

# Faculty Chat



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## It started with a simple fungus. . .

As I watched Ryan Day accept the Founders Medal on the graduation stage, I remembered with a chuckle the first day he walked into my office as a lanky, unassuming freshman. “Ryan,” I asked, “What are you planning to do with your life, and why are you planning to do it?” The exact answer he gave escapes my memory; he said something about helping other people, wanting to go to medical school, and being interested in the workings of living things. “How do you feel about fungi?” was my next question; when he didn’t flee my office in fright or laughter, I knew I had my next victim—er, research student.

I’m always searching for converts to the world of fungal genetics. I saw in Ryan a desire to learn how and why living systems function, not just a desire to memorize what they do. He had the hallmarks of a good researcher: He always asked questions and was great at solving problems. Ryan had no idea that he could merge his interest in helping others as a physician with his insatiable curiosity.

My task was to help him discover that he could do this by working toward an M.D./Ph.D. after he finished at Millsaps, and I used those wonderful fungi as a lure. Three years later, he’d completed an honors thesis, constructed numerous fungal strains, and presented his work at a national meeting in Washington, D.C. When I received a phone call from the M.D./Ph.D. program at Washington University School of Medicine asking if we had any more students to send to their program, Ryan’s was the first name that came to mind.

One of my former research students, Suzanne Wahrle, was midway through her M.D./Ph.D. at Washington University in St. Louis, and the school was so impressed with her work that the admissions recruiters were hoping for more Millsaps students. Washington University has one of the

best M.D./Ph.D. programs in the nation; admission is extremely competitive. When I asked what made the university so interested in Millsaps students, the answer was simple: Our students know how to ask questions, perform properly controlled experiments, and analyze the results. They know how to think, they work hard, and because they’ve had an intense undergraduate research experience, they have a good idea of what they’re undertaking.

Ryan is just beginning the M.D./Ph.D. program at Washington University, and Suzanne is nearly finished. Both are examples of how involvement in undergraduate research can enlighten a student and shape his or her future career. My first undergraduate research students are now completing their degrees and entering the workforce—from those who obtained their M.D.’s and are pediatricians, orthopedists, and family doctors, to those who obtained their Ph.D.’s and are doing research and grant-proposal writing, to the student who obtained a Ph.D. and J.D. and is a patent lawyer for a biotech firm. All are using their problem-solving skills; all constantly amaze me.

Regardless of the division or department of the College, undergraduate research is a vital part of the Millsaps culture; it opens doors and illuminates paths. There are numerous opportunities in the sciences for field research and lab research. Our faculty members direct research programs that are nationally recognized, and our colleagues at larger institutions are often astounded by what undergraduate students can accomplish. More astounding, however, is what undergraduate students can comprehend and how they use their creativity to solve problems. Every Millsaps College faculty member who directs a research program has stories like Ryan’s and Suzanne’s, or they’ve just begun and will soon have such stories. Mentoring undergraduate research is one of the most rewarding experiences we have as teachers. If I can just find my next victim, the fun with fungi can continue. I hope it never ends.

# Faculty & Staff

## Humanities Council honors Hopkins with 2007 teacher award

Dr. Patrick Hopkins, associate professor of philosophy, was awarded the 2007 Humanities Teacher Award by the Mississippi Humanities Council in

October. As the Humanities Teacher Award recipient, Hopkins gave a public lecture, entitled “Unnatural Ethics,” on campus in October.

“Any time someone tells you that you are good enough at what you do to win an award, you have to feel good,” Hopkins

said. “Of course, as a proper self-effacing Southerner, I also have to pooh-pooh it as

nothing to get all excited about.”

Hopkins received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Mississippi and his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. His courses cover material as diverse as ethics, biotechnology, gender studies, history of philosophy, and epistemology. He is working on several scholarly projects, including a book called “Nature, Culture and Technology in Moral and Political Discourse.”

“Dr. Hopkins is widely respected at Millsaps for his intellect and incisive questions,” said Dr. Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the College. “He is a great teacher with a special gift for framing questions about ethics and other complex issues in ways that engage and excite students.”

The Humanities Teacher Awards, given to one humanities faculty member at each institution of higher learning in Mississippi, are distributed in October to commemorate Arts and Humanities Month. The title carries a cash prize of \$500, which is matched by the nominating institution, which provides promotional costs and a reception following the public presentation.

—Margaret Cahoon



## New faculty: Oriented toward teaching

New faculty orientation took place in August and included: (front, from left) Alexis Manheim, coordinator of library acquisitions and cataloguing; Jeannie-Marie Brown, assistant professor of theatre; Melissa Lea, assistant professor of psychology; Brent Fogt, assistant professor of art; Cory Conover, visiting instructor of history; Zachary Musselman, assistant professor of geology; (back) Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the College; Daniel Turkeltaub, assistant professor of classics; Nicholas Brown, visiting instructor of history; Markus Tellkamp, assistant professor of biology; and James Pfrehm, visiting assistant professor of German. Not pictured is Ledora Harris, assistant professor of education.

## Bey and Galaty win National Science Foundation awards

Dr. George Bey and Dr. Michael Galaty, professors in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, have won prestigious awards from the National Science Foundation, an agency of the federal government.

Bey received a senior archaeology research grant with his colleague William Ringle (Davidson College) for research to be conducted at the site of Kiuic in Yucatán, Mexico. Kiuic is a large, well-preserved Maya city that sits at the center of Millsaps College's



Helen Moyers Biocultural Reserve. Kiuic, which spans all phases of Maya civilization, is ideal for studying the early periods of Maya state formation (circa 800 B.C.). The grant included money from the Research

Experience for Undergraduates to support student participation.

Galaty received a senior archaeology research grant from the National Science Foundation for research conducted in northern highland Albania during the summer of 2007. Galaty and a team of international collaborators have been studying



the history of settlement in the Shala Valley, home to the Shala tribe. In 2005 they discovered a previously unknown Bronze-Iron Age fortified site called Grunas (circa 1000 B.C.).

Galaty is excavating the site with the help of Millsaps students. The discovery of Grunas was featured in *USA Today* in September.

In addition, Galaty received an International Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, also an agency of the federal government. This grant will allow American and Albanian historians working with Galaty to do research in archives

in Washington, D.C., London, Vienna, Istanbul, Venice, the Vatican, and Shkodër and Tirana, Albania, where they hope to gain access to documents related to the Shala Valley dating to the Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern periods.

"NSF and NEH grants are extremely difficult to get," said Dr. Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the College. "The fact that professors Bey and Galaty received grants in the same year is an extraordinary accomplishment; indeed, I suspect there is no other undergraduate sociology/anthropology department in the nation in which two members of the same department in the same year received NSF funding.

"But what's even more significant is that such funding creates wonderful opportunities for our undergraduates to be involved in cutting-edge research. These grants therefore help enhance the education we offer our students at Millsaps and ensure that Millsaps remains one of the premier colleges in the region."

—Lisa Purdie



## Presidents briefed on the Millsaps Yucatán initiative

Tomás Gallareta Negrón, center; the Millsaps scholar of Maya studies, was the official guide for President Felipe Calderón of Mexico, left, and President George W. Bush at Uxmal, the pre-Columbian ruins of the Maya city in the Mexican state of Yucatán. Negrón told Dr. George Bey III, professor of anthropology, that he had discussed with Bush and Calderón the unique Mexican/American partnership that Millsaps College and Kaxil Kiuic had created, as well as the College's interest and investment in Yucatán.

# Faculty & Staff

## Arts and Letters

**Carolyn Brown** (English) ran in the Nike Women's Marathon in San Francisco on Oct. 21 as part of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program in Jackson. She has raised more than \$5,000 for the society.

**Brent Fogt** (art) is among 40 artists featured in the 2007 Midwestern edition of *New American Paintings*, "a juried exhibition in print." The juror, Elizabeth Dunbar, curator of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City,



The Camac Centre d'Art in the Champagne region of France, where Greg Miller spent four months.

Missouri, selected Fogt from more than 1,300 entrants. Information about the publication can be found at [www.newamericanpaintings.com](http://www.newamericanpaintings.com).

**Robert Kahn** (modern languages) had a record number of students enrolled in the Costa Rica program this summer. Twenty-six students attended the first session of summer school and 10 the second session, which was added this year in response to the program's earlier popularity.

**Greg Miller** (English) spent four months in residence at the Camac Centre d'Art, an international artists' colony in the Champagne region of France. His book

*George Herbert's 'Holy Patterns': Reforming Individuals in Community*, a study of the 17th-century Anglican poet and priest, was published by Continuum Publishing.

**Darby Ray** (religious studies) published an essay in the edited volume *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians* (Fortress Press, 2007). The book presents 30 major Christian thinkers in relation to the "empires" of their day and considers the implications of their thought for 21st-century life. Ray wrote the chapter on Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). Ray is also joining six other faculty

colleagues from around the country on a Teagle Foundation grant project entitled "The Religion Major and Liberal Education." For that project, Ray wrote a brief article for *Religious Studies News* and was to co-host a daylong workshop and an academic

paper session at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Diego in November.

**Elise Smith** (art) had an article entitled "'Whom the gods love die young': Evelyn De Morgan and the Legend of the Wandering Jew" published in the *British Art Journal* 7.3 (Winter 2006/2007): 29-39. Another article, "'The aged pollard's shade': Gainsborough's *Landscape with Woodcutter and Milkmaid*," is scheduled for publication in *Eighteenth Century Studies* 41.1 (Fall 2007), and an entry on "Marie Hull" will appear in the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and Ted Ownby (forthcoming from the University Press of

Mississippi, 2008). Smith's article "'In the home-garden': The Arbor, Wall, and Gate in Moral Tales for Children" has been accepted by *Children's Literature*.

**Steve Smith** (philosophy) published an article on "Zoroastrianism: The Appeal of the Good Mind" in *Calliope* (November 2006), a young people's world history magazine. Smith also presented "Historical Meaningfulness in Shared Action" to the Mississippi Philosophical Association in Hattiesburg on April 14.

## Else School

**Bill Brister** (finance) and his wife, Liz, took two Millsaps students and 12 Murrah High School boys to New York City over spring break. This trip was part of the Bibles and Basketball program at Broadmeadow United Methodist Church. More than \$10,000 was raised to send these youths to New York. They visited the United Nations, the Ford Foundation, the New York Historical Society, the Museum of Modern Art, and Bill Clinton's offices in Harlem. They also attended a Knicks game.

**Kim Burke** (accounting) co-wrote a paper, "Walking the Tightrope: The Impact of Teaching and Service on Scholarly Productivity for Accountants," with her colleagues **Blakely Fender** (economics) and **Susan Taylor** (economics). It was published in *The Journal of Learning in Higher Education*. It had previously been presented at the Academic Business World Conference in May 2007, where it received a Best Paper Award and Burke received a Best Presentation award.

In October **Walter Neely** (finance) presented a paper entitled "Equity Valuation Using Value Line, the Internet, and Dividend Discount Models" at the Financial Education Association annual meeting in Southampton, Bermuda.

## Science

**Michael Galaty** (sociology-anthropology) received a travel grant from the American Council of Learned Societies to attend the annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Sept. 18–23 in Zadar, Croatia. While there, he presented papers on cultural resource management in Albania and the prehistoric settlement of the Albanian Adriatic coast.

**Ledora Harris** (education) continued her direction of the Millsaps College Principals' Institute this summer and reports that this year's 15th annual event was composed of 63 school administrators and five facilitators from across the state of Mississippi, representing 30 public school districts and six private and/or parochial schools. This same group was to participate in a follow-up session in November. Next summer's institute will be held June 8–13.

**Jim Purser** (chemistry) presented at the southeast regional meeting of the American Chemical Society in October at Greenville, S.C. His presentation was a follow-up to previous presentations at regional and national chemical society meetings. The presentation centers on the inclusion of "Ethics" as a topic in the senior chemistry seminar based upon the society's Chemist Code of Conduct.

**Connie Schimmel** (education) presented results from the Delta Council/Adult Literacy project with Mayor Shirley Allen of Metcalfe, Mississippi, at the 16th Annual National Conference on Family Literacy in March in Orlando, Fla. To date, 28 programs have been completed, serving 132 adult participants from 11 Delta counties. Schimmel also presented at the Illinois Teachers of Hard of Hearing/Deaf Individuals 43rd Annual Conference in Bloomingdale, Ill., in March. The initial results from an ongoing reading program for deaf students in the suburban Chicago public school system were presented.

**Donald Schwartz** (computer science) presented a paper entitled "Service Learning and Software Engineering: Defining and Managing 'Real World' Group Projects," at the 16th International Conference on Software Engineering and Data Engineering (SEDE-07) in Las Vegas this summer. He also served as the session chair for the Software Engineering and Learning session.

## Staff

**John Conway** (campus life) received his master's degree in community counseling from Jackson State University in December 2006. As part of his coursework, he completed a four-month internship at St. Dominic Hospital Behavioral Health Unit in Jackson. In April 2007, Conway was sworn in as a deputy of the Hinds County Sheriff's Office Reserve Unit.

**Nola Gibson, Wanda Manor, and Diane Fleming** (continuing education) conducted the Advanced Placement Institute for high school AP teachers July 13–18 on campus. Three hundred and thirty-three teachers, mostly from Mississippi schools, attended the institute, setting an all-time record. Fourteen College Board-certified instructors from the Southern states conducted the workshops.

In September, **Kathi Griffin** (Writing Center) held the seventh annual Mississippi Writing Centers Association conference, "Writing the Center," attended by administrators, faculty, and tutors from 11 institutions of higher education. The

featured guest was Neal Lerner of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, co-editor of *The Writing Center Journal* and co-author of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, author of more than 20 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on the history, theory, and assessment of teaching writing, and three-time recipient of the International Writing Centers Association Outstanding Scholarship award. He led two workshops that included eight current Millsaps peer writing tutors—Elaine Blaine, Cartier Gwin, Katie Hamm, Ross Leblanc, Amy Marcellus, Michael Mohr, James Rice, and Caroline Stroud, as well as two Millsaps



Bill Brister and his wife, Liz, with Millsaps and Murrah students on a church-sponsored trip to New York.

graduates, Ramsey Wise, B.A. 2006, and Jon-Mark Olivier, B.A. 2007. Griffin also co-lead two workshops, on tutoring strategies and tutor training.

**Isabelle Patterson**, B.A. 1978 (financial aid), along with Ann Hendrick, B.A. 1975, presented "Counseling Students and Families: Tackling Financial Issues" at the Mississippi Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators' fall training event. Isabelle also serves on the association's training committee.