?

Each department will be evaluated and will develop a unique exit plan to give its current students a reasonable amount of time — about two to four years — to complete their degrees or transition to a new major. The staff and nontenured faculty in those departments will be laid off. Faculty members with tenure will be reassigned on a case-by-case basis to another appropriate department.

## Can't we raise tuition instead of closing departments?

Actually, student fee increases, along with savings from an early retirement program for employees, could help us bridge the budget gap for the next year or two before savings from the program eliminations kick in. However, increasing the burden on students can only go so far for a couple of reasons. First, increasing tuition and fees may result in pricing many bright students out of the





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opportunities that come from a college education.

Second, the way the funding works now, student tuition goes to the state general fund; so increasing tuition will help the state's overall budget, but not ours. We are working with our legislators right now to change that and ensure that revenues from students stay on the campuses from which they came.

We also are collaborating with UNR to introduce differential tuition for those high cost-per-student programs. Nursing, for example, is an excellent candidate for differential tuition. It costs more than twice what the state provides in funding, and its graduates are in such demand that a job is virtually guaranteed after graduation.

A side note on tuition and affordability: We expect funding for the highly successful Millennium Scholarship program to dry up in the next three to four years. That program has brought about \$10 million a year to UNLV and affects about 6,000 students. Many of these students simply will not be able to afford a college education. When it goes away, we will see a significant enrollment decline.

## How will UNLV avoid such drastic cuts in the future?

My fear, and it's grounded in a grim reality, is that this is just the beginning. If there are any other viable options, we will pursue them but I expect little relief. Unless there is some sort of miracle turnaround in the state's economy, we will face more cuts in the next

budget-setting cycle. That means education in Nevada continues to be threatened.

Fortunately, the advocacy work of students, alumni, and community members has changed the game. I don't think it will be easy to sweep higher education under the carpet any more. The state's leaders have a thorough understanding of our issues and of the strong link between higher education and economic prosperity for Nevada. They seem committed to developing a sustainable and appropriate funding formula so we can contend better with the ups and downs of economic cycles.

## Any other thoughts for readers?

I want to thank the many donors who continue to invest in our university. While their donations cannot make up for the budget shortfall, they are vital to enhancing programs and to opening up access to education through scholarships. (Read more about the impact of the Invent the Future campaign on page 20.)

I urge all readers to continue reaching out to their leaders and community members. UNLV will emerge as a smaller, more focused institution; it will depend on all of you if we emerge as a high-quality institution when this is all over.

**More info:** Visit [www.unlv.edu/budget](http://www.unlv.edu/budget) to learn more about the budget crisis, ask a question, or become an advocate for UNLV.



# THE Flashlight



## Drawing You In

### Contemporary art collection now housed at UNLV

It's a quiet little piece, not unlike the gallery now holding it. Titled "To Mahan-Iran2," the 1975 work by Edda Renouf is part of a remarkable collection of contemporary art that has found a home at the Donna Beam Art Gallery.

"It's not typical in the manner of its making, which may have something to do with why I like it," says gallery director Jerry Schefcik. "It feels like a drawing, but also like a low-relief sculpture. It comes alive with the shadows cast by the light hitting its small punctures." Its subtlety draws you in, he says, and invites a close examination.

Maybe the Beam will do the same for you. And maybe something in it will inspire you to follow the example of Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, who purchased that Renouf. The postmaster and librarian put their paychecks toward art beginning in the 1960s and now have a collection of well over 4,500 pieces. It's too large for one location, so the Vogels,

in conjunction with the National Gallery of Art, have distributed pieces to each state under the Vogel 50x50 project.

The Beam houses Nevada's share and will work it into the regular rotation of student and faculty exhibits. The Vogels, who are still adding to the collection, likely would appreciate their works finding a home amidst Las Vegas' young artists. They started their collection with works from unknown artists. "They went to galleries and talked directly with the artists. Over time, they became very educated about art — not in the formal sense, but perhaps in a more personal and meaningful sense," Schefcik says.

They did not buy art, like many wealthy collectors do, as a symbol of social status or to reap a profit, Schefcik says. They bought what they liked. And so might you.

"Buying art can be intimidating," he concedes. "I tell people, 'The piece should speak to you on some level.' Buy that one and just think about it. Then continue to simply keep looking at art."

Cost can also turn off novice buyers. "It's a stopping point for me too," Schefcik says. He offers this: Consider the amount of time creating the piece took as well as the cost of the materials. If a \$200 piece took 20 hours, is \$10 an hour too much to ask?

As a keeper of a Vogel collection, the Beam is in good company. California's share went to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; Arizona's to the Phoenix Art Museum; and Texas' to the Blanton Museum at the University of Texas at Austin. UNLV's collection of drawings, collages, and paintings by 22 artists includes works from Stephen Antonakos, Mark Kostabi, Richard Tuttle, and Larry Zox.

"The collection adds to the cultural fabric of the university and Las Vegas," Schefcik says. "In a small way, it helps to make us a more liveable, enriching city."

— CATE WEEKS

**More info:** Visit [donnabeamgallery.unlv.edu](http://donnabeamgallery.unlv.edu) and [vogel5050.org](http://vogel5050.org).



# Curbing Construction Accidents

**UNLV develops training program to address job site fatalities from falls**

More than 750 local construction workers will receive free safety training through a new program developed by UNLV researchers. The fall-prevention and safety training program specifically targets the Southern Nevada construction workforce.

Funded through a \$287,000 grant from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the program will be open to all construction workers but will target Latino workers, a group that suffers disproportionately from workplace injury and death.

## A NEED FOR TRAINING

Fall-related deaths account for more than a third of all construction fatalities in Nevada since 2003. In recent years, deaths at high-profile local construction sites have garnered attention from both media and the federal government and have driven many in the industry to step up safety efforts.

"There are requirements in place for construction managers to train employees exposed to fall hazards, but the incidence of deaths and injuries from falls indicates that not enough is being done effectively," says Nancy Menzel, project director and professor of nursing. "This deficiency is especially true for immigrant construction workers, so health and safety professionals need to step in to provide the information and skills these workers need to protect themselves from falls."

UNLV's team of occupational health and construction management experts will evaluate the effectiveness of the new program over a two-year period. The team also will produce safety awareness materials in both English and Spanish to reinforce the training.

To reflect the realities of a job site, the program will use simulation as a training strategy. For example, instead of only showing pictures of a fall arrest system or demonstrating its proper use, trainees will practice using the system under a simulated stress environment.

## FREE FOR LOCAL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Training will consist of two four-hour sessions held at UNLV. Topics will include fall protection requirements, scaffold safety/set-up, equipment inspections, and assertiveness training.

"Many factors can play into the improper use of safety equipment, such as feeling pressed for time, the inability to ask questions in English, or damaged and ill-fitting equipment," says Pramen Shrestha, co-project director and assistant professor of construction management. "Trainees need to have confidence that, if they recognize a poor safety situation, they have the right and ability to demand safety equipment prior to proceeding."

The UNLV project is part of OSHA's Susan Harwood Training Grant, which supports programs that educate workers and employers in industries with high hazard and fatality rates, workers with limited English proficiency, and small business employers. The training is free and open to all construction workers in Southern Nevada. — TONY ALLEN

**More info:** Contact Nancy Menzel at 702-895-5970 or at [nancy.menzel@unlv.edu](mailto:nancy.menzel@unlv.edu).



## DON'T MISS IT

> **"Creating an Opportunity Society"** The Brookings Mountain West Initiative presents this lecture at 5:30 p.m. April 6 in Greenspun Hall. The talk explores how America presents citizens and immigrants with great opportunity to get ahead. And yet, there is less mobility in America than in other industrialized nations. Proposals for increasing opportunity will be presented. [brookingsmtnwest.unlv.edu](http://brookingsmtnwest.unlv.edu)

> **"The Art of Nature"** Sharon K. Schafer's fine art and photography will show at the Barrick Museum through May 1. She specializes in artistic and scientifically accurate images of Southern Nevada's public lands. Free and open to the public Monday-Saturday. [barrickmuseum.unlv.edu](http://barrickmuseum.unlv.edu)

> **Dean and Rove Debate** The Barrick Lecture Series at 7:30 p.m. April 9 will feature Howard Dean, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Karl Rove, former deputy chief of staff and senior adviser to President George W. Bush. Topics will include health care reform, foreign affairs, and economics. The event is free but tickets are required. **702-895-2787** or [pac.unlv.edu](http://pac.unlv.edu)

> **UNLV Spring Flicks 2010** Catch a film by students and alumni April 23-24 in the Student Union theater. This event attracts a large and good-naturedly raucous crowd each year. In past years, the event marked the first stop for filmmakers on the festival circuit. [shortfilmarchive.unlv.edu](http://shortfilmarchive.unlv.edu)



BRIEFLY  
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## Counseling program targets the unemployed

UNLV therapists launched an outreach program to help community members cope with Nevada's all-time-high unemployment rate. Confidential sessions through the Center of Individual, Couple and Family Counseling help clients deal with the problems common to their situation. Unemployed parents, for example, can become either too controlling of their kids or distant and inattentive to children's needs.

A sliding payment schedule ensures no one is turned away.

For the last 11 years, the center has offered therapy to Las Vegas residents to treat anger management, anxiety, depression, and relationship and child behavior issues. Graduate students provide therapy under faculty supervision. Students are required to provide 500 hours of therapy before completing their advanced degrees in psychology or marriage and family therapy. In 2009, the center provided more than 4,000 hours of therapy to Southern Nevadans.

**More info:** Visit [urbanaffairs.unlv.edu/client\\_services](http://urbanaffairs.unlv.edu/client_services) or call 702-895-3106.



Dallas Logan ended his five-month job search with a position at AAA after attending a UNLV networking session.

# Land that job

## Career Services helps alumni job seekers, employers connect

This is exactly how Career Services envisioned its new program working. In December, Dallas Logan, '09 BS Business Administration, attended an Alumni Career Support Session. He was looking for career advice and tips to enhance his job prospects.

Matt Engle, '91 BS Business Administration, was there as well. As the area business manager for AAA, Engle was asked to be a guest speaker.

Out of work for five months, Logan was interested in a claims position with an insurance company and gave his resume to Engle, who placed it in the hands of AAA recruiters. That chance meeting led to a phone interview, then an in-person interview, and finally a job offer for Logan.

### Got a job? Be a mentor

Career Services is seeking alumni to be part of its next success story. The Alumni Association and Career Services formed the UNLV Professional Network Career Mentor database to connect students and alumni with experienced professionals.

"Students often struggle to make close ties within a profession they are pursuing," says Eileen McGarry, Career Services executive director. "It helps to have alumni that we can reach out to and who can help our students by offering advice or industry-specific job search tips."

But potential mentors shouldn't worry about becoming overwhelmed with requests from job seekers. The system can be customized so mentors can control how many potential mentees can contact them and what information they see.

Now Logan has his own advice to offer fellow alumni: "Take advantage of everything Career Services has to offer. The counselors have many contacts in every field and will steer you in the right direction."

The Alumni Career Support Session, held on the first Friday of each month, is tailored for graduates. As Logan learned, Career Services has several other benefits to offer graduates, including resume critiques, mock interviews, and a new specialized job search engine, CareerShift.

— SHANE BEVELL

**More info:** Learn more about Career Services at [hire.unlv.edu](http://hire.unlv.edu) or call 702-895-3928.



# Alumni Association increases number of scholarship awards

Stepping up to the plate to help today's students. That's exactly what the UNLV Alumni Association is doing once again — this time by increasing the number of scholarships it funds each year.

"The association board really wanted to make a statement during these difficult economic times by increasing the amount of financial assistance we are able to offer UNLV students," said Sandra Phillips Johnson, secretary of the association's Board of Directors and chair of the Scholarship Awards Committee.

**CHILDREN OF ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP:** The number of Children of Alumni Scholarships funded by the association will quadruple from the three currently awarded to 12 scholarships each year. The amount of each scholarship is \$1,500 and is renewable for up to four years.

Children of alumni who either are lifetime members of the association or have been dues-paying members for the last three consecutive years are



## Plate up for scholarships

Alumni Association scholarships are funded through the sale of the UNLV license plates through the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles. This year, the plates feature a new design. The cost is \$61 the first year and \$30 every year thereafter. Visit [dmv.nv.com](http://dmv.nv.com)

eligible. To qualify for the award, the recipient must maintain a 3.0 grade point average or have an ACT or SAT score of 22 or 1,040 respectively, and must earn 12 credits each semester.

**GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT:** The Alumni Graduate Student Scholarship will increase in both the number of and the amount of each award. The association is tripling the number of scholarships from the three currently awarded to nine. It also is increasing the amount of the awards to \$1,500 each from the current \$1,000. The scholarship now is renewable for two years (up from one year). Recipients must maintain a 3.0 grade point average, be enrolled full time, and have already earned at least one UNLV degree.

Scholarship recipients are chosen by UNLV's office of financial aid & scholarships. The scholarships are not based on financial need.  
—DIANE RUSSELL

**More info:** Call the financial aid & scholarships office at 702-895-3424 or visit [finaid.unlv.edu](http://finaid.unlv.edu).

## NEWSMAKERS

**Promising Prose:** English instructor and alumnus Vu Tran received the prestigious 2009 Whiting Writers' Award for his short stories on Vietnamese culture and immigrant life. The coveted prize is for up-and-coming writers and includes a \$50,000 award. He also recently landed a publication deal for his crime novel *This or Any Desert*, which is set in Las Vegas. Tran, a Glenn Schaeffer Fellow at UNLV, received a Ph.D. in English in 2006.



**Making History:** The National Council on Public History awarded three UNLV researchers its best project award this year for the Nevada Test Site Oral History. It includes interviews of more than 150 people affected by Cold War Era nuclear testing. The archive is housed at Lied Library and on a vast multimedia website, [digital.library.unlv.edu](http://digital.library.unlv.edu). The award went to project director **Mary Palevsky** and professors Andy Kirk of history and Robert Futrell of sociology.

**Soldier Smiles:** A dental school outreach program for National Guard troops received a national community leadership award from the American Dental Association Foundation. In 2008, UNLV students founded the Sergeant Clint Ferrin Memorial Clinic to treat soldiers deemed nondeployable because of dental problems. Some patients could not access care because they are not on active duty and therefore ineligible for military benefits. The program has provided free treatments to more than 100 guardsmen and veterans. It was named in honor of a dental school student's brother, who was killed while deployed to Iraq.

## DON'T MISS IT

### > A Midsummer Night's

**Dream** The Nevada Conservatory Theatre (NCT) at UNLV presents the William Shakespeare comedy April 23-May 2 in the Judy Bayley Theatre. The NCT features both advanced theater majors and professional actors from around the country. **702-895-2787** or [pac.unlv.edu](http://pac.unlv.edu)

### > "Practical Physics for Life in the 21st Century

University Forum presents this lecture by UNLV professor Michael Pravica at 7:30 p.m. April 23, Barrick Museum auditorium. He will share various energy- and money-saving strategies along with the basic physics principles behind them. [www.unlv.edu/Colleges/Liberal\\_Arts](http://www.unlv.edu/Colleges/Liberal_Arts)

### > Classical Guitar Series

UNLV guitar professor Ricardo Cobo teams with Christopher McGuire to perform 8 p.m. April 23 in the Doc Rando Recital Hall. Cobo made his professional debut at age 17 and is regarded as one of the leading virtuosos of his generation. McGuire is artistic director of the Fort Worth Classic Guitar Society and the Allegro Guitar Society of Dallas. **702-895-2787** or [pac.unlv.edu](http://pac.unlv.edu)

### > Broadway Classics

The Performing Arts Center presents seven-time Tony nominee Bernadette Peters at 8 p.m. May 1. **702-895-2787** or [pac.unlv.edu](http://pac.unlv.edu)



BRIEFLY  
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## On Your Marks...

Originally opened in 1975, Buchanan Natatorium underwent a makeover last year. The aluminum pool shell, which had started to leak, was replaced with concrete. The facility got a new deck, diving boards, and a permanent dewatering system to deal with an underground stream. The shallow end was deepened to seven feet to cut down on turbulence while the diving end was deepened to 14 feet to meet NCAA regulations.

The natatorium was named after James L. "Bucky" Buchanan II. The former regent was an avid swimmer and supporter of athletics until his passing in fall 2009.

The men's team won its sixth straight title at the 2010 Mountain West Conference Championships in February.



# The Business of Sports

Just a few days after accepting the athletic director position, Jim Livengood checked a huge item off his to-do list. Livengood selected Bobby Hauck as our 10th head football coach. *UNLV Magazine's* Shane Bevell sat down with both to discuss their first impressions.

## ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

### Jim Livengood

Education: BA in education, BYU '68  
AD Experience: Arizona, 1994-2009; Washington State, 1988-93; Southern Illinois, 1985-87

**Why UNLV?** It was the right time. I was at Arizona for 16 years, which is a long time to stay at one place in this profession. I have a lot of experience. I don't have all the answers, but I think I can help make a difference.

**A difficult transition?** It will be different but not difficult. The interesting thing about this profession is that the issues — financial, academic,

behavioral — are all the same; it's just different people.

**Future outlook for college athletics in general?** There are potentially some incredibly dire straights ahead. If we don't get our arms around the financial part of athletics, it will be hard for college athletics to survive. Nearly every state is having financial problems. Athletics has got to find a way to become more self-sufficient.

**Priorities?** One, making sure our student-athletes have the best collegiate experience possible. Two, figuring out a way to solve this financial issue. I can't solve it from a state or university

# 33

Consecutive hours it took to fill the pool

# 700,000

Gallons of water required to fill the pool



level, but can do the best job I can from an athletics standpoint.

**How did you keep Arizona athletics in the black without state-appropriated monies or student fees?** Parts of every day were spent with the budget. I also had good financial people and our coaches and staff really understood the budget. It made for great relations with faculty and staff because athletics wasn't perceived as a drain.

**How will you raise money here?** Smartly, carefully. There are no hidden sources of revenue. That is why we have to fill up Sam Boyd Stadium and why gate receipts and television contracts are important. A larger part is to convince alumni and the community that UNLV athletics is a good investment.

**What attracts top student-athletes to UNLV?** Great city — and not just because of the glitz on the Strip — and great institution. UNLV is thought of as a much better institution away from here, which is very normal for most schools. Athletics is guilty of staying in its own little world — getting out is one way we can sell UNLV. I want our staff and coaches in every building on campus.

**What NCAA policies would you most like changed?** I wish, although it's not possible and will never happen, that we could throw the rule-book out and start over. I am not against rules; I just think we have gotten to the point where we are overregulated.

#### HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

## Bobby Hauck

Education: BA in business and physical education, Montana '88; MED, UCLA '91  
Career Record: 80-17 at Montana

**Why UNLV?** When you see a place that has potential, there is promise. It's a good city and a good university. Las Vegas has proximity to athletes in Nevada and California — there are direct flights to everywhere in the country, so it gives us an opportunity to recruit.

**Priorities?** Recruiting is always a priority. Others include getting to know our players and putting the off-season training program in place as well as making sure kids succeed academically.

**Why do you coach special teams in addition to being head coach?** It gives me a chance to actually coach every kid on the team and not just be an administrator.

**Biggest misconception about college football?** That the players are coddled and have everything catered to them. We are very demanding, which includes classwork, community service, weight training, practice, conditioning, and getting beat up and spending time in the training room. I tell recruits they better love football because there are easier ways to earn your tuition.

**What rules would you like to see changed?** We have to be real cautious about changing our game. We don't want to be the NFL; we want to be college football.

**Last year, you visited U.S. troops in the Middle East and Asia. Why?** At one time, I thought about joining the Marines to become a pilot. I'm a big fan of the military and have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for what they do for our country.

**Anyone you met stand out?** It was fun to meet some fellow Montanans, but there was one guy who serves in the Special Forces that I met at the hospital. He told me about how he had been shot twice in a firefight the same day I went to visit. I was really impressed with his attitude and candor and how he was ready to get back out there.

**What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?** Landing my wife Stacey. However, the proudest moment of my life was giving the eulogy at my father's funeral and receiving a standing ovation. It was a tough thing to do.

**How do you manage stress?** By not taking it home. The volatility and stress are just part of the job.

**The weather and lifestyle in Las Vegas are different than in Missoula. Do you think it will be a difficult adjustment?** Attitude is everything, and we are excited to be here, so the adjustment will be easy. We have a little time off in July, so we may head back north for a couple weeks.

**Is there something people would be surprised to know about you?** I have a sense of humor and do smile once in a while.

#### BRIEFLY .....

## Making the Grade

UNLV's student-athlete graduation numbers continue to rise. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) climbed to 68 percent in 2009. The GSR was developed by the NCAA to assess the academic progress of student-athletes. The statistic holds institutions accountable for transfer students. UNLV's rate has improved every year since the NCAA began tracking the GSR in 2003.

## Inspiring Literacy

UNLV student-athletes are encouraging kids to excel through the new Rebel Reading Program at eight at-risk elementary schools. Student-athletes kicked off the program at assemblies that included trivia questions, prizes, and story time.

Jennifer Ramos-Struber's fourth-graders at Jay Jeffers Elementary School read the most pages, earning tickets and transportation to the Runnin' Rebels final home game and two concession food vouchers per student, as well as a \$250 VISA gift card for their teacher. The top two readers at each participating school also earned tickets.

The program was co-sponsored by UNLV Athletics, Clark County School District partnership office, Spread the Word Nevada: Kids to Kids, and Cash America SuperPawn.

# 550

Cubic yards of Shotcrete used during construction

# 5

Tons each bulkhead weighs

# 14,000

Gallons of water removed and reclaimed daily from a stream running underground





# Memorable Moments

If you're past a certain age, you remember when the Runnin' Rebels won the 1990 NCAA Basketball Championship. The towel chewing. The dancing in the streets. The *Sports Illustrated* covers. This season, UNLV celebrated the 20th anniversary of that stunning tournament. But the Rebels also have had plenty of miracle moments in other sports. — BY SHANE BEVELL

## MEN'S SPORTS

### BASEBALL

**That's A No No** — Herb Pryor pitched the school's first no-hitter and only perfect game on March 16, 1971, against Colorado. Pryor's 2.54 career earned run average is still the best ever. On May 5, 1990, Brian Boehringer threw the second no-hitter against University of the Pacific, and on March 28, 2003, freshman right-hander Matt Luca threw a no-hitter in a 5-0 victory over San Diego State.

### FOOTBALL

**Undefeated** — On Oct. 23, 1974, UNLV climbed to No. 2 in the Associated Press and United Press International Division II (then known as small college) rankings. Led by quarterback **Glenn Carano**, the Rebels completed their one and only undefeated regular season. UNLV fell to Delaware in the Grantland Rice Bowl, just one win away from playing for the national championship.

### GOLF

**Hole In Won** — On May 30, 1998, under Hall of Fame coach Dwaine Knight, UNLV won the NCAA men's golf title. Junior Chris

Berry finished in a tie for second, overcoming the memories of a nightmare of a tournament two years prior, when he finished dead last. As a reward for winning the title, team members joined President Bill Clinton for a round of golf at the Army Navy Country Club. Knight says standing in the Oval Office was a highlight of his career.

### SOCCER

**Playing With Heart** — A year after having a heart transplant, Simon Keith transferred to UNLV in 1987. His older brother, Adam, played midfield on the soccer team. Simon became a Rebel after UNLV was released from liability and went on to be named All-Big West in both his years here. After his senior season, he was selected as the conference's student-athlete of the year.

### SWIMMING & DIVING

**Piping Hot** — **Bart Pippenger** finished second in the nation in the 200-yard butterfly at both the 1989 and 1990 NCAA Championships, the highest finish ever by a UNLV swimmer. His time of 1:43.54 at the 1990 championships is the longest-standing mark on the UNLV swimming record books.

### TENNIS

**Amazing Aussie** — Rebel Luke Smith stunned the college tennis world in 1997 when, unseeded and ranked 65th nationally, the Australian blew through the competition in Los Angeles to win the NCAA singles championship and then the doubles national title with partner Tim Blenkiron on the same day.

## WOMEN'S SPORTS

### BASKETBALL

**Call It A Comeback** — UNLV owns two of the top-five comebacks in NCAA history. On Nov. 30, 2007, the Lady Rebels trailed No. 16 George Washington by 25 points with 19 minutes left before rallying for a 62-61 victory. **Sequoia Holmes** alone outscored the entire GW team in the second half (22-21). On March 4, 2009, UNLV





trailed Air Force by 22 points with 10 minutes to play. The Lady Rebels went on a 30-7 run, fueled by Shannon Oberg's six three-pointers. Dominique Harris scored the game-winning layup with one second remaining for a 64-63 victory.

## CROSS COUNTRY

**Running Away** — Katie Barto earned the highest finish ever for a Rebel runner at the 2000 NCAA Cross Country Championships, placing 74th.

## GOLF

**Back-to-Back-to-Back** — UNLV never trailed in winning its third straight Mountain West Conference Tournament in 2006. During the streak, three different Rebels won medalist honors, beginning with Sunny Oh in 2004, followed by Elena Kurokawa in 2005, and Da Sol Chung in 2006. The program's success is especially remarkable considering it was launched in 2001, just three years prior to its first title.

## SOCCER

**No Goal For You** — Freshman goalkeeper Alicia Lugo came off the bench 20 minutes into the 2006 first round MWC Tournament game after the starting keeper was injured. Lugo did not allow a goal over the next 290 minutes of the tournament. UNLV defeated Wyoming 1-0 on a last-minute goal and both No. 19 BYU and No. 10 Utah on penalty kick shootouts. UNLV is the only team in NCAA history to win a three-game conference tournament while scoring just one goal.

## SOFTBALL

**Lefty's Legacy** — Future Olympic gold medalist **Lori Harrigan** hurled six no-hitters, including the school's only perfect game (over Missouri in 1992). From 1989-92, Harrigan compiled an 83-53 record and a 0.77 earned run average. Her UNLV records include career strikeouts (725), innings pitched (1,034.7), shutouts (53), and complete games (123). The southpaw led her teams to three NCAA Tournament appearances and two trips to the College World Series.

## SWIMMING & DIVING

**Relay Success** — With its 14th place finish at the NCAA Championships, the 1986 women's 4x100 medley relay squad (Wendy Hoffman-Meyers, Joanne Beck, Sally Fleisher, and Tessie Grimmett) still stands as UNLV's only All-America relay team. UNLV scored 34 total points to finish in 24th place, the women's best finish ever.

## TENNIS

**Serving An Ace** — In 2000, MWC Player of the Year Katarina Malec's season included an upset of defending NCAA champion Zuzana Lesenorova of the University of San Diego. She then teamed with Marianne Bakken to stun Lesenorova and Katarina Valkyova, the nation's top-ranked doubles team. Malec's winning streak reached a school-record 19 matches as she reeled off four singles wins to crash the Final Four of women's tennis. She would fall in the NCAA semifinals to the event's top seed.

## TRACK & FIELD

**Her Memory Lives On** — Sheila Tarr-Smith was UNLV's first-ever national champion, capturing the 1984 NCAA heptathlon crown. She won back-to-back Pacific Coast Athletic Association Athlete of the Year awards. After graduating, the Las Vegas native went on to be a firefighter in town. She died in 1998, at 34, from a rare neurological disorder. In the spring of 1999, UNLV named the field at its new track and field facility after her.

## VOLLEYBALL

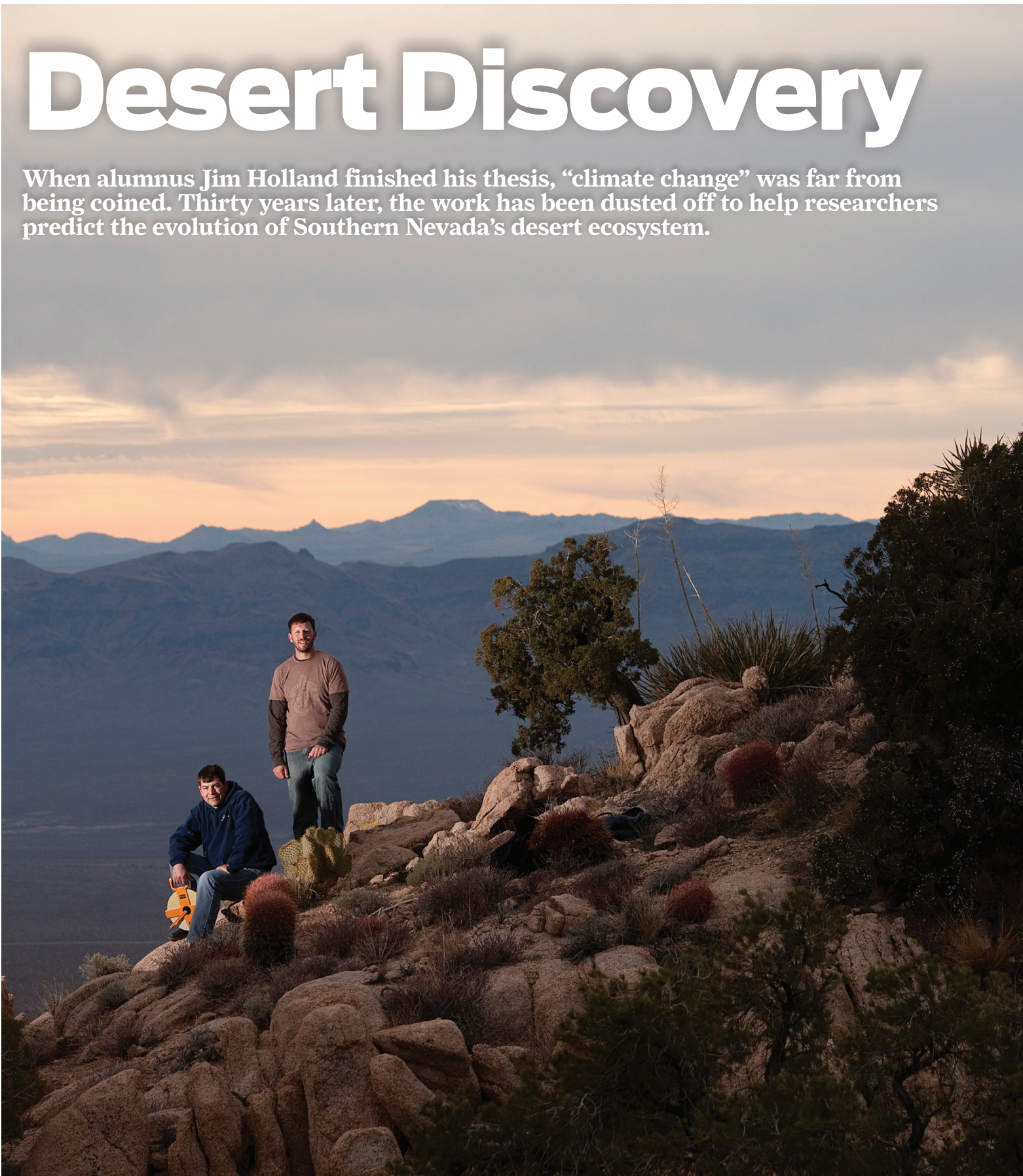
**All-American Season** — Following a memorable 2007 season, which included the program's first NCAA tournament appearance, **Lauren Miramontes** became the program's first All-American. She was named to the American Volleyball Coaches Association's Division I Honorable Mention All-America team. Miramontes led the team in kills, kills-per-game, hitting, total blocks, solo blocks, and assisted blocks.

**More online:** For more memorable moments in UNLV athletics, visit [cms.unlv.edu/newscenter](http://cms.unlv.edu/newscenter).



# Desert Discovery

When alumnus Jim Holland finished his thesis, “climate change” was far from being coined. Thirty years later, the work has been dusted off to help researchers predict the evolution of Southern Nevada’s desert ecosystem.







Graduate student Chris Roberts, left, and environmental studies professor Scott Abella in the Newberry Mountains. By replicating an old study, Roberts has been able to note an increase in barrel cacti there since the late 1970s.

BY BRENDAN BUHLER

The thesis had come off a Lied Library shelf, bound in black, covered in dust, 232 pages long, and bearing the scintillating title, “A Floristic and Vegetation Analysis of the Newberry Mountains.” No one had looked at it in the last decade. But what it contained was utterly remarkable to Scott Abella.

The Newberries are border country, not merely between Arizona and Nevada but between the inhospitable Sonoran Desert and the almost extraterrestrial Mojave. It’s a place where two ecosystems meet and compete, a conflict that could be influenced by climate change and invasive species. The Newberries are also part of one of the world’s least studied ecologies. All in all, an ideal spot to expand the boundaries of human knowledge, venomous snakes aside.

So in that thesis Abella first held two years ago, the environmental studies professor saw a baseline record of the past, one that you could compare to the present to puzzle out the changes in Southern Nevada’s landscape.

Unfortunately, there wasn’t quite enough in the thesis; it didn’t include raw data or an especially detailed map. If only there were some way to recover the missing information, Abella thought. But surely there wasn’t, not after 30 years.

The only clue was that the long-gone graduate student had worked with the National Park Service. Not long afterward, Abella was out at the Park Service’s office at Lake Mead talking to Alice Newton, a vegetation management specialist who coordinates research with UNLV. Abella asked if there might be any archived files or longtime employees who could point the way to the thesis’s author, a guy named Jim Holland.

Yeah, Newton said, he’s right there, about 100 feet down the hall.

And the research he conducted 30 years ago?

He still had it: 150 pages of handwritten data in two cardboard-covered three-ring notebooks, plus taped-together pieces of graph paper and meticulous maps. They were yellowing in his garage. At lunch, he went home and got them.



"It was pretty exciting because I'm the type of guy who still has all of that stuff," Holland says.

**MAYBE THAT THESIS HELD SENTIMENTAL VALUE.** The research launched Holland's career and convinced him to apply for a Park Service job when he was awarded his master's degree in biology in 1982. After postings in North Carolina, the Everglades, Denver, and Glen Canyon, Holland came back to Nevada and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. He is in charge of planning and recreational development of the park's 1.5 million acres, which includes part of the Newberries.

Abella told Holland he wanted to send another grad student out to replicate the research, only this time with GPS coordinates, photographs, databases, and other tools of 21st-century science. Thrilled to see his early work pass on to a new researcher, Holland also saw how the data could be useful to Park Service land managers.

"Our agency is dedicated to preserving the natural history for the public to enjoy," he says. "So as these systems are changing, we're trying to understand how our long-term goals should change as well. It might not significantly affect how we manage the lands but it certainly will change how we interpret things for the public."

Holland had collected his data in 1979 from 112 swaths of land. Each plot is 100 meters long and three meters wide, and every plant therein is counted by species and recorded. The plots are scattered over roughly 200 square miles of difficult terrain that is home to three species of rattlesnakes. They start at 400 feet above sea level and rise to over a mile, from the comparatively lush area around Davis Dam to the bright austerity of Spirit Mountain, which is the central site of human creation in the traditions of Yuman-speaking tribes and is significant to Hopi Native Americans as well.

It took Holland three months to sample all of his sites. It would take his successor, a graduate researcher named Chris Roberts, six months to locate and re-sample the 103 remaining intact sites and count 39,000 plants.

"I think [Holland] was significantly younger than I am now," Roberts deadpans.



Roberts is lean and in his late 30s with dark hair. He's much paler than you would expect of a man raised in Texas, schooled in New Mexico, and fresh off six months of desert research. He credits his library-grade tan to hats, long sleeves, lots of water, and SPF 60 sunblock.

It is more difficult to rediscover sites from the pre-GPS era than it is to pick wholly new sites. Moreover, Roberts was collecting more data than Holland did — including information about sunlight received and soil types.

Another challenge was simply that the Newberries are a steep and rugged solitude, unfriendly to humans, and punctuated by granite batholiths rising from the eroded terrain like the bones of extinct monsters. "It kind of looks like some Fortress of Doom," Roberts says.

It is, he adds, quite beautiful.

#### **DESPITE THEIR UNYIELDING APPEARANCES, DESERTS ARE SURPRISINGLY FRAGILE LANDSCAPES.**

They are easily disturbed and slow to recover. For example, during World War II the Army trained tank divisions in the southern Mojave. The tread marks are still visible almost 70 years later.

Roberts wants to piece together a natural history of the Newberries for the last century or so and beyond. He has scoured the archives of the Boulder City Historical

Jim Holland's work as a graduate student 30 years ago led to a National Park Service career. He now oversees planning and development of Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Society and the Searchlight Historical Society, which is pretty much just one woman, Jane Overy, and one room — "It's like a closet," Roberts says.

But that closet contains treasures — historical letters and photos showing areas like Christmas Tree Pass as they looked in the 1920s. Roberts has studied the unlikely history of cattle ranching in this corner of the Mojave. He's also studying others' analysis of pack rat middens — nests made of plant material and animal dung sometimes thousands of years ago and preserved in crystalized rat urine.

That work doesn't yield hard data that he can compare directly to Holland's thesis and Roberts' own re-sampling, but it can help put such data in context.

"The real skill isn't to gather the data, it's to tell a story here," Roberts says. "I can stare out at a landscape and start to put together a history."

And history is a way to look to the future.

#### **AS ALWAYS, GOOD SCIENCE MEANS COLLECTING MORE DATA.**

The more data, the better the predictions. Roberts' new data, along with Holland's old data, are being



added to the Mojave Inventory and Monitoring Network, a database that makes it easier for scientists to draw upon and follow up on past research.

Already, Roberts can tell you some things by comparing Holland's snapshot of plant life in the 1970s to today. For instance, there are more barrel cacti and at higher altitudes now. Other species have also proliferated, like invasive grasses. "I cannot, in good conscience, tell you that, for instance, barrel cacti are going to increase, but someone who has five snapshots could tell you. Right now, we have two," Roberts says.

Because some plants in the desert live for a long time and change slowly, it's hard to say for sure how big of an impact climate change is having. These species may be fine or they may be among the living dead, a species that could die out in the coming decades.

Consider the uncertain fate of the creosote bush. It is gray-barked, thin-leaved and seemingly unremarkable. It lives for about 150 years and reproduces rarely and only under exceptionally favorable conditions: plentiful rain, at the right time of the year, for three years in a row.

Invasive brome grasses imperil the native desert ecology because they reproduce yearly, easily, and widely. And they have a nasty habit of burning,

which makes the other three traits all the more deadly.

Wildfires once were rare in the desert simply because native plants dotted the landscape rather than filling it. A lightning strike generally consumed a small patch of plants before burning itself out. The grasses surround native plants, giving fire a path over many acres. Then, after a fire, the grasses quickly repopulate the area, including the parts that used to have perfectly nice creosote bushes. A drier climate might make it even easier for brome grasses and harder for creosote. Were a creosote capable of feelings, it would be an indignant bush.

Why might humans care about the fate of creosote bushes? After all, there were bushes and now there are grasses. Big whoop.

There are practical considerations; a landscape of highly flammable grass is more likely to burn down your house. Land managers need to know that. But also, the bushes are part of a whole ecosystem of balanced plants and animals, including the charismatic ones like tortoises and bighorn sheep. Maybe if bushes are eliminated, the rest of these species will survive, but maybe not.

As Abella puts it: "Think of a brick wall. You can pull out a couple of bricks and the wall will still stand. But how many bricks can you pull out?"

## THIS JUST IN

### Tuna Surprise

#### 1 BILLION POUNDS

of tuna consumed by Americans each year

#### 4 OUT OF 5

fish-consumption advisories linked to unsafe mercury levels each year

#### 55 PERCENT

of tuna samples exceed EPA's mercury safety levels

#### 5 PERCENT

of tuna samples that exceeded the less-stringent FDA safety levels

#### 18 DAYS

children should wait between canned tuna meals, according to study results and EPA guidelines

— from UNLV study of mercury concentration in three brands of canned tuna. The study calls for government agencies to develop consistent monitoring guidelines for the tuna industry.

## Biased babies

Do babies cry when they look at you? Could be you look funny to them. Weird funny, not ha-ha funny.

Stereotypes based on attractiveness, gender, and race are formed at an early age, says psychology professor Jennifer Rennels, director of the Baby and Child Rebel Lab. She has studied what traits babies dwell on when scanning faces. Now she's researching why babies stereotype and how stereotyping can be curbed before children reach adulthood.

### FAMILIARITY BREEDS COMFORT

Rennels' research has shown that 92 percent of the faces infants see in their first year are the same race as their primary caregiver. Likewise, 71 percent of the faces babies see in their first year are female, Rennels says. Such familiarity generates a favorable reaction from the babies.

A grant from the National Science Foundation is helping Rennels study how infants react to different faces and why they have a difficult time recognizing them. She's also looking at what cues adults



find attractive in male faces and whether adult and infant scanning behaviors are linked.

"Understanding the way infants categorize individuals in their social environment is important because these early categories can become linked to certain attributes and subsequently develop into stereotypes," Rennels says.

### INSIDE THE BABY AND CHILD REBEL LAB

Rennels and her team of graduate and undergraduate assistants have been observing babies ages 3-12 months. Using computer eye-tracking programs, Rennels can pinpoint the eye movements, facial expressions, and areas of the face on which babies fixate. Babies are shown more than 20 composite faces on a television screen. The faces of men and women of various races, ages 18 to 35 years old, are pieced together from volunteers.

Finding research participants is a challenge, which often affects the speed and frequency of lab experiments. Rennels and her team scan newspaper birth announcements and send letters to families of newborns, hoping the subject of the study will spark interest.

— Afsha Bawany



Economics professor Keith Schwer died Dec. 3 at age 66. National media outlets and local business leaders often called Schwer first for insight on the community's robust growth and dramatic downturn over the last two decades. One of his greater accomplishments, however, was helping to give voice to Nevada's children through the Kids Count program, a national program to track the well-being of children. The data provides policymakers and the public information for developing sound programs. This interview was conducted in September. At the time Schwer was undergoing cancer treatment, but kept that battle private.

# HAPPINESS IN NUMBERS

**Keith Schwer**, Center for Business and Economic Research

## Language of Decisions

Economics is a field that does not give you a lot of simple answers. But it does give you a common language. It's the language of making decisions.

You can't talk about the key issues of the day — health care, the environment, unemployment, education — without economics. It's about putting resources, which are always limited, toward what you need to do. The decisions on what to bomb in World War II were made by economists. The liberty ship strategy came from economists.

I don't mind stating my point, but there's a limit. There's a danger in researchers taking on too much advocacy. Our role is to make sure we know what's going on as best we can and to bring those facts and analysis into the discussions — to make sure policies are made with the best information available.

I don't have an emotional attachment to numbers, but that doesn't mean I don't care about what they show. When the unemployment rate is in the double-digits, you know there are children out there who didn't have breakfast.

## Baseball and Vacuum Cleaners

If I could've hit a curveball, I'd still be in baseball.

I admire certain people for certain things. Ted Williams fought in two wars and was the last guy to hit .400. Parts of his life were complete disasters, but I've always admired his ability to focus with great intensity.

I started out to be an architect but found my artistic talents were limited. I shifted to statistics and by my senior year became intrigued with economics.

It's very nice to be an age at which it doesn't take much money to be indulgent. I buy a lot of books.

My most imprudent purchase? Probably a vacuum for my wife. It's a classic example.

My wife pretty much buys what she wants. She has a different perspective; though I have to say she's become more conservative with time.

Money is one of the top reasons couples fight; we've been married 47 years.

## Clouding the Forecast

The job of economists is made difficult by instant news analysis and the need to fill a lot of airtime. There's too much overstatement. There's outright lying. It's probably not fair to say that Walter Cronkite was always more objective but — well, actually it is fair. He was.

Economists evaluate the current environment. The difficulty in that is we can never have all the information we need. You go back and discover the rocks in the river that were not revealed to you.

Las Vegas couldn't defy the laws of economics.

When housing prices jumped 50 percent, there were warnings out there. Economists like me said that, at best, we'd have to grow into the excess; the national economy just did not allow us to do that.

A lot of people may have predicted the downturn, but they completely failed in the upturn.

In Southern Nevada, one thing that shadowed our outlook the wrong way was the magnitude to which building on the Strip

was going forward without financing in place. When the housing market crumbled and financing dried up, projects like Fontainebleau and Echelon got into trouble.

## Fifty-Fifty

The acceptance of mediocrity troubles me more than anything.

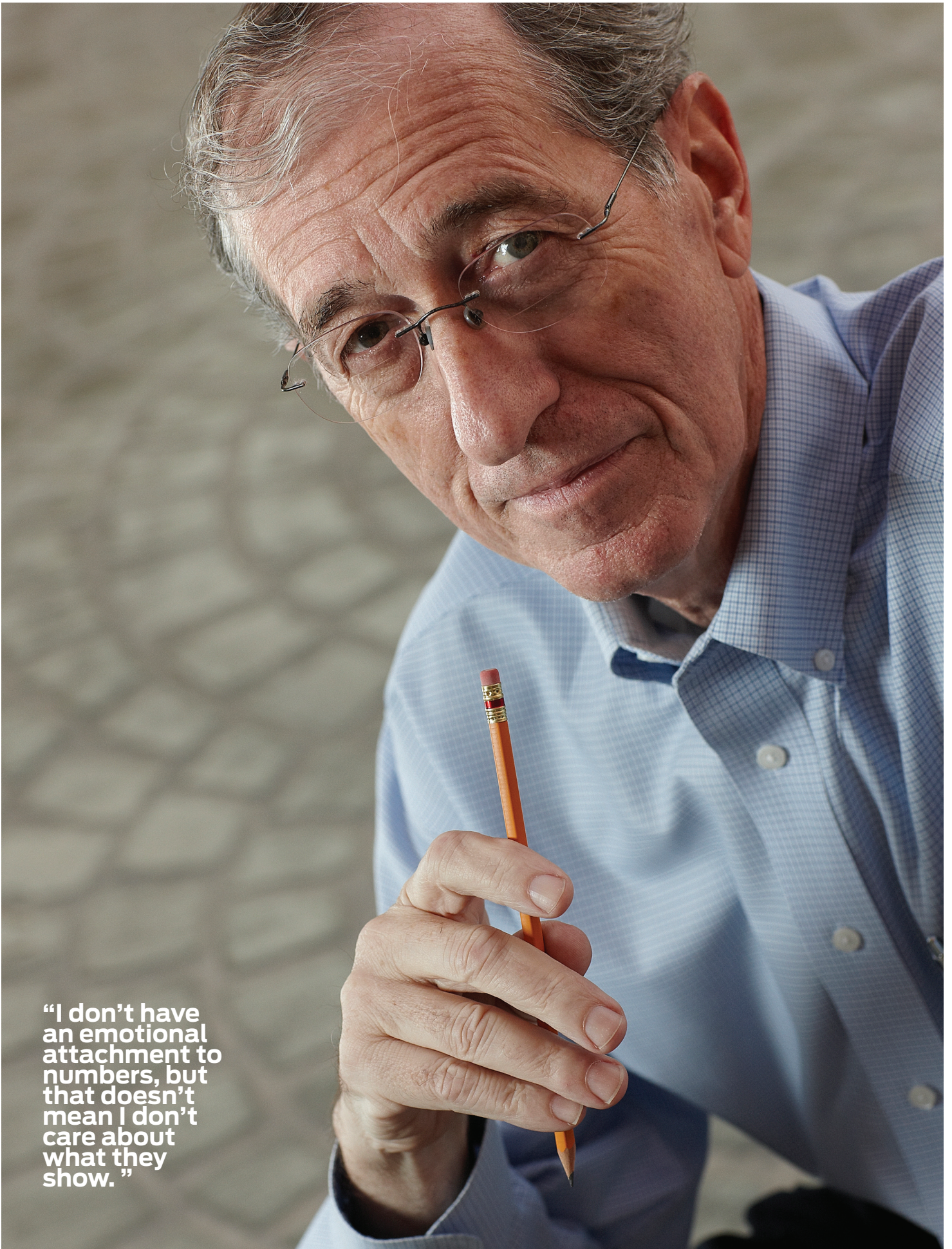
Maybe it's a sign of the times, but students now realize that college is something more than an adult preschool. They're facing a tough job market, and they know that years of social promotion in the schools haven't served them well.

Anyone who gets a degree without a foundational course in economics is not an enlightened individual. My opinion. I'd be as deeply concerned if they have no knowledge of science.

I'm happy in life because I found out what I like to do, and I'm appreciative that I get to do it. I pity those who struggle and never find that happiness.

My wife would say I see the glass as half empty, that I worry too much. I think I'd say it's fifty-fifty.





**"I don't have  
an emotional  
attachment to  
numbers, but  
that doesn't  
mean I don't  
care about  
what they  
show."**





[PIXELS]

## Calming the nerves

Freshman music composition major Nick Kowaleski practices the Matteo Carcassi études for his first UNLV jury, a sort of final for performance classes. During the nerve-wracking wait, he tries to follow the advice of guitar professor Ricardo Cobo for musicians to “practice to the point where they are completely in control throughout the piece, regardless of distractions,” Kowaleski says. “It is important not to let your mind wander, which is difficult for me because I am a total scatterbrain.”

[Photo by Aaron Mayes]







# Ready to Invent the Future

With help from the annual O'Rourke Plumbing Scholarship, Matthew Cutler graduated in December with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. The former Student Senate president had an impressive 3.8 GPA and was recognized during commencement as one of six Outstanding Graduates. Like many UNLV students, Cutler is a first-generation college graduate. After receiving his degree, he launched his career as an associate nuclear engineer with Bechtel Marine Propulsion Corp.

Thousands of students like Cutler are benefitting from private donations through UNLV's recently completed Invent the Future campaign. [Read more >>](#)

[Photos by Geri Kodey, Aaron Mayes, and R. Marsh Starks]









# The Future is Now

**A TOUGH ECONOMY DOESN'T STOP UNLV FROM REACHING ITS EXTRAORDINARY GOAL OF RAISING A HALF BILLION DOLLARS** BY LISA ARTH and MICHELLE MOUTON

**E**ight years ago, fundraising consultants were brought into UNLV to evaluate a proposed goal of \$250 million for its first-ever capital campaign. The consultants' report suggested that community support was lacking for such a lofty goal and that the sum was simply too ambitious. Our community leaders believed otherwise.

In response, UNLV launched the Invent the Future campaign with a goal of \$500 million, doubling the target initially proposed. With vision and determination — along with an amazing group of donors, alumni, stakeholders, and friends, not to mention volunteers, faculty, staff, and students — UNLV surpassed the goal and successfully concluded the Invent the Future campaign on Dec. 31.

"A half a billion dollar campaign goal was audacious for such a young campus," declares UNLV President Neal Smatresk. "But this community — these individuals, businesses, and foundations — partnered with UNLV, believed in our university, and together we leapt toward a vision for our future that appeared unattainable a decade ago."

UNLV raised \$537,201,478 in what is widely considered the worst economic climate of a lifetime.

Priorities for the campaign included broadening alumni support and participation, updating facilities and developing new space, strengthening academic excellence through scholarships, and developing innovative research and educational programs.

Nearly 42 percent of donors to the Invent the Future campaign were alumni — a huge

number for a young university with about 90,000 alumni. Alumni giving not only had a tremendous impact on the bottom line for the campaign, but the numbers will also be used as criteria for national rankings for the university — a significant element in enhancing UNLV's reputation and the value of students' degrees.

Building an excellent university requires bricks and mortar — facilities for students and faculty that enhance the educational experience. This campaign added a number of new facilities to the UNLV campus, including Greenspun Hall, the Thomas & Mack Moot Court Complex, and the Science and Engineering Building. It also raised funding for the forthcoming Innovation UNLV, which eventually will include a 330-room hotel and conference center as well as a new academic building for the William F.





Oscar Quiroz, a civil engineering master's student, tests concrete samples in the Mendenhall Innovation & Design Lab in the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering. Funding from Robert Mendenhall, founder of Las Vegas Paving Corp., allowed for the complete remodel of the space and installation of industrial-grade equipment. The lab's staff members help students complete their class projects and mentor local secondary school students participating in national engineering competitions. Quiroz, a first-generation college student and native Las Vegas, says, "It seemed like we used to spend as much time scavenging for tools and space as we did actually building." He plans to apply what he's learning in the lab and in class to developing new building materials using recycled paint.

Harrah College of Hotel Administration.

Many contributions to the campaign focused on the student experience, including funding for undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships, career advising, and new or updated facilities for classes and laboratories. Two of the largest scholarship programs at any Nevada institution were announced as part of the Invent the Future campaign. The Engelstad Foundation donated more than \$12.6 million to develop the Engelstad Scholars Program (see article page 26). In addition, a \$15 million irrevocable estate gift from Mel and Ruth Wolzinger will ultimately fund scholarships for about 250 students per year.

In order to thrive, UNLV needs a solid base of support for research and educational programs that emerge in response to the changing needs of our community and the organizations that hire UNLV graduates. Private gifts help build these programs and advance strategic initiatives that create opportunities for faculty and students. One example is the creation of The Lincy Institute. Together with the new Brookings Mountain West initiative, The Lincy Institute brings UNLV a comprehensive platform for addressing education, health care,

social systems, and public policy. It not only refines and focuses existing strengths but develops a partnership that will shape the future of UNLV in the years to come.

The Invent the Future campaign also inspired our community to become more involved with UNLV. Today, more than 800 community members serve on volunteer advisory boards in colleges and units across the campus. These individuals share their expertise to ensure that the university is meeting the needs of its students and the community. Lecture programs, endowed professorships, and Rebel athletics also received funding through the Invent the Future campaign.

The \$500 million that has been raised through the generosity of tens of thousands of donors has provided a strong foundation of funds to address some of the university's most critical needs. The success of the Invent the Future campaign, far from marking an end to private support, will help define future initiatives. Private contributions are more critical to UNLV than ever; it will be growing support from dedicated alumni and friends that will ensure that the generations of Nevadans to come will choose UNLV for its program excellence.

# Q&A

## **With the campaign's success, why is UNLV facing a budget crisis?**

UNLV did not receive a windfall of funding from the campaign. Approximately 57 percent of the contributions were used in the year in which they were donated (the campaign started in 2002). The remaining donations are expected in the future through estate commitments or were used to create endowments. With an endowment, the original donation is invested and only the interest generated is used to fund programs.

## **Doesn't the state support UNLV?**

In the current fiscal year, the state provided about a third of UNLV's budget with significant cuts looming at press time. Those funds primarily go to employee salaries and operational costs, such as utilities and maintenance. Donor funds are used to enhance the basics. Typical examples include providing travel funds for student competitions, purchasing new lab equipment, or helping students afford college. The state will never be able to increase its support enough to provide all the resources needed to produce nationally recognized programs while keeping tuition and fees affordable.

## **Who decides where the money goes?**

Donors designate how their contributions will be used, and rare is the donor who wants to pay the university's electric bill. In fact, 97 percent of the donations received are earmarked by donors for specific things.

## **Now what?**

In today's economy, private contributions are especially critical to maintaining quality programs. Students are struggling to afford college while the state is struggling to provide basic services to its citizens. Thus, UNLV will continue its private fundraising efforts and immediately prepare for its next groundbreaking campaign.

**For more on the university budget situation, see *From the President*, page 3.**



# Invent the Future Campaign

[ By The Numbers ]

**\$537,201,478**

total raised during the 8-year campaign,  
exceeding the goal by more than 7 percent

**74%**

in cash or pledges

**26%**

to come from future estate gifts

**\$6,358**

average gift amount

**84,486**

total number of gifts

**62%**

increase in annual gifts received,  
comparing 1999 to 2009

**2,182**

number of gifts above \$10,000

**79/21**

percent of Nevada residents vs. out-of-state  
donors. Donors came from all 50 states, plus  
Washington, D.C., American Samoa, Puerto  
Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

**183**

number of new scholarships and fellowships  
created — 71 of them were endowed, meaning  
the funding will last in perpetuity

**12/31/09**

date the campaign ended. The last gift tallied  
came through online from a 2004 Greenspun  
College of Urban Affairs graduate

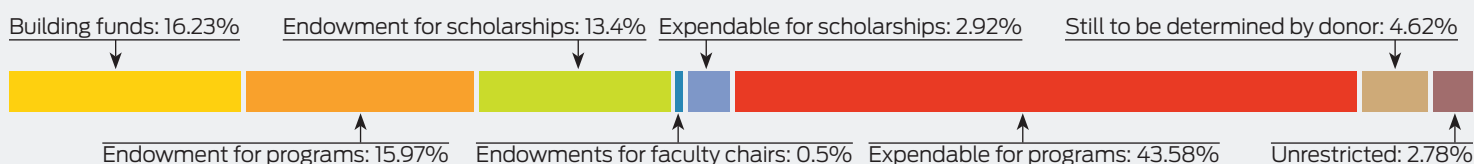
**25,691**

number of donors

## Where the Money Came From



## Where It Went







Science and Engineering Building





Shavonna Noble at the Andre Agassi  
College Preparatory Academy



# More Than a Scholar

## NEW PROGRAM MAKES COMMUNITY SERVICE INTEGRAL TO COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

**F**rank Fuentes and Shavonna Noble make a lasting impression. Bright and aspiring, the UNLV freshmen are ready to conquer the world. Each has definite plans — first for college and then for their careers. And they're eager to hurry into the future.

They are just the kind of students the board of the Engelstad Family Foundation had in mind when it created the Engelstad Scholars' Program. Last fall the foundation pledged nearly \$12.63 million to UNLV.

### NEARLY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Fuentes, Noble, and eight other students were selected in January to participate in the pilot phase of the new scholarship program. For Fuentes, the first person in his family to go to college, the news was huge. The \$2,500 he will receive each semester makes it possible to focus on his classes without having to find a job. "I told my whole family," the freshman political science major says. "My brothers were jumping. My mom was calling the rest of our family. My dad was crying."

Noble says having her undergraduate costs covered goes a long way in helping her achieve her dream of becoming a sports medicine physician one day.

Kris Engelstad McGarry, a trustee of the Engelstad Family Foundation, noted that a scholarship made it possible for her own father to attend college. The Engelstad Scholars' Program is the result of the largest scholarship endowment pledge in the university's 52-year history.

"The Engelstad Scholars' Program highlights our investment in giving back to the community and reflects the generous contributions of those who came before us," McGarry says. "We want to help deserving students receive quality educations — especially in light of the hard economic times."

"Scholarship' — it's a beautiful word for a lot of people."



Frank Fuentes at Three Square Food Bank

### GIVING BACK

This scholarship does come with one string attached. As a way to "pay it forward" students receiving the scholarship must help local community service agencies.

This critical component of the program "will provide students the chance to give back to the community at the same time they are receiving," McGarry says. "They will develop skills while performing jobs vital to our partner agencies. They'll be doing real work, not just logging hours."

Volunteering is not new for either Noble or Fuentes. Noble has volunteered at the West Las Vegas Library, at a pediatrician's office, and at a science fair. Volunteering was an important part of the service-based debutante program she participated in through Les Femmes Douze.

Fuentes, who plans to attend law school after earning his bachelor's degree, says he helped organize a variety of service projects when he was in the Navy Junior ROTC at Eldorado High School. He read to children, cleaned up schools, and helped at dog shows.

Both recently began their community service work as Engelstad Scholars. Fuentes is in charge of planning a demonstration garden for Three Square Food Bank. At the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, Noble tutors students and assists the technology team. Next she may work with the athletics staff.

### TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Eagerness to help others is a crucial element in what makes a student an Engelstad Scholar, says William Boldt, UNLV vice president for university advancement. Good grades are not enough. "We are nurturing leaders for the future," he says. "These are students who want to be leaders, and we expect that they will 'pay it forward' during their lives."

McGarry adds, "It's neighbors helping neighbors. No matter how big this city gets, in many ways it is still a small town. We don't want to forget the value of lending our neighbor a helping hand."

—DIANE RUSSELL

### The Engelstad Scholars' Program

The program began this semester with a pilot group of 10 scholars. Plans call for that number to increase each fall until the program reaches its full complement of 100 recipients.

The scholars must meet grade-point and financial-need criteria, and perform 100 hours of community service each year. Scholars in the pilot class are working with the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, Boys & Girls Club, Goodie Two Shoes Foundation, and Three Square Food Bank.



“Why is he turning blue? Do something!” shouted Angel’s mother. “You’re supposed to be our nurses!”

# Sim City

**WITH THE SOUNDS AND SMELLS OF A HOSPITAL ASSAULTING THEIR SENSES, NURSING STUDENTS LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKES**

**S**till dressed in their scrubs, the nurses gathered to figure out what went wrong. The patient, 5-year-old Angel Calderon, had come in presenting symptoms of respiratory distress. Pneumonia, most likely.

The nurses put on paper gowns and latex gloves but forgot their masks — a must when dealing with an unknown respiratory ailment. Their mistake puts their own health, and the health of everyone else in the hospital, at needless risk.

Various digital instruments of modern medicine spiked and beeped, signaling a drop in the level of oxygen in Angel’s blood. A nurse tilted his head back to ease his breathing, a standard procedure. Still, Angel’s levels kept falling.

“Why is he turning blue? Do something!” shouted Angel’s mother. “You’re supposed to be our nurses!”

As his oxygen levels fell, Angel’s heart raced, trying to compensate by moving more blood through his system. Angel’s mother begged the nurses to call a doctor as her child turned bluer and bluer. A nurse put an oxygen mask on Angel’s face to help him breathe, but couldn’t seem to make it work. At one point he placed the mask upside down on Angel’s face, prompting a strangely distant cry of, “What are you doing? I can’t breathe!”

This child, thankfully, was a mix of soft plastic and circuits. His mother a second-semester student, as were the other “nurses” in the room. Appearances aside, this scenario played out not in a hospital room but in the new 31,000-square-foot Clinical Skills Center of Las Vegas. One of the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi, the center is located at UNLV’s Shadow Lane campus in the heart of Las Vegas’s medical district.

The center is a unique collaboration among the nursing schools at UNLV and Nevada State College and, more unusually, the University of Nevada School of Medicine. By training future nurses and doctors alongside each other, the facility’s simulations will be all that more realistic.

The inspiration for the center came during a taxi ride Carolyn Yucha, UNLV’s dean of nursing, shared with her Nevada State counterpart after a conference three and a half years ago. Both marveled about the simulation facilities elsewhere and lamented the struggle of funding one for Southern Nevada. Yucha looked up and asked, *Why don’t we do one together?*

With the addition of the medical school, the project became a Nevada System of Higher Education priority. Having three institutions involved helped shelter the project from Nevada’s budget woes. The state provided \$14 million to remodel a



Nursing students at the Clinical Skills Center of Las Vegas

space on the Shadow Lane campus. Then the project attracted the attention of The Lincy Foundation, which provided \$3.2 million to purchase furnishings and top-of-the-line equipment. Additional equipment purchases came from federal appropriations.

The most expensive pieces of equipment are the computer-controlled training mannequins. Their pulses appear to race, their blood chemistry to change. You can sew stitches on some and perform CPR on others, says Suzanne Sharp, a nurse and





technician who controls the simulations. One even recreates a live birth.

"Do you have any children of your own?" Sharp asks. "No? Then you probably don't want to know (how it happens)."

For the record: A metal motor shoves a life-sized infant doll out of a life-sized mom mannequin. Red finger paint makes the simulation as life-like as possible when there's a turn for the worse.

Several mannequins simulate bodily fluids. There's a dye to mimic the red backflow of blood when a needle is inserted into a

vein. One mannequin sweats. Others have full bladders. And then there's fake vomit, mixed from canned soup, canned corn, and foul-smelling sulfurous compounds. It assaults more than one sense as it's passed in a blue, kidney-shaped bowl under the noses of the students.

But Yucha says the most important feature of the mannequins is "they allow our students to make mistakes."

Traditionally, nursing students learn theory in the classroom and receive practical training with real patients at a hospital

while their instructors watch, prepared to step in if a student begins to make a mistake. This is morally necessary but educationally unfortunate. Mistakes are powerful teachers, as the nursing students who trained on "Angel Calderon" can attest.

After their simulation, the entire class reviews its performance on a digital replay. The student who put that mask on upside down watches his performance, putting his head in his hands and shaking it. There's much still to learn.

—BRENDAN BUHLER





Peer Research Coaches at UNLV Libraries

# Student Support

*Scholarships help UNLV recruit and retain the most talented students, who are then more likely to stay in the community after graduating. This support immediately impacts individual lives while preparing future leaders to help Nevada prosper.*

**Flora and Stuart Mason Peer Research Coaches:** This program pairs trained undergraduate mentors with students needing assistance tapping into the UNLV Libraries' vast collections of books, electronic journals, microfilm, and historic documents. The peer coaches gain leadership skills and in turn help fellow students to make the most of the libraries' resources.

**MGM MIRAGE Academic Excellence Scholarship:** In 2006, MGM MIRAGE established the Academic Excellence Scholarship for National Merit scholars. This \$1 million gift and the annual award covers the attendance costs for four years. So far, it has been awarded to two students, both Las Vegas natives.

**President's Graduate Research Fellowship:** For doctoral students, conducting specific research and writing the dissertation are the most important and intense parts of completing their degrees. These fellowships allow promising graduate students to cover living expenses and focus on their academic work. Across disciplines and across campus, their research findings can impact UNLV, the region, and the world. **Want some proof? Read "Desert Discovery," Page 14.**

There are dozens more examples of how support from private donors has shaped the UNLV campus and community. View a special photo slide show at [invention.unlv.edu](http://invention.unlv.edu).





# Facilities

*Private support helps UNLV develop and improve campus facilities, allowing students and faculty alike to learn, conduct research, and share knowledge in an environment of the highest quality. Donations also helped renovate athletics and fine arts spaces.*

## **Thomas & Mack Moot Court Complex:**

This facility serves students as well as the entire community by supporting the William S. Boyd School of Law's trial advocacy, appellate advocacy, and Kids' Court programs. The state-of-the-art teaching facility, which opened in 2007, includes a courtroom and a 100-seat auditorium. The fully equipped courtroom also hosts real proceedings for the Nevada Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

## **Science and Engineering Building:**

Flexible laboratories and state-of-the-art classrooms are the hub for collaboration across seemingly disparate disciplines. This facility brings together professors, students, and industry partners to address problems in areas of highest importance to our community: arid lands science and policy; entertainment/convention technology; energy and materials science; and information and communication technology.

**Greenspun Hall:** The public-private partnership that built Greenspun Hall exemplifies the power of what visionaries can accomplish together. The 120,000-square-foot facility brings together all departments of the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs. And its smart building features have made it gold-certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Whether it's in the new studios for UNLV-TV and KUNV-FM 91.5, the specialized labs for criminal justice and the Center for Analysis of Crime Statistics, or the high-tech auditorium that hosts guest speakers and specialized workshops, emerging leaders are sure to be found under the 125-foot-high sign that lights up with "UNLV."

# Program Support

*UNLV's history is linked with that of Southern Nevada and, consequently, the university's programs and centers complement the needs and goals of students and of the community.*

**Public Lectures:** Social, political, scientific, and literary luminaries have graced the campus and provided unique insights into the world. Through the Barrick Lecture Series, the University Forum Lecture Series, the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution's Peace in the Desert lectures, the Black Mountain Institute programs, and many others, the university benefits when individuals share their knowledge and experiences with the students and community. By providing these opportunities for intellectual growth and exploration on campus, UNLV fosters thoughtful dialogue, idea sharing, and community engagement well beyond its borders. **See page 3 for upcoming lectures and events.**

**Sanford I. Berman Debate Forum:** Reinstated in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs after a 10-year hiatus, the debate program recently ranked by the National Debate Tournament as 34th in the nation, ahead of Arizona State, Michigan, and Stanford universities. An endowment from the forum's namesake provides for travel costs, materials, and scholarship support for the 14-member team. The program follows a competitive policy-debate format and enhances the students' abilities to critically interpret and deconstruct complicated issues.

**The Oral History Research Center:** Housed in the UNLV Lied Library Special Collections, the center conducts audio and video interviews of people selected for their ability to provide first-hand observations on Nevada. These special materials capture the voices and insights of those who built and sustained our community, including gaming entrepreneurs, mining pioneers, and community advocates. Their unique testimonials and valuable artifacts enrich the studies of researchers and students in a powerful way. **Listen to the interviews at [www.library.unlv.edu/oral\\_histories](http://www.library.unlv.edu/oral_histories).**

**Wells Fargo Global Entrepreneurship Experience:** The program attracts creative, high-achieving students to UNLV. Here they experience entrepreneurship on a global scale. The innovative, immersive-learning curriculum develops critical skills while broadening the world perspective of the next generation of business leaders, inspiring them to bring new products and services to world markets. Aspiring entrepreneurs receive scholarships, learn from experienced entrepreneurs through guest lectures, and compete in business plan competitions throughout the United States.







# The ROI of Education

Trailblazer challenges the grads who followed him to reinvest in education  
(this means you)

## Jon Cobain

'64 BS Business Administration

BY ERIN O'DONNELL

When a university is young, its alumni are young too. And that can hamper an institution's efforts to raise funds and generate community support, because few graduates have reached a point in their careers where they are able to give back.

That's one reason Jon Cobain is such an asset to UNLV. He's the university's first graduate — first among 29 students to accept their degrees in the spring of 1964. Since then, Cobain has gone on to build a successful career as the head of his own mergers and acquisitions firm in California.

### RECOGNIZING A GOOD INVESTMENT

Cobain was one of several donors on hand last fall when the UNLV Foundation announced it had exceeded the \$500 million goal for the Invent the Future capital campaign. Cobain isn't fond of the attention he gets for his gifts, though. He's a businessman. The way he sees it, he's making a direct investment in the future of Nevada and the U.S.

"It's beyond a tragedy. I think it's criminal" that education doesn't get greater support, Cobain says. "If we have to decide between repaving roads and having better education, we'll get a superior return on our investment by investing in education. It's in everyone's best interests to have a well-informed, educated population."

While Cobain supports education as a donor, his wife and daughter are practitioners. Judy Flynn, his wife of 26 years, embarked on a second career when she moved to New Zealand for a year to teach English as a second language. She wrote a book about her experience. Their daughter is a teacher in Beverly Hills, and their son is an orthodontist in northern California.

Cobain's giving began during Dr. Carol Harter's tenure as university president. He was impressed with the leadership she showed in initiating the university's first comprehensive campaign and quickly became "a fan."

"I certainly feel some strong affinity, being the first graduate from the UNLV campus," Cobain says, "but Carol was the one who really made the difference."

After UNLV, Cobain earned his MBA at Northwestern University — an established, well-endowed university that was worlds away from the fledgling Las Vegas campus. That experience seemed to impress upon Cobain that UNLV needed alumni support if it was going to attain the same prestige, Harter says. "He saw that UNLV was struggling as a young university to come into its own, and he watched it develop over the years," she says. "He has a natural, wonderful attachment to the place and a sense of its future and its capacity for growth and development. It's a great perspective from the first person to graduate from UNLV."

### BACK TO THE BASICS

Cobain started his career in marketing and new product development for large, Fortune 500 companies including Beatrice Foods, Lear Siegler, and International Harvester. In time, he discovered that acquisition was a superior way to enter a new market or put forth a new product, versus a startup venture. Along the way, he discovered a fundamental truth about himself, too.

"I learned I didn't enjoy big company environments. They're political, and I find there's an awful lot of wasteful time. It just didn't suit my personality," he says.

So in 1979 he started Fomento Ltd., a mergers and acquisitions firm that helps entrepreneurs turn their bright ideas into cash. Since then, he has handled transactions in 33 states and six countries. His

clients' companies are typically worth between \$30 million and \$100 million.

"The stimulating part is working with people who are talented and imaginative," he says. "It's rewarding to help them achieve their objectives. They become very talented at doing whatever it is they do. But they have no experience in converting their valuable asset into money."

In the 1980s, Fomento grew to 60 employees with offices in Washington, D.C., and Newport Beach, Calif. "Then I wound up managing people rather than working on transactions for the clients. That's not what I like or do best." He sold his interest as the largest shareholder and began again as a sole proprietor — back to the small, boutique environment that allows him to be hands-on. Today, the firm concentrates on only a couple of transactions a year.

### BUSINESS AND LITERATURE

Harter says Cobain's business style is reflected in his giving — he expects to see a return on his money. The cash portion of his recent gift is earmarked for graduate assistantships in English and the creative writing MFA program, and will be matched by the department. He's especially interested in seeing those graduate assistants participate in the Black Mountain Institute, of which Harter is now executive director.

As a business graduate, Cobain is an unlikely supporter of the humanities, Harter says, but he seems to believe bringing literary arts and minds to the community will enhance the quality of life for all. And his gift allows the department to increase its stipend for graduate students for the first time in 10 years. "The whole institution is trying to find ways to enhance the stipends for the very best students," she says. "That's what Jon's cash will do."

And, who knows, maybe it will inspire a new generation of alumni to continue the giving.



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## 1960s

**Paul Steffens**, '65 BS Business Administration, is executive director of the San Diego Armed Services YMCA. He spent more than 30 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring with the rank of captain, and worked as a mass transit administrator in Honolulu. He and his wife, Barbara, have two daughters, Lisa and Angela, and a grandson, Jaden. His hobbies include golf, biking, walking, pumping iron, and photography.

## 1970s

**Dorothy Ritenour Wright**, '71 BA Psychology, '81 MA History, retired as centennial program administrator for the Clark County parks and recreation department. She had worked for the department since 1988. Previously, she had worked for the Nevada Humanities Committee. Her husband, **Richard Avila**, '71 BS Business Administration, is an attorney. She has one son, Christopher Ritenour. Her hobbies are researching Southern Nevada history, reading, seeing movies, and hiking.

**Margaret Enright Wye**, '71 BS Education, '73 MA English, earned a Ph.D. in rhetoric, linguistics, & literature at the University of Southern California in 2003. She is a professor of English at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo., and last year published a critical monograph of Jane Austen, *Architectural Influences on Jane Austen's Narratives: Structure as an Active Agent of Fictive Knowledge in the Long 18<sup>th</sup> Century*. She lives in Gladstone.

**Edward Crispell**, '72 BS Hotel Administration, owns Custom Teleconnect, a telecommunications company. He recently designed an artistic working UNLV Rebel payphone. Previously, he worked 35 years in the casino industry.

**Rodney Poteete**, '74 Master of Education, retired after teaching 35 years at Pahrump Valley High School. He writes a weekly sports blog for RebelNation.net. For the past 28 years he has officiated high school basketball in Las Vegas. His hobby is collecting cards for baseball, football, and basketball. He specializes in cards for a number of different teams.

**Frank Dobson**, '75 MA English, is director of Vanderbilt University's Bishop Johnson Black Cultural Center in Nashville. He also is the faculty head of house for a campus living-and-learning facility for first-year students. A published novelist, essayist, and scholar, he is married and has three children and two grandchildren. His hobbies are working out, traveling, and sports.



# Cindy Ortega

'91 BS Hotel Administration

BY BRENDAN BUHLER

Cindy Ortega grew up riding on her parents' Utah cattle ranch, not too far from the eastern edge of Great Basin National Park. Grade school was in a two-room schoolhouse. High school required catching a bus to the next town over. She lived with a widow during the week and went home on the weekends. Their wealth was in their land and rarely in their wallets, she remembers. "Just like all ranchers and farmers, you're sitting on a gold mine but you're very poor."

It's an unlikely background for someone who just helped open CityCenter, a multibillion dollar resort dedicated to the massaging and feeding of tourists and gamblers. And at first blush, it seems more unlikely still that Cindy Ortega's specific job is making such a place environmentally friendly.

She doesn't see it that way. She says growing up the way she did on a ranch in the desert made her very aware that the land's resources are finite and good stewardship is required.

## STEPPING LIGHTLY

Thanks to Ortega, the project received the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy

and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification, making CityCenter the highest rated green development in Las Vegas and one of the largest sustainable developments in the world. Ortega, to use a term popular in environmental speak, gave CityCenter a small footprint.

But when you're talking about an \$8.5 billion, 67-acre casino, resort, condo, and shopping mall development, shrinking its environmental footprint is like breeding a nondestructive Godzilla. The creature still has to be awe-inspiring — massive size and domination of a skyline. And its hunger for a lot of energy must be fed. So the task then is to mitigate the damage the mighty beast causes.

The very scale of CityCenter means that even small percentages turn into big savings.

It means that using water-saving technology like low-flow shower heads inside and carefully watered desert plants outside saves 50 million gallons of water a year. Using energy-efficient lighting and high-performance glass, as well as letting more sunlight into the building, saves as much electricity as 8,800 households use in a year. Recycling and reusing practices kept 260,000 tons of



construction waste out of our landfills.

There are two other ways of looking at CityCenter that make its size an actual environmental advantage. Most green buildings are like throwing a pebble into a pond and looking for ripples of change. Ortega says CityCenter is like hurling a boulder into a lake. You see waves.

Directly, its sheer size allowed MGM Mirage to demand different, more environmentally friendly manufacturing techniques. For instance, there's fiberboard, which you may know as the not-quite-wood cabinets in your own kitchens and bathrooms. Almost all fiberboard is made using urea-formaldehyde glues, which are toxic and can evaporate into the air. CityCenter's size meant that it was able to pressure manufacturers to shut down their plants, drain their glue lines, and refill them with environmentally friendly glue.

Indirectly, CityCenter is a giant demonstration project that may change the way other companies build their large projects. Usually, Ortega says, environmentally sensitive buildings are university or government buildings, and they have a sort of post-industrial, pedestrian aesthetic. Ortega says the biggest misconception people have is that all green buildings have to be that way. CityCenter shows green can be luxurious.

"The environmental movement is not about people sitting at home, huddling together, and trying to use as few resources as possible," Ortega says. "It's about preserving our resources and enhancing our quality of life. And our quality of life is greatly enhanced by our ability to travel. And (MGM Mirage is) in the travel industry."

## ONCE A REBEL

As the 20-year anniversary of UNLV's NCAA basketball championship approached last fall, Jay Jacquemoud was feeling nostalgic. He was on the UNLV cheer team when the Runnin' Rebels brought home that title, and in recent years had been swept up in the enthusiasm over the team's winning record. Being a professional car buff, he knew just how to show his pride. The owner of MustangDepot.com, which helps enthusiasts trick out their cars, transformed his own 2010 Mustang into "The Rebellion."

Jacquemoud started the MustangDepot in 1998, while he was working in the hospitality industry. The timing was right for the Internet-based company, and soon Jacquemoud's sideline turned into a full-time operation. Annual sales have grown from about \$100,000 in 2000 to more than \$2 million today, and the company is expanding with HotRodDepot.com and OffRoadDepot.com.



## MAKING THE COMPLEX SIMPLE

Ortega found herself in the industry when she graduated from Harrah Hotel College in 1991. She started as a financial analyst, one of two students accepted into the Mirage's management training program. She did a stint in the '90s running a failed project for hotel management software with Microsoft, which would have run every aspect of the hotel including automatically setting daily room rates. It collapsed, she says, because it was too complex.

She learned a lot from that, gaining the insights that "You have to do things really simple when they're on a huge scale," and also that, "You shouldn't try to do everything all at once. Everything has a phase two and a phase three."

Those lessons were first in her mind when, after running the finances of the Mirage, she was promoted to senior vice president in 2006 (one of only 25 in a company that employs 40,000 people in Las Vegas alone) and given the task of launching a corporate division to green MGM Mirage and its latest, hugely ambitious project.

Ortega says that UNLV prepared her well for her job and the workplace, perhaps better than any other school could have. At the Hotel College, she learned from the leading experts in the field. She says UNLV graduates complement their academic and communication skills with a stronger work ethic than students from other schools.

"And remember that I interview and hire college graduates every year," Ortega says.

That's why two of her own children, ages 20 and 23, are attending UNLV.

## NOTES

**Jim Mikula**, '78 BS Hotel Administration, is general manager of Hotel Baronette in Novi, Mich. He has been busy renovating and rebranding the hotel to become The Baronette, a Renaissance Hotel. He lives in Northville.

**Richard Pipkins**, '78 BA History, is a lawyer and expert in the protection of intellectual property, compliance with state and federal regulatory law related to information technology, as well as computer network design and network security. He received his law degree from the University of Southern California Law Center in 1982 and worked on the massive MGM and Las Vegas Hilton fire cases. He also served as a deputy district attorney. In 1989 he was a post-graduate student at Harvard Business School. He subsequently earned the Microsoft certified systems engineer credential. In 2006 he received the certified information systems security professional credential, which was renewed last year. He lives in Henderson.

**Duane Rosa**, '79 BS Hotel Administration, '81 MA Economics, is a professor of economics and director of the Texas Transportation Institute at West Texas A&M University. His research includes journal articles and sponsored state/federal grants in the field of transportation and alternative energy. He served as a Fulbright professor at the University of Iceland in 1992-93. There he researched geothermal power production. He lives in Amarillo.

## 1980s

**Jim Luce**, '80 BS Hotel Administration, is executive vice president of sales and marketing for Amneal Pharmaceuticals, the 11<sup>th</sup> largest generic pharmaceutical manufacturer in the country. He and his wife, Gale, have two daughters, Taylor and Denae, and a son, Bryn. His hobbies include playing ultimate Frisbee, riding mountain bikes, and traveling. The family lives in Coto de Caza, Calif.

**George McGann**, '81 BS Hotel Administration, is vice president, managing director of Pyramid Hotel Group and general manager of the Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel and Conference Center.

**Deborah Levy**, '82 BS Business Administration, and her daughter, **Sarah Levy**, '05 BS Hotel Administration, own Art Starts Here, an art school for students of all ages. Sarah also is pursuing a master's degree in special education at UNLV. They recently moved the business to Summerlin and expanded the programming to include classes, workshops, and birthday parties. Deborah's other daughter is **Jenna Levy**, '09 MS Kinesiology. Deborah



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volunteers with several nonprofit groups, including Boys & Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, and Junior League of Las Vegas. Her hobbies are attending UNLV sporting events and spending time in Brian Head, Utah.

**Dolores Nast**, '83 BS Business Administration, '88 MBA, worked several years as a civil draftsman for the city of Las Vegas, the Nevada Test Site, and the city of Flint, Mich. She later was a plans checker for the city of Las Vegas. Since 1996 her art has been exhibited in more than 40 venues. She has received seven Nevada Art Council Jackpot grants and an honorable mention fellowship. Her husband, John, died last year. She has two living children, Johnny and Janet; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. A second son, Karl, died in 2003.

**Randy Hockfeld**, '84 BA Communication Studies, is district sales manager for R.H. Donnelley/Dex Media. His hobbies are bicycling, swimming, and attending sporting events, especially UNLV basketball and football games and those involving his daughter. He lives in Henderson.

**Lisa Smyth**, '84 BS Information Systems, is a system administrator with Aerospace Testing Alliance. She has one son and one daughter. Her hobbies are swimming and traveling. She lives in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

**Kevin Hedden**, '85 BS Hotel Administration, '02 JD, is an attorney with the Nevada Attorney for Injured Workers, representing clients in their workers' compensation appeals. His hobby is attending UNLV athletic events. His wife is **Judith Long Hedden**, '83 BS Hotel Administration. Their oldest son is a computer science major at UNLV. The family lives in Henderson.

**Bruce Ford**, '86 BS Business Administration, recently was hired by City National Bank as vice president and Nevada business banking manager in its Core Banking Division. He works with the branch managers and staff of eight branches to develop business opportunities with small- and medium-size companies. He has served in a variety of positions in the banking industry during the past 26 years and was regional president and chief operating officer of Community Bank of Nevada. He is a graduate of the School of Retail Bank Management at the University of Virginia and the Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington. He is a member of the UNLV Alumni Association Finance Committee and the Nevada Development Authority Recruitment Committee.

**Shannon Hume Shogren**, '87 BA History, is a home-educating mom who also works part time as a branch aide at a

# 2 REBELS 4 MISS USA

**T**wo Rebels will be among the women competing for the Miss USA crown this year. Claire Schreiner and Emily Anne Miller will have a hometown crowd rooting for them when the competition is held May 16 at the Planet Hollywood theater.



"Last year, I interned at ESPN for Kenny Mayne, and I really liked being part of the broadcast world. But I have to admit my secret love is soap operas. I would love to act in them." — Claire Schreiner



"I'll move to Los Angeles to pursue acting. It's also always been my dream to be a Radio City Rockette, so I plan to try out for the holiday extravaganza." — Emily Anne Miller



# Claire Schreiner

'09 BA Journalism and Media Studies

## Miss Wyoming USA

**Got my start:** Being from Wyoming, the opportunities in the entertainment industry are limited. I started competing in pageants and got the pageant bug.

**Favorite part of the competition:** I love the interview. I don't stress about having the "right" answer. It's more about letting the judges see your personality.

**Least favorite:** Not being able to eat cupcakes. The final question is also nerve-wracking. It always seems to provide the YouTube moment of the year. I'm praying that I am not that girl.

**People would be surprised to know:** It's both physically and mentally demanding. For the mental side, I journal every day. I also keep up on current events so I'm confident going into the interview.

**UNLV experience:** I came here on a scholarship for high jumping. That taught me some skills — time-management, hard work, how to prepare physically — and has helped me prepare for the pageant.

**Post-pageant plans:** Last year, I interned at ESPN for Kenny Mayne (a fellow alumnus, '82 BA Communication Studies), and I really liked being part of the broadcast world. But I have to admit my secret love is soap operas. I would love to act in them.



# Emily Anne Miller

UNLV senior, majoring in dance

## Miss South Dakota USA

**Got my start:** When I was in second grade, I discovered I was dyslexic. So as an incentive to achieve good grades, my parents told me I could do any activity I wanted. I had just watched a pageant on TV, and that just popped out of my mouth.

**Favorite part of the competition:** It's kind of weird but I really love the swimsuit portion because it's all about showing your confidence. If you can feel great walking across a stage in heels and a swimsuit, you can do just about anything.

**Least favorite:** Trying to get the glue off that holds your swimsuit in place. It takes days.

**People don't realize:** That Miss USA and Miss America are two different pageants. Miss USA goes on to compete in the Miss Universe pageant.

**UNLV experience:** I think coming here was the best decision I've ever made. The dance department is well-connected, and I've had the chance to perform regularly and to travel overseas to Australia and South Korea. I hope now to go on to Miss Universe.

**Post-pageant plans:** I'll move to Los Angeles to pursue acting. It's also always been my dream to be a Radio City Rockette, so I plan to try out for the holiday extravaganza.



## NOTES

library. She previously was an administrative law judge. Her family includes her husband, Bob, and three daughters, Erin, Ashley, and Abigail, and one son, **Carnell Johnson**, '06 Bachelor of Music. Carnell is married to, **Kayla Keep Johnson**, '05 Bachelor of Music. Shannon sings in and serves on the board of a community chorale, helps with the musical direction of the local summer youth theater program and serves on its board, and helps run the local homeschool co-op and serves on its board. She serves on her county's planning commission, directs the choir at her church, and teaches Sunday school. The family lives in Cambridge, Minn.

**James Adamson III**, '88 BSBA Management, is the Pacific Northwest general manager for G&K Services Inc. He and his wife, Vicky, have three children, James, Gabby, and Maddie. They live in Sammamish, Wash.

**Ed Conway**, '88 MS Hotel Administration, is general manager of Sedona Rouge Hotel & Spa in Arizona. He recently expanded the spa, which now has 10 treatment rooms, and is seeking the zoning necessary to expand the number of resort rooms to 109 from 77. He lives in Cornville.

**Mary Beth Cutshall**, '88 BS Hotel Administration, is director of business development for Hotel Equities, an Atlanta-based, full-scale hotel management, development, and consulting firm with a current portfolio of 44 hotels under management. The portfolio includes select service properties with Marriott, Hilton, IHG, Best Western, LaQuinta, and Choice as well as an independent full-service conference center. Since joining the company in 2004 she has spearheaded efforts to grow the company's portfolio to 30 from 14 operated properties and placed an additional 14 properties in the pipeline through the takeover of existing hotels and new development. Previously, she worked for Marriott and Starwood and managed her own marketing and sales consulting firm. The mother of two enjoys running, reading, cooking, and traveling.

**Susan Cunningham Ward**, '89 BS Chemistry, is an environmental consultant and the Nevada affiliate chair for the Lyme Disease United Coalition. She says she has found her life's calling in working to increase awareness of Lyme disease and to prevent its spread in Nevada. She and her husband, **Steven Ward**, '94 MS Chemistry, became active in the cause after he was bitten by a Western black-legged tick in 2004 and then diagnosed with Lyme disease four years later. In 2009, he was placed on full disability. His career had included a variety of chemistry-



NOTES  
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related jobs, including working on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Love Canal project. Susan also held a number of jobs in the chemistry field and worked for Nevada's U.S. Sen. Harry Reid in his Washington, D.C., office. The couple was active with Habitat for Humanity while living in Wyoming. They met while working at what today is UNLV's Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies.

## 1990s

**Randy Boesch**, '90 BS Business Administration, works for City National Bank as senior vice president and manager of its private client service group in Nevada. He oversees client service and retention, business development, and investment management for the bank's high net-worth clients. He has more than 35 years of experience in various financial services positions, most recently serving as president and CEO of Red Rock Community Bank. He is a member of the UNLV Alumni Association and the Rotary Club of Las Vegas. He has served on the boards of a number of nonprofit organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs and Southern Nevada Clean Communities.

**Mike Murrell**, '90 BA Hotel Administration, is an agent for State Farm Insurance & Financial Services. He is licensed in health, life, property, and casualty insurance. He also is licensed to sell State Farm mutual funds, IRAs, and college savings plans. He is married and has three sons and three daughters. He lives in La Quinta, Calif.

**Russell Rowe**, '90 BA Political Science, is an attorney and shareholder with Kaempfer Crowell. He specializes in government affairs, land use, and administrative law. He and his wife, **Christine Lee Rowe**, '95 BA French, '01 MS Counseling, have two daughters, Juliette and Caroline. He is a board member of the UNLV Alumni Association, the Nevada Development Authority, Clinics in Schools, Aid for AIDS of Nevada, and the Urban Land Institute-Nevada. The family lives in Henderson.

**Antonio Castanon**, '91 BS Business Administration, is an executive vice president of Citigroup, and responsible for Citi Private Label credit card operations. He serves as chairman of the board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Kansas City area. He has three children, Amanda, 22, Kelsey, 19, and Jacob, 16. The family lives in Westwood, Kan.

**Jeffrey Geihs**, '91 BA Communications, is vice president and chief operations officer at the Public Education Foundation. His previous jobs with the Clark County School District (CCSD) included being an English teacher and department coordinator, dean of students, assistant principal, chief of staff to a regional superintendent, and principal of Cheyenne High School, where he was inducted into the CCSD Hall of Fame in 2008 and named Nevada High School Principal of the Year in 2009. He and his wife, **Mindy Malloy Geihs**, '94 BS Education, are the parents of Madison and David. He enjoys occasionally playing a round of golf.

**Shakeh Ghoukassian**, '91 Master of Music, is a longtime faculty member of the Nevada School of the Arts. In 2007, she was appointed as dean/executive director of the school. She also is the principal second violinist of the Las Vegas Philharmonic. Her husband, **Haik Goomroyan**, is facilities manager of UNLV's Ham Fine Arts Building and Beam Music Center. They have one son. Her hobbies are reading and cooking. The family lives in Henderson.

**Libia Taylor**, '91 BS Hotel and Restaurant Management, is broker/owner of Boardwalk Realty of NW Florida. She is a real estate broker for second homes and investment properties in the "Forgotten Coast" area of Florida. She is a member of the Gulf County Arts Alliance Association, the Forgotten Coast Cultural Coalition, and Plein Air. She is married and has one son. Her hobbies are art appreciation, kayaking, traveling, cooking, and wine tasting. The family lives in Port Saint Joe.

**Lyra Beck Hynie**, '93 BS Hotel Administration, is a revenue contractor. She works remotely from home and handles properties in Beverly Hills and Palm Springs, Calif. She was married two years ago in Key West, Fla. She lives in North Las Vegas.

**Andrew Lane**, '93 BS Hotel Administration, is a Gaming Control Board agent. He is married and has two children.

**Cathy Planchard**, '93 BS Business Administration, '93 BA Communications, '97 MBA, is a principal in and the group director of public relations for Mindspace, a full-service marketing firm in Phoenix. She leads the public relations functions for a variety of clients, including LifeLock, Hilton, Catholic Healthcare, PremierGarage, and Elluminate. She serves on the boards of the Junior League of Phoenix and the Public Relations Society of America. Her hobbies include traveling, cooking, gardening, and reading. She is married and lives in Tempe.

**Krista Rhea**, '93 BS Hotel Administration, is a flight attendant instructor for United Airlines. Two years ago she married Nelson Gedeon in the rose garden at UNLV. Their first child, son Nolan Rhea Gedeon, was born Nov. 1. The family lives in Chicago.

**Jennifer Godfrey**, '94 BA Communications, is CEO and team leader of Keller Williams Realty. Previously, she was regional accounts manager of Reed Business Information and contracts administrator for Silicon Graphics. Her hobbies include hiking, skiing, skating, horseback riding, sailing, and gardening. She and her boyfriend, Justin Seymour, have six pets. She lives in Franklin, Tenn.

**Kevin Moy**, '94 BS Hotel Administration, is an independent strength and conditioning coach focused on enhancing the performance of golfers. He lives in San Francisco.

**Evelyn Ramos**, '94 BS Hotel Administration, is executive manager of special events at the American Gem Society in Las Vegas. The association is dedicated to setting and maintaining the highest possible standards of business ethics and professionalism in the jewelry industry. Previously, she was director of catering sales for Wolfgang Puck Catering at the Springs Preserve in Las Vegas.

**Dorie Groudan**, '95 BS Hotel Administration, was recruited by CLI Groups, a premier destination management company based in Las Vegas, as their national sales manager last year. She provides travel coordination and event planning services to corporate incentive and convention groups of all sizes.

**Jeffrey "Buck" Lawrence**, '95 BA Communications, '99 MA Communications, is an assistant professor of speech & communication as well as the program chairperson of communication and social & behavioral sciences at Ivy Tech Community College in Columbus, Ind. His hobbies are fishing, hunting, camping, collecting sports and entertainment memorabilia, following sports, doing home improvements, reading biographies, and watching classic films. His wife's name is Linda. He has two nephews, Tony and Eric, who he says are like sons to him; a stepdaughter, Lauren; and a grandson, Joshua.

**Zane Marshall**, '96 BA Environmental Studies, '06 MA Science, is a resources division manager with the Southern Nevada Water Authority. He has spent 14 years with the agency, working on water resource planning and environmental compliance for large water infrastructure. His hobbies include

cycling, diving, hiking, camping, reading, and bird watching. He has been married 10 years and has two sons. The family lives in Henderson.

**Jim Maland**, '97 BS Electrical Engineering, is a systems engineer for Raytheon Missile Systems. His projects include algorithm development for tracking/association/pattern-matching systems across a variety of missile, system design, performance vs. cost-tradeoff analysis, and advanced reasoning/artificial intelligence research. His adventures over the years include paragliding and canyoning in the Swiss Alps, skydiving, running in half marathons and one marathon, and competing in a triathlon. He is married and lives in Tucson, Ariz.

**Tiffannie Bond**, '98 BA Communications, is a recreation assistant in the marketing section of the Clark County parks and recreation department. She also is a freelance writer and teaches a children's hip-hop dance team. Previously, she wrote for the *Magazine of Summerlin* and the *View* community newspapers. Photography is her hobby. She lives in Henderson.

**Valerie Miller**, '98 BA Communications, a reporter for the *Las Vegas Business Press*, received four journalism awards in the 2009 Nevada Press Association Better Newspaper Contest. Her story "City Cuts Some Structural Reviews" won first place in the business news story category. "Closing Time," which focused on how some businesses are cutting both workers and hours in order to survive, won best business feature story. She received a second-place award in the best investigative or in-depth story or series category for her series on the smoking ban. She also took third-place honors in the best business news story category for "Win 4 Charity Executive Accused in Lawsuit."

**John Valentine**, '98 BS Biology, is the West Coast area manager of training for Forest Laboratories in Salt Lake City. He joined the company in 2000 and has worked in several different positions, including sales representative, divisional manager, and regional sales trainer. Previously, he worked for PDI and Astra Pharmaceuticals. His hobbies include mixed martial arts and submission grappling, a form of wrestling. He and his wife, Shari, have two young sons, Kyle and JT. The family lives in Draper.

**Heather Hamilton Valera**, '98 BA Communication Studies, is director of marketing for the Galleria at Sunset mall. She has focused the marketing efforts toward building programs and partnerships with various community

organizations. The mall hosts more than 100 community group events each year. She served as an event organizer for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle and Angel Tree programs, SAFE House's annual 1K Walk, and the annual boot drive for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Henderson Fire Department. She serves on the board of the UNLV Alumni Association. Her husband, **Luis Valera**, '98 BA Political Science, '05 JD, serves as UNLV's director of government relations. They have 7-year-old twins, Mason and Avery. The family lives in Henderson.

**Roni Benenson de Sterin**, '99 BS Hotel Administration, is global marketing communications manager for the Stockton Group, which has developed a natural/organic biopesticide. She worked as a sales manager at Caesars Palace for several years before moving back to Israel in 2006. In Israel she has worked for both Lexus and for Netafim, an agricultural company. She married David Sterin in Tel Aviv last year.

**Elliot Dubin**, '99 BS Hotel Administration, is attending law school at Northern Illinois University. He lives in Sycamore.

## 2000s

**Chris Koliatsis**, '00 BS Business Administration, is a senior financial analyst for the General Board of Pension and Health Services of the United Methodist Church. He aspires to be a chief financial officer of a major casino someday. His hobbies include running, traveling, listening to a variety of music, watching movies, and playing sports. He lives in Chicago.

**Pamela Graves Longley**, '00 MS Sport & Leisure Service Management, is president and chief operating officer of Clic Media Bistro. Her company is a boutique media and idea bistro that works to develop cost-efficient and cutting-edge media and marketing campaigns for clients. She married Brendon Longley in 2009. They live in Kamas, Utah.

**Joseph Wagner**, '00 BS Hotel Administration, is the director of VIP operations for the Venetian and Palazzo. The Venetian is the world's largest five-diamond resort.

**Thomas Anschutz**, '01 BS Hotel Administration, earned his law degree from the University of Nebraska in 2004. He now is a counsel attorney in the labor and employment group of Spencer Fane Britt & Browne in Omaha. He represents employers in traditional labor and employment issues. He lives in Plattsmouth.



**Marissa Geffen Temple**, '01 BA Communications, '04 JD, is an associate staff attorney with American Family Insurance. Running marathons is her hobby.

**Adam Lopez**, '02 BS Hotel Administration, works as the fleet slot manager at Crystal Cruises in the Louisville, Ky., area. Some of his accomplishments include being selected to take over the slot operations for Crystal Cruises, contributing to the new casino layout and networking system, successfully increasing revenue by 15 percent, and designing a part-ordering and supply process that allows Crystal Cruises to be fully operational anywhere in the world. He lives in Jeffersonville, Ind.

**Joe Lucchese**, '02 BS Hotel Administration, recently toured with U2, hosting VIP events and consumer engagements for BlackBerry, the tour's concert sponsor. He is the founder of EventJoe, an event and tour management company based in Las Vegas and Chicago. He lives in Elmhurst, Ill.

**Yassine Lyoubi**, '02 BS Hotel Administration, is the managing partner of the Lyoubi Group. He holds his real estate license. While still doing sales, he partnered with an associate and started an investment business specializing in flipping distressed properties. Previously, he worked with Lettuce Entertain You restaurants, managing Mon Ami Gabi at the Paris Hotel and opening Café Ba Ba Reeba at the Fashion Show mall. Hobbies include playing soccer and spending time in Morocco with family and friends.

**Jason Wyatt**, '02 BS Health Education, is a teacher with the Humble Independent School District. He has been a special education teacher for

seven years and also an eighth-grade science teacher. Additionally, he is a party time disc jockey. His hobbies include playing sports, traveling, music, golf, and mentoring at-risk youths. He lives in Houston.

**Rebecca Gowing**, '03 MS Physical Education, is a legal assistant for Clark County. She is the mother of a 1-year-old.

**Tony Timmons**, '03 BS Business Administration, is a market development manager for CenturyLink. He focuses on Hispanic marketing and outreach in Southern Nevada.

**Cammy Brunold**, '04 BS Hotel Administration, is self-employed as a Mona Vie distributor. She has two daughters in high school, Tiffany and Kristen. Both are considering attending UNLV. Her hobbies include reading and relaxing with her cat, Cupid. She lives in Pahrump.

**Jennifer Kern**, '04 BS Business Administration, is an account supervisor with Euro RSCG, an advertising agency focused on web development and branding. Her hobbies include photography, wine tasting, city exploration, volunteering, and studying social/tech trending. She lives in San Francisco.

**Fernando Avila**, '05 BS Physical Education, is a real estate broker with Atlas Group. He is married and has two daughters. His hobbies include music, sports, and soccer.

**Gina-Marie Nissen**, '05 BA Journalism & Media Studies, is a marketing manager for Medco Health Solutions. She became engaged to **Jonathan Strong**, '08 BS Culinary Arts Management, in November while on vacation in New York City.

## New job? Expanded the family?

Submit your Class Notes to UNLV Magazine at [myupdate.unlv.edu](http://myupdate.unlv.edu)

**Lyle Persch III**, '05 BA Psychology, '05 BA Criminal Justice, is married and has had three children, one of whom is living. His hobbies include vintage cars and vintage Lionel trains.

**Katie Shipp**, '05 BA Communication, is the creative director at New Community Church. She also is a singer and songwriter. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in art at UNLV. Her hobbies include music, graphic design, and writing. She lives in Henderson.

**Nicole Suzuki-Uyeno**, '05 BS Kinesiological Sciences, received her MS degree in occupational therapy from Touro University in May. She works as an occupational therapist at Silver Hills Healthcare Center. She lives in Henderson.

**Heather Willden**, '05 BS Hotel Administration, teaches tourism and meeting & event planning courses at UNLV. Her research interests include the use of social media and online learning as they relate to meetings, events, and nonprofit organizations. She recently married Carl VanHoose and has a 13-year-old daughter, Taylor.

**James Jackson**, '06 Ph.D. Political Science, is president of Ferox Inc., which handles the manufacturing and importing of promotional toys and tools from China. His hobbies include traveling, outdoor activities, and sports.

**Junilla Kershner**, '06 BA Criminal Justice, earned her law degree from

the University of Miami. She works for the law firm of Fowler, White, Burnett, practicing primarily in the field of medical malpractice defense. Her hobbies include travel, cooking, concerts, going to the beach, and taking road trips. She lives in Miami.

**Aaron Morales**, '06 BS Kinesiological Sciences, is the owner of Lifetime Fitness Solutions, an in-home personal training business. He started the company in 2008. He also is pursuing a doctoral degree in physical therapy from the University of Connecticut. He lives in Ashford.

**Matt Higginson**, '07 BS Hotel Administration, is front office manager for Welk Resorts, which owns and operates four luxury resorts located in San Diego; Palm Springs, Calif.; Missouri; and Los Cabos, Mexico. He also is cofounder and vice president of operations for PictureThis! Event Services, which is based in Utah and has affiliates in Orange County, Calif.; San Diego; San Francisco; New York; Philadelphia; and Phoenix. The company specializes in online customization and event management tools coupled with on-site social media hubs that serve as a bridge from pre- to post-event. He lives in San Diego.

**Adrian Huerta**, '07 BS Human Services Counseling, is an academic advisor at the University of Southern California. He earned a master's degree in higher education administration from Ohio State University. He lives in El Monte.

**Brian Karnik**, '07 MA Economics, is a business line data analyst for Commerce Bank. He is pursuing an MBA at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. He lives in Overland Park, Kan.

**T.J. Milner**, '07 BS Business Administration, is an accountant with Reeves, Evans, McBride & Zhang. His hobbies include baseball, basketball, golf, and nightlife.

**Kaitlin Riggio**, '07 BS Culinary Management, is a hotel manager at Caesars Palace. She recently received recognition in *MeetingNews* magazine as one of the nation's "Ones to Watch: 30 Under 30." She is vice chair of the American Hotel & Lodging Association's Under 30 Gateway Council and chair for the Nevada Hotel & Lodging Association's Under 30 Gateway Council.

## NOTES

**Sian Robertson**, '07 BS Business Administration, is a revenue accountant for Peter Lik USA Corp. She audits the daily revenue of the 13 Peter Lik galleries around the world, performs cash reconciliations, and prepares balance sheets. She lives in North Las Vegas.

**Yolanda Tuttle-Williams**, '07 BS Hotel Administration, was accepted into the accelerated master's of tourism administration program at George Washington University.

**Adrianna Jiron Carpio**, '08 BS Gaming Management, is a casino floor supervisor at Caesars Palace. Upon graduating she was recruited by Harrah's Entertainment for a new program in table games. The program consisted of learning and dealing all of the games in a short span of time. Participants then shadowed various floor supervisors to learn the supervisory aspects.

**Rodolfo Castro**, '08 MS Nursing, is a member of the nursing staff in a telemetry unit at White Memorial Medical Center. His hobbies are reading and golf. He lives in Glendale, Calif.

**Nina Hassing**, '08 BS Hotel Administration, moved to Singapore for a management trainee position with the new St. Regis Hotel in October 2008. Within a year, she was promoted to assistant manager of the spa.

**Thomas Ryberg**, '08 M.Ed. Special Education, is a third-year seminarian at Chicago Theological Seminary and a pastoral intern at St. Paul's United Church of Christ. He is married to **Andria Ryberg**, '07 M.Ed. Secondary Instruction and Curriculum.

**Robert Gaines**, '09 BS Hotel Administration, is the Internet marketing specialist at the Las Vegas Hilton. His job involves creating and developing social media outlets. In July, he hosted a TweetUp with alumnus **Peter Arceo**, '96 BS Hotel Administration. The event was covered by KVBC, channel 3.

**Matthew Mayhood**, '09 BA Journalism & Media Studies, is a newscast director at KVBC, channel 3. He began working there while in college and has held a variety of positions, including those involving camera operation, on-air graphics, and technical directing. An alumnus of Foothill High School, he volunteers with the school's broadcast journalism program. He lives in Henderson.

**Maggie Vazquez**, '09 BS Hotel Administration, is a PBX operator at the Wyndham Grand Desert. She was hired in August.

## DEATHS

**Barbara Cloud**, former associate provost for academic affairs and emerita professor of journalism and media studies, died Dec. 24. She specialized in the history of journalism in the American West and media law. She served as president of the American Journalism History Association in the mid 1980s and edited and published *Journalism History* from 1992 to 2001. Since 2003, she compiled the Books section for *UNLV Magazine*. At the time of her death, she was researching a biography of Las Vegas newspaper pioneer C.P. "Pop" Squires and teaching a class on women and the media. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, emeritus professor of physics Stan Cloud, and a sister.

**R. Keith Schwer**, director of UNLV's Center for Business and Economic Research and professor of economics, died Dec. 2. He joined UNLV in 1986 and had become a recognized authority on the business and economic environment of Las Vegas and the region. He is survived by his wife, Kaye; three daughters, Nancy Archambault, Amanda Schwer, and Michelle Nicholl; three grandchildren; his parents; and a sister. (Read more about Schwer on page 18.)





## How Did Our Garden Grow?

When the xeric garden outside the Marjorie Barrick Museum was installed two decades ago, water-efficient landscaping just wasn't the fashion. *Replace large swaths of grass with prickly cactus?* The idea was not embraced. And administrators rejected the proposed location along Maryland Parkway.

But Don Baepler, former UNLV president and higher education chancellor, became a low-key champion.

The project likely appealed to Baepler, the ornithologist, says Dennis Swartzell, who oversaw UNLV's grounds at the time. "I think Don had a sneaking suspicion that the plants would attract birds he hadn't seen on campus before, and in time it certainly did," Swartzell says.

At the time, Baepler was director of the museum and suggested making the garden an extension of the Barrick.

Swartzell conceived the garden and local landscape architect Jack Zunino designed it for free. A number of local businesses donated materials and volunteered labor. "After the grass was killed and the irrigation put in, however, I couldn't get a soul to come back out," Swartzell says. "It was going to be a shameful thing for me to have that unfinished patch of dirt in the middle of campus." In stepped Baepler, who approved using museum funding to cover some of the labor costs.

Baepler died in May 2008, and the garden has since been renamed in his memory.

[Photo by R. Marsh Starks]

**More online:** Wondering how the Donald H. Baepler Xeric Garden has evolved since you graduated? View a slideshow and learn more about its plants at [barrickmuseum.unlv.edu](http://barrickmuseum.unlv.edu).



# THANK YOU

UNLV has received more than 78,000 gifts and has surpassed the \$500 million goal of this historic campaign. We are grateful to alumni, friends, and community members who have partnered with the UNLV Foundation to invent the future.



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