

# Faculty Chat



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**Associate Dean for Arts & Letters**  
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## Celebrating Our Heritage

Forty years ago this year, the vision of a small group of academic entrepreneurs for a full-year interdisciplinary humanities course for freshmen became a reality. The Heritage Program is now a distinctive strength of Millsaps and has provided liberal arts training for more than 4,000 students.

The power and beauty of this original conceptual framework is that Heritage is as relevant today for educating global citizens as it was in 1968. Environmental concerns, financial crises, foreign wars, political divisions, and terrorist attacks are nothing new. Through history, these are the challenges that bring out the best of who we are – the brightest minds, the poetic voices, the creative hands.

True to its mission, today's Heritage is not your mother's Heritage course. Gender issues were incorporated in the 1980s and since 1994, the course embraced a global context for questioning and appreciating the "Heritage of the West." Perspectives from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas help define the origins and natures of the heritages of the West, while encouraging students to appreciate cultural diversity. Instead of faculty presenting pre-packaged facts known as "The Heritage of the West," widely taught since the 1940s in the U. S. as "Western Civilization," students are challenged to ask, "What is Western Civilization? What are the events and cultures that have shaped 'the Western experience'?"

From the core disciplines of the humanities – art, music, philosophy, religion, literature, and history – the Heritage faculty focus on selected moments – the choicest lines, the precious pages, and poignant images in the narrative of human history – to capture the celebrations and tragedies that shape our lives. Heritage provides learning situations in which students can develop skills needed to be

discerning interpreters of information, sensitive leaders, and responsible citizens in a global community. Led by four faculty who model academic inquiry and scholarly debate, freshmen are encouraged to ask deep questions, to engage in careful analysis of texts and images, and to develop effective written and verbal expression.

Although our Heritage Program has been widely emulated and applauded by academic reviews, the most significant praise comes from the faculty and students who have been at the heart of the program since 1968. For most, it has provided a framework for all other types of knowledge accumulated over a lifetime of learning.

As we celebrate 40 years of Heritage, let us also anticipate its future. It must remain true to its original purpose, but employ new technologies, encourage new debates, and explore the frontiers of knowledge. Proposals have been made to expand Heritage beyond its current first-year experience to include a more independent sophomore year experience with language-study and study-abroad opportunities for students who wish to explore a Heritage theme, topic, or question in more depth. Funds will be sought for faculty travel and research to enrich their expertise, both as a team and individually, and prepare them for the demands of this course.

As part of the Millsaps family, you are invited to join us as we celebrate during the spring semester. Musical, artistic, and academic events that capture the Heritage spirit will be highlighted and will culminate in a reunion of former students and faculty in April. A reunion is a most fitting way to celebrate Heritage because it is not just another academic program – we will celebrate and honor what really makes Heritage valuable: the visionaries who conceived it; the faculty who taught it; and the 4,000 alumni who continue to make history every day. This is a Heritage worth celebrating.

*A Friday Forum on April 3 at 12:30 p.m. in the Academic Complex will focus on the Heritage Program.*

# Faculty & Staff

## Assistant Dean receives Professor of the Year award

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education have named Dr. Kimberly Burke at Millsaps College as the 2008 Mississippi Professor of the Year.

Burke, professor of accounting, assistant dean of the Else School of Management and Kelly Gene Cook Chair of Business Administration, is the fifth Millsaps professor to receive the honor. Previous winners are Dr. Sarah Lea McGuire (biology), Dr. Bob McElvaine (history), Dr. Greg Miller (English), and Dr. George Bey III (anthropology).

Burke was selected from nearly 300 top professors in the United States. She has taught at Millsaps College and the Else School of Management since 1995.

"I feel very honored and very grateful to the college for providing a supportive environment where it's possible to flourish as a teacher," Burke said.

Burke teaches undergraduate and graduate auditing, immediate and advanced accounting,

accounting information systems, principles of financial accounting and introduction to liberal studies. She also leads study abroad programs in both Europe and Merida, Mexico. In every subject she teaches, Burke communicates excitement and enthusiasm.

"Dr. Burke is very knowledgeable and loves her students," said Liz Smith, a senior accounting major from Alexandria, La. "She's a lot of fun and is actually concerned about her students' well-being and success."



"Dr. Burke has been an outstanding teacher-scholar since her first days on the Millsaps campus. She exemplifies the model of a Millsaps faculty member with her commitment to teach in a way that motivates students to learn at the highest levels of intellectual exploration," said Dr. Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the college.

CASE and the Carnegie Foundation have been partners in offering Professors of the Year since 1981. TIAA-CREF, one of America's leading financial services organizations and higher education's premier retirement system, became the primary sponsor for the awards ceremony in 2000. Additional support for the program is received from a number of higher education associations, including Phi Beta Kappa.

This year, there are winners in 44 states, the District of Columbia and Guam. CASE assembled two preliminary panels of judges to select finalists. The Carnegie Foundation then convened the third and final panel, which selected four national winners. CASE and Carnegie select state winners from top entries resulting from the judging process.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was founded in 1905 by Andrew Carnegie "to do all things necessary to encourage, uphold and dignify the profession of teaching." The foundation is the only advanced-study center for teachers in the world and the third-oldest foundation in the nation. Its nonprofit research activities are conducted by a small group of distinguished scholars.

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education is the largest international association of education institutions, serving more than 3,400 universities, colleges, schools, and related organizations in 61 countries. CASE is the leading resource for professional development, information, and standards in the fields of educational fundraising, communications, marketing and alumni relations.

— K. P.

## Council honors Millsaps professor



An understanding of the humanities gives students a broader perspective of their contemporary world and provides a wonderful background to

enrich any field of study, said Dr. Laura Franey, the 2008 Humanities Teacher of the Year at Millsaps College.

An associate professor of English and chair of the English department, Franey has taught at Millsaps College since 1999. The Mississippi Humanities Council gives the award each year in celebration of Arts and Humanities Month.

"I try my best to provide students good experiences in the classroom, and I keep striving to improve my techniques and my personal connections with them," Franey said.

In connection with the award, Franey lectured on "That Dreamy Gliding in the Boat: Women's Water Travels in Victorian Literature and Art," at Millsaps in November. She will discuss women's travels by railroad during a Friday Forum on April 24 at 12:30 p.m. in the Academic Complex. This event is free.

"She is well known as an excellent teacher with high standards and a gift for

encouraging classroom discussions and as a conscientious mentor who spends many hours both inside and outside the classroom working with students," said Dr. Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the college. "In addition, she is an accomplished scholar of travel writing and Victorian literature and more recently, Asian-American, Asian-British, and ethnic studies."

Franey's enthusiasm for 19th century literature and an affinity for history, led to her first book, *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British Writing on Africa 1855-1902*, as well as a new edition of Yone Noguchi's *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl*.

"In college, I loved all of my literature and history courses that dealt with the 19th century and the early 20th century, including classes on British imperialism and the Victorian novel," Franey said. "The 19th century seemed so diverse and rich to me that I couldn't help but want to dig deeper."

Franey is working on a book about women's modes of transportation and mobility as portrayed in Victorian prose fiction, narrative poetry, and painting. She received a doctorate degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.

— K. P.

## Marrs moderates panel of writers

Dr. Suzanne Marrs, Millsaps College Welty Foundation Scholar-in-Residence, kicked



off the year-long centennial celebration of Eudora Welty's life and work with a literary symposium in November in New York City. Marrs, author of *Eudora Welty:*

*A Biography* moderated a roundtable discussion that included Richard Ford, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist; Robert MacNeil, journalist and former co-host of "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour"; and Reynolds Price, novelist and recipient of the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York and the Welty Foundation, the symposium Marrs moderated heralded the remounting of Welty's first photo exhibit in New York in 1936. *Eudora Welty in New York: Photographs of the early 1930s* will be on display at the Museum of the City of New York through Feb. 16.

The symposium and photography exhibit are the first in a year-long series of events to celebrate the Eudora Welty Centennial, 1909-2009.

In January, Marrs will teach a continuing education Great Topics Seminar "Eudora Welty and Friends" at Millsaps. Other events that will celebrate Welty include a statewide reading project, "Mississippi Reads," featuring Welty's Collected Stories and a Eudora Welty New Play Series at New Stage Theatre in Jackson.

— K. P.



## New Faculty

Millsaps College and Dr. Richard A. Smith, senior vice president and dean of the College, back row, third from left, welcomed new and visiting faculty members this year, including (back row from left) Dr. Brent Hendrixson, Dr. Yan Wang, Dr. Smith, Dr. Damon Campbell, Dr. Shadow Robinson, Dr. Blake Couey; front row, Dr. Anita DeRouen, Dr. Stacy DeZutter, Terri Hudson, Judith Caballero, Annie Blakeney-Glazier, and Dr. Maline Werness. Not pictured are James Martin and Ryan Roy.

# Faculty & Staff

## Arts and Letters

**James E. Bowley** (religious studies) is the 2008-2009 alumnus-in-residence for the School of Graduate Studies at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Bowley will spend a week in February at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, giving public lectures, teaching, and meeting with graduate students.



**Catherine Freis** (classical studies) presented a two-lecture presentation on Puccini's "Tosca" at St. Andrew's Episcopal School Performing Arts Center on Oct. 2 and 3. She was part of a panel on Nov. 18 exploring "Unburied Treasures" at the Mississippi Museum of Art. The myth of Leda and the Swan and its interpretation in art and literature was the focus of her presentation. She also gave a slide presentation on "Myth, the Cross and the Christmas Tree" at St. Peter's Cathedral in Jackson on Nov. 19.

**Richard Freis'** (emeritus, classical studies) libretto for "From Greater Light," a cantata composed by Alva Henderson, had its world premiere on Sept. 13. The Pacific Symphony and Chorale performed the cantata at a benefit concert for the Village of Hope in Orange County, Calif. The cantata,

whose libretto is based in part on the Book of Job, was commissioned to celebrate the opening of the Village of Hope, a comprehensive residence facility that helps the homeless and their families transition to more stable lives.

**Kristen T. Oertel** (history) presented a paper in June at the 14th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, the largest meeting of women's historians in

the world. Oertel's paper, "Strong-Minded Women: Female Antislavery Violence and Bleeding Kansas," drew upon the themes from her first book, *Bleeding Borders: Race, Gender and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas*, which will be published by LSU Press in the spring of 2009.

**Darby Ray** (religious studies) is co-author of a paper produced for the American Academy of Religion under the auspices of a grant from the Teagle Foundation. The paper, entitled "The Religious Studies Major in a Post-9/11 World: New Challenges, New Opportunities," was the topic of discussion at a special session at the national conference of the AAR in November. In addition, Ray has been invited to participate in a major Ford Foundation Grant to "rekindle theological

imagination" and support "transformative thought for progressive action."

## Science

**Michael Galaty** (sociology-anthropology) was invited to deliver the paper "Grunas, Shala: A New Fortified Prehistoric Site in the Northern Albanian Mountains" in Grenoble, France in October at the Cinquième Colloque International sur l'Illyrie Méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité.

**Connie Schimmel** (education) was an invited speaker for the 2008 Midwest Conference on Deaf Education in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in July. In August, she presented her reading program for deaf students at the Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Framingham, Mass. The presentation was the first in a series of three weekend literacy trainings.

**Don Schwartz** (computer science) presented a paper entitled "CLOWNS – A Software Engineering Semester Project Currently In-Use in Kindergarten Classes" at the International Conference on Frontiers in Education: Computer Science and Computer Engineering in Las Vegas in July. In August, he received a \$284,980 grant from the Oracle Academy Advanced Computer Science Initiative. The donation consisted of Oracle 10g Windows (full software suite and updated support software) for use in his Database classes.

## Staff

**Don Fortenberry** (student life) was named to the Leadership Jackson Alumni Association Executive Committee.

**Kara G. Paulk** (communications) had her essay, "Uprooting," published in the July edition of *Southern Living*. Her essay described her move from a small town in North Mississippi to the metro area.

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair, wearing glasses and a black blazer, smiling warmly. She is wearing a necklace with blue beads. The background is a solid blue color.

**THOUGHT IS NOT  
A COMMODITY.**

[mba.millsaps.edu](http://mba.millsaps.edu)



The Else School of Management  
MILLSAPS COLLEGE