

# VCU Shafer Court Connections

VCU  
THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
School of Engineering East Hall



## *Presidential perspective*

Eugene P. Trani reflects on  
his tenure as the university's  
visionary leader since 1990

CIRCA

University Student Commons: 2009

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009, the 162,182-square-foot University Student Commons serves as the center for daily activities, meetings and events on the Monroe Park Campus at Virginia Commonwealth University. Outside the classroom, an ever-growing student population gathers in the facility's indoor and outdoor areas to meet friends, study and grab a bite to eat.



# Contents

## [FEATURES]

- 8 > Presidential perspective**  
Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., shares his thoughts on Virginia Commonwealth University's growth and its impact on the region.
- 12 > Family ties**  
Families with multiple VCU graduates reveal how their unique link strengthens their connection to one another.
- 22 > Scholarly pursuits**  
Endowed gifts contribute to student success and ensure that VCU's tradition of excellence and accessible education continues.

## [DEPARTMENTS]

- 2 > Circa**  
University Student Commons: 2009.
- 5 > University news**  
Noteworthy news and research at VCU.
- 18 > Face to face**  
Karen Videtic talks about using fashion as a service-learning opportunity for students.
- 19 > My college town**  
James River Film Festival caters to Richmond-area cinema lovers.
- 20 > The big picture**  
Classroom lessons at the VCU Rice Center expand to the water's edge.
- 26 > Alumni connections**  
The latest news from the alumni association.
- 31 > Class notes**  
Updates from alumni, faculty, staff and friends.
- 37 > Then and now**  
Barnes & Noble offers a new textbook definition of campus bookstores.
- 38 > Datebook**  
Upcoming university and alumni events.
- 39 > Circa**  
University Student Commons: 1984.



# Building VCU's legacy through alumni engagement

With the retirement of President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., your university is assessing its past, present and future, in preparation for writing the next chapter of its history. In 19 years, Dr. Trani's leadership has brought growth and change to campus and the community, and his accomplishments and contributions are featured in this issue. We wish him the very best and thank him for his stellar service.

Beckoning to all of us is the opportunity to build on the legacy of Dr. Trani and other faculty, students, alumni and staff who've come before, as we welcome a new president and refresh our dedication to and support for Virginia Commonwealth University.

How might we best build on that legacy? I believe the path requires us to work together to enhance alumni engagement.

What is alumni engagement? It's establishing the alumni association as a primary connection for alumni with the university, so that you can capitalize on the university's role as a lifelong educational and social resource. It's also advancing the university by building active support, commitment and involvement among alumni, students, faculty and business and community partners.

How will we build alumni engagement? The first step is to invite you and all alumni to join the alumni association and actively engage in setting our goals and objectives. We're creating several opportunities to allow alumni to interact with the association and the university.

We're improving our Web site, [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org), and expanding the networking and services available for all alumni, particularly active, dues-paying members who provide essential financial resources to fund student and alumni outreach and support.

We're also increasing our presence on social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as expanding our activities and programs, both on- and off-campus, to engage more alumni in the full range of intellectual, service, networking and Ram spirit opportunities available.

Please review the reunion information and other programming featured in this issue and come back to campus to renew friendships with fellow alumni and meet and greet the faculty members and students who are keeping the Ram spirit alive and well!

VCU is achieving recognition for its high-quality programs and facilities and has a lot to offer alumni. Your continuing involvement with the university is critical to building and maintaining the type of educational environment that leads to sustained excellence.

Your alumni association is your primary connection to a lifetime of learning and engagement. We need you to be an active member of the team!

Yours for VCU,



Gordon A. McDougall  
Assistant Vice President, University Alumni Relations  
[gamdougall@vcu.edu](mailto:gamdougall@vcu.edu)

P.S. Help us keep our communications streamlined and green. Register your e-mail address at [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org).



## VCU Shafer Court Connections

Spring 2009 • Volume 14, Number 2  
[www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org)

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT,  
UNIVERSITY ALUMNI RELATIONS  
Gordon A. McDougall

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
VCU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
Diane Stout-Brown (B.S.W. '80/SW)

EDITORIAL  
Kristen Caldwell (B.S. '94/MC)

DESIGN  
Trina Lambert

PHOTOGRAPHY  
Linda George

PRODUCTION  
Jessica Foster

CONTRIBUTORS  
*Editorial:* Kelli Anderson, Jennifer Carmean (B.S. '98/H&S), Teri Dunnivant, Erin Egan, Polly Roberts, Melanie Irvin Solaimani (B.S. '96/MC), Kim Witt

*Design:* Pamela Arnold (B.F.A. '87/A), Nathan Hanger (B.S. '01/MC), Haley Hollenbach (B.F.A. '01/A), Katie McBride (B.F.A. '04/A), Matthew Phillips (M.F.A. '87/A), Shannon Williams

*Photography:* VCU Libraries – Special Collections and Archives, Allen Jones (B.F.A. '82/A; M.F.A. '92/A), Tom Kojcsich

Shafer Court Connections is published semiannually by the Office of Alumni Relations and VCU Creative Services for Virginia Commonwealth University's alumni, faculty, staff and friends. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of the university or magazine staff.

Send address changes to the Office of Alumni Relations, Virginia Commonwealth University, 924 W. Franklin St., P.O. Box 843044, Richmond, VA 23284-3044; telephone (804) 828-2586; [vcu-alum@vcu.edu](mailto:vcu-alum@vcu.edu) or [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org).

Letters to the editor should be sent to Shafer Court Connections, Virginia Commonwealth University, 827 W. Franklin St., P.O. Box 842041, Richmond, VA 23284-2041, or e-mail [shafercourt@vcu.edu](mailto:shafercourt@vcu.edu). Please include your name, address and a daytime phone number; anonymous letters will not be published. Letters may be edited for clarity or space.

Contributions of articles, photos and artwork are welcome, however, Shafer Court Connections accepts no responsibility for unsolicited items.

© 2009, Virginia Commonwealth University.  
An equal opportunity, affirmative action university. 080923-02



### On the cover

Virginia Commonwealth University President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., and the Pauley Pavilion, home to the da Vinci Center for Innovation in Product Design and Development.

# University news

Virginia Commonwealth University news and research. For the latest updates, visit VCU online at [www.news.vcu.edu](http://www.news.vcu.edu)

## VCU welcomes Central Michigan head Michael Rao as its fifth president

The VCU Board of Visitors announced in late February that Michael Rao, Ph.D., president of Central Michigan University, will be VCU's next president and president of the VCU Health System. He also will be a tenured professor in the School of Education.

Rao, 42, comes to VCU with a broad range of educational experience, including serving as a president of a large doctoral research university, university chancellor, president of a two-year college and a college dean.

"Michael Rao's accomplishments are remarkable," says VCU Rector Tom Rosenthal. "Members of the board, the presidential search committee and others representing university groups who have met Mike are excited about the energy, enthusiasm and intelligence he will bring to VCU as its fifth president."

The board's unanimous decision came after an extensive process that sought input from the entire university community about VCU's future and the type of person who should be its next president. A 17-member, universitywide committee used that information as it conducted a national search and forwarded recommendations to the VCU Board of Visitors.

"I am truly honored to be appointed VCU's next president. This is the only position I have pursued, and it is because VCU is a dynamic and diverse university in a vibrant city," Rao says. "It is very clear that VCU is an institution of opportunity with great momentum. I am excited to work with all its stakeholders to carry that momentum forward as we fulfill an important mission as a leading urban research university, with high-quality, well-integrated academic programs and a pre-eminent academic medical center."

Rao will officially take the helm of the university on July 1 when Eugene P. Trani,

Ph.D., retires from the positions of VCU president and president and chair of the VCU Health System. Trani will remain at VCU as university distinguished professor.

Rao has served as president and professor at Central Michigan University since 2000. CMU, located in Mount Pleasant, Mich., is a public doctoral research institution with 28,000 students and an operating budget of more than \$400 million.

## Acclaimed debut novelist speaks about his literary journey

In November, Travis Holland accepted the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award and participated in a forum discussion about the journey of his critically acclaimed debut novel, "The Archivist's Story," published in 2007.

Inspired by Isaac Babel, one of Russia's greatest short-story writers, who was executed by the Stalinist regime, Holland captures the atmosphere of Moscow at the end of the 1930s. The novel follows the ethical and moral dilemmas of the main character, an archivist at the Lubyanka Prison who is charged with cataloging (and ultimately incinerating) the works of writers who have been denounced and arrested.

The VCU Cabell First Novelist Award celebrates the VCU M.F.A. in Creative Writing Program's yearlong novel workshop — the first in the nation and still one of the few in existence.

## Electric trucks roll across campus

As part of a pilot program to test emissions and cost-effectiveness, VCU purchased two electric trucks that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 99 percent when compared with the diesel-powered Bobcat Toolcats already in use on campus.

The trucks — used for collecting trash, recycling and maintaining the grounds on VCU's campuses — place VCU among the 66 percent of universities nationwide that reported using hybrid or alternative-energy vehicles in 2008, according to the College Sustainability Report Card.

The trucks support VCU's sustainability initiatives as a signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. The commitment, which VCU signed in April 2008, is an effort among universities to address global warming by conducting a greenhouse gas inventory and establishing a timeline for achieving carbon neutrality.

"It is my hope that sustainability becomes an integral component of the academic, administrative, clinical, operational and research activity VCU engages in every day," says Jacek Ghosh, who joined VCU in September 2008 as director of sustainability. "I would like to see sustainability become ingrained in VCU's DNA as a matter of course."

The Vantage Electric TruckAll-truck supports VCU's pursuit of a sustainable campus.



VCU President-elect Michael Rao, Ph.D., greets Irene Lubker, research librarian at the Tompkins-McCaw Library, and her colleagues (from left) Shannon Jones, head of Outreach Services, and Barbara Wright, reference services librarian, at a March 5 campus forum.



## Bill Cosby kicks off lecture series

Entertainer Bill Cosby spoke to an enthusiastic VCU audience in December at the Alltel Pavilion of the Stuart C. Siegel Center. The event culminated a series of celebrations this past fall recognizing VCU's 40th anniversary and was the first presentation in the newly established L. Douglas Wilder Lectureship Series.

Named for the former Richmond mayor and former Virginia governor, and made possible by a gift from Dominion Resources, the Wilder Lecture will be presented every fall and spring semester. Wilder, who also is a distinguished professor in the VCU Center for Public Policy, was instrumental in bringing Cosby to VCU, and he will continue to help identify speakers for future series lectures.

## Hospital fills a critical need in Va.

Virginia's only hospital devoted solely to critical care was dedicated in October 2008 at the VCU Medical Center.



Critical Care Hospital at the VCU Medical Center

Designed with input from more than 600 doctors, nurses, staff members and patients, the 15-level, 367,000-square-foot Critical Care Hospital increases the medical center's capacity for treating seriously ill and injured patients and includes intensive care units for surgical trauma, neonatal, cardiac, neuroscience and oncology, as well as the Evans-Haynes Burn Center. The largest capital construction project in the history of the VCU Medical Center, the \$184 million Critical Care Hospital houses 232 adult patient beds, increasing the medical center's ratio of private to semiprivate beds from 37 percent to 70 percent.

## Art alumna receives 'genius grant'

Sculptor and VCU School of the Arts graduate **Tara Donovan** (M.F.A. '99/A) won the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2008, becoming the third former VCU student to win the award in the past five years.

Donovan was one of 25 MacArthur Fellows named in September. Each grant winner will receive \$500,000 over the course of five years with no obligations on how the money is spent, providing honorees with a large measure of freedom to advance their work.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowships are awarded annually to individuals from a variety of fields throughout the U.S. Fellows are selected for their "creativity, originality and potential." The award is often referred to as the "genius grant."

Donovan was the subject of a solo exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City last year and recently completed a major exhibit at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.

In awarding a fellowship to Donovan, the MacArthur Foundation noted that she "is an inventive young sculptor whose installations



Constructed from Mylar sheets and glue, "Untitled (Mylar), 2008" illustrates what the MacArthur Foundation calls Tara Donovan's "dazzling body of work that will enrich the fields of contemporary sculpture and installation for years to come."

bring wonder to the most common objects of everyday life. Donovan's site-specific, sculptural works transform ordinary accumulated materials into intriguing visual and physical installations."

## VCU, W&M partner on life sciences

In January, The College of William & Mary and VCU announced a partnership that pools the research and expertise of their environmental science programs.

Under the agreement, William & Mary's Center for Conservation Biology, best known for its work with bald eagles and ensuring sustainability of bird populations, will draw on its extensive academic programs in biology, bio-science and computational modeling, while providing a close connection with the considerable expertise within the VCU Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences.

The collaboration will be named the College of William & Mary/Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Conservation Biology at the VCU Rice Center.

## Faculty honors

**M. Njeri Jackson, Ph.D.**, special assistant for diversity in the Office of the Provost and associate professor in the Department of African American Studies and the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, received the 2008 Women of Color Professional Achievement Recognition Award from the Women's Caucus for Political Science.

The American Physical Society elected **Alenka Luzar, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of Chemistry, to the status of Fellow.

**June Nicholson**, associate director and associate professor in the School of Mass Communications, received the 2008 Robert P. Knight Multicultural Recruitment Award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies elected **Joseph Ornato, M.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, to its member ranks.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science named two VCU professors as Fellows: **Audrey Smedley, Ph.D.**, professor emeritus of anthropology with a joint appointment in African American Studies, and **Sarah Spiegel, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

**David Wojahn**, director of the creative writing program in the Department of English, received a 2009 Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the Dominion Foundation.

"One of the priorities of my administration has been to work collaboratively with The College of William & Mary and this agreement brings together two very strong areas of expertise," says VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.

Last year, VCU and William & Mary created the VCU-William & Mary Health Policy and Law Initiative, which draws on faculty from the two institutions to conduct research, provide public service and offer joint degree programs that focus on solving topical problems in health policy, law and bioethics.



The VCU Pauley Heart Center is the first in the U.S. to use the Vivid i system, a new type of intracardiac ultrasound machine that produces enhanced imaging of the heart, allowing cardiac electrophysiologists to better diagnose and treat atrial fibrillation.

Affecting more than 2 million Americans, atrial fibrillation interferes with the heart's ability to efficiently pump blood, which can lead to clots and possibly a stroke.

"It gives us spectacular images of the heart, our catheters in the heart and the structures in the heart and helps us do an even better job of ablating atrial fibrillation more safely and more effectively," says Kenneth Ellenbogen, M.D., professor of cardiology and director of the cardiac electrophysiology lab at the VCU Medical Center.

## Research report

### Scientists find heat-free way to produce hydrogen

Scientists at Penn State University and VCU have discovered a way to produce hydrogen by exposing selected clusters of aluminum atoms to water. The findings demonstrate that it is the geometries of these aluminum clusters, rather than solely their electronic properties, that govern the proximity of the clusters' exposed active sites.

Supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, the team, which includes VCU physics professor Shiv Khanna, Ph.D., and postdoctoral associate Arthur Reber, found that the aluminum clusters react differently when exposed to water depending on their sizes and their unique geometric structures. Three of the aluminum clusters produced hydrogen from water at room temperature.

"Traditional techniques for splitting water to produce hydrogen generally require a lot of energy at the time the hydrogen is generated. But our method allows us to produce hydrogen without supplying heat, connecting to a battery or adding electricity. Once the aluminum clusters are synthesized, they can generate hydrogen on demand without the need to store it," Khanna says.



Shiv Khanna, Ph.D.

### Gene discovery could lead to new cancer therapies

SARI, a new anti-tumor gene identified by VCU researchers, suppresses the growth and survival of tumor cells by interfering with the action of cancer cell molecules that drive cell division and promote survival.

Supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health, the Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation and the National Foundation for Cancer Research, the investigators delivered SARI to cancer cells using a virus, and the infected cancer cells subsequently stopped dividing and died. As 90 percent of all cancer types rely on a similar mechanism to proliferate and evade destruction, researchers noted that SARI could be an effective anti-cancer treatment for many tumors.

"We have uncovered a new way by which interferon can induce anti-tumor activity. The identification of SARI also provides a new potential reagent for the selective killing of tumor cells," says lead investigator Paul B. Fisher, M.Ph., Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Human and Molecular Genetics and director of the VCU Institute of Molecular Medicine in the VCU School of Medicine. Subtraction hybridization, a powerful technique pioneered in Fisher's laboratory, uncovered SARI.

Next, the team plans to develop improved approaches to more effectively target the delivery of SARI.

### Study confirms power of PET scan as an imaging tool

A nationwide study involving VCU researchers confirmed the effectiveness of positron emission tomography (PET) scans in monitoring tumor activity across a range of cancers. The results could lead to expanded Medicare coverage for PET scans in diagnosing, staging and restaging all cancers.

Researchers reported results by cancer type for two years of data collected from nearly 41,000 PET studies conducted at more than 1,300 cancer centers nationwide and found the impact of PET did not vary significantly among cancers.

"As a result, we believe that coverage for PET in the staging, restaging and detection of recurrence of cancer should be handled the same across the board," says Bruce E. Hillner, M.D., professor of medicine at the VCU Massey Cancer Center and lead author of the article, published in the December issue of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*. Hillner serves as chair of the National Oncologic PET Registry, which ensures access to Medicare reimbursement for certain types of PET scans.



Photo VCU School of the Arts



## Eugene P. Trani

reflects on his 19-year tenure as the university's visionary leader

# Presidential perspective



© VCU Shafiq Court Connections





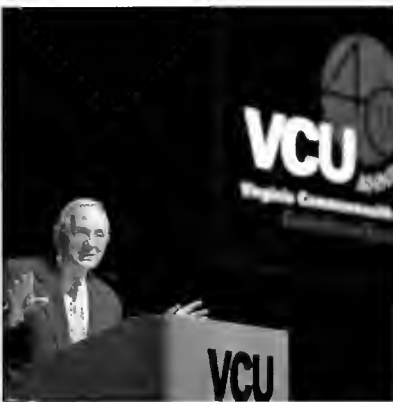
*It's fitting that a noted history scholar and author would make history himself.*

With the nation's college and university presidents serving on average 8.5 years, according to the American Education Council, the 19-year presidency of Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., represents one of the longest tenures of any university system president in modern times. Virginia Commonwealth University benefited from Dr. Trani's longevity as he led VCU through a strategic transformation, building the university into a major urban research institution and the largest university in Virginia.

As he prepares to retire as president of VCU and president and chair of the VCU Health System, Dr. Trani shares his thoughts on the university's growth and its impact throughout the region since he arrived on campus in 1990.



**(First row, from left)** Francis L. Macrina, Ph.D., VCU vice president for research, Dr. Trani and Sheldon Retchin, M.D., M.S.P.H., VCU Health System CEO and VCU Health Sciences vice president • Virginia General Assembly resolution commending Dr. Trani's leadership • Hibbs Hall • Campaign for VCU celebration **(Second row, from left)** VCU School of the Arts in Qatar • Monroe Park Campus Addition • VCU Commencement • Robert T. Skunda, president and CEO, Virginia BioTechnology Research Park, and Dr. Trani **(Third row, from left)** Dr. Trani on C-SPAN2's Book TV • Novelist Toni Morrison and Dr. Trani • Dr. Trani's "retired" jersey in the Alltel Pavilion at the Siegel Center • VCU Critical Care Hospital **(Fourth row, from left)** Dr. Trani's inaugural address • Linden Court • VCU Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences • Dr. Trani and his wife, Lois, with former President Bill Clinton



Dr. Trani at VCU's 40th Anniversary in fall 2008 (center) celebrates the growth of the university, which includes more than \$2.2 billion in capital construction and renovation projects on the Monroe Park Campus (far left) and MCV Campus since 1990.

**During your presidency, VCU set many enrollment records, and VCU became Virginia's largest public university. How has a growing student population been an asset to VCU, and has a larger student body changed the VCU experience?**

It clearly has given us a critical mass to do different things – for example, a critical mass of life science students and a critical mass of engineering students. I think it has helped our prestige within the commonwealth since so many of our students are from Virginia. We have almost 600 freshmen from Fairfax County this year and, therefore, I can go into the office of almost any legislator from Fairfax County and they know all about VCU. They didn't used to know about VCU.

**If you were advising parents of a 17-year-old student weighing college choices, what would you tell them about VCU?**

I would tell them it would be a real-world experience. It's not isolated physically or psychologically. We are in a great metropolitan area with a diverse student body that reflects what the United States looks like – what the world looks like. And we prepare our students for the world of work – and we're very good at that. This is no ivy-covered isolated place. VCU represents the real world, and I think our students are ready to go out into that world when they graduate.

“ When I met Dr. Trani in 1999, he ignited my passion to become involved with my alma mater. Gene has transformed VCU ... to the world-class healing, teaching, research and residential university that we are today. When I think about all the positive change that has taken place, I realize that Dr. Trani not only has reinvented VCU, but he has also had a material impact on changing the face of the city of Richmond. – Richard T. “Dick” Robertson (B.S. '67/MC)



**Raising institutional pride has been a priority for your administration. What do you think it means to be a Ram today?**

I think it's much more meaningful. Certainly, the only identification is not athletics, but

if you were at the VCU-George Mason game, which was on ESPN2, you really got a sense for what it means to be a Ram. They're proud. They're boisterous, but they're respectful. There's just a great feeling. Our students have clearly rallied around our athletic teams



and the concept of VCU, and our faculty and staff and many of our alumni have really become very supportive. So it means something special.

**The connection between the city and VCU became increasingly important during your tenure, with major campus construction projects, partnerships and revitalization. How do you see that continuing?**

I'm sure it will continue. I think it's part of who we are. It certainly was not new with me – maybe a little more focused than it had been in the past. We are an urban institution – proud to be an urban institution – and our students and faculty benefit all the time from close interactions with the city in terms of their research, in terms of their community service and in terms of their teaching opportunities. It is at the core of what VCU is.

**What spots on VCU's campuses are most special to you?**

I love the Egyptian Medical Sciences Courtyard – that's a special place. The courtyard in the Life Sciences building is a special place, as is the walk from my office to the library, passing the dining facility and Hibbs Hall. And what I especially like is that there is a real sense of the two campuses more now than we ever had before. Our physical facilities people do a wonderful

job in terms of keeping VCU up and clean and modernized. It's a great place to walk around.

**What favorite memories do you have of your early years at VCU?**

I think it was the establishment of the Virginia BioTechnology Research Park and the establishment of the School of Engineering. These were certainly early signals as to what VCU was going to become.

**What are you most proud of about your tenure here at VCU?**

I think VCU has become one university – we didn't start as a university. University of Virginia and William & Mary started as universities and then things grew out from there. We didn't have a corpus. We have a corpus now – and it's strong, vital and growing.

**When you came to VCU in 1990, did you envision leading the university for nearly two decades?**

No. I thought eight to 10 years, but it's gone quickly. With my physical difficulties of the past year, it's time. I'm ready. I'm also 69 years old.

**What's next for you, President Trani?**

I have three books under way – one coming out in May on American-Russian-Chinese relations in the 20th century. It's being published in English, Russian, Chinese and Spanish. And I have one that is due to publishers in July on universities and economic development. My co-author on foreign policy and I have started a biography of Harrison Salisbury. And since there are 675 boxes of papers that we're going through, I think it'll be a long process. I'm also going to teach modules here in the Honors College.

**What does the future hold for VCU?**

It's very bright. I think the infrastructure is here. I am very pleased with the appointment of Michael Rao to be my successor. The board and the search committee have found the right person to continue VCU's transformation as a world-class university and academic medical center.

# Highlights

## 1990 to present

- VCU's enrollment has increased from 21,764 in 1990 to 32,077 in 2008, a 47 percent increase. VCU now has the largest student body of any university in Virginia. The growth in VCU's enrollment has been in full-time students, the number of which has increased more than 60 percent over the past 10 years. In addition, the size of the freshman class has increased from 1,612 to 3,756, more than doubling.
- VCU remains a diverse university – minority students make up more than one-third of our student body. VCU's international student enrollments increased by 170 percent over the past nine years to more than 1,500 students. In addition, 60 percent of VCU students are female.
- From 1990 through the present, VCU and the medical center have undertaken or been authorized to undertake more than \$2.2 billion in capital construction and renovation projects. More than half of the total has been funded with private gifts, university resources or hospital revenues. Another \$930 million in projects are planned.
- VCU's sponsored research program awards increased 216 percent, from \$71 million in awards and contracts in 1970 to more than \$223 million in 2008.
- Annual private giving to VCU has grown from an average of \$11 million a year during the 1990s to an average \$56 million a year during the past seven years. VCU's endowment and unrestricted investments have risen from \$63.2 million in 1990 to nearly \$427 million in the first quarter of 2008.
- VCU continues innovative efforts to internationalize its campuses by establishing universitywide international partnerships with universities from around the world, including 10 non-European partners. During his presidency, Dr. Trani has established significant linkages in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Central and South America and Asia. Currently, VCU has developed partnerships with 14 universities, most with academic medical centers.

## Alumni commend Dr. Trani's leadership

About 200 current and former alumni leaders attended a Feb. 19 reception at the VCU Scott House honoring President Trani. The VCU Alumni Association and the MCV Alumni Association of VCU commended Dr. Trani and his wife, Lois, with a resolution in their honor. Dan Massey (B.S. '92/B), (center) VCUAA president, and Mary S. Shall, Ph.D. (Ph.D. '91/M), (far left) MCVAA president, presented Dr. Trani with a the resolution.

# Family *Ties*

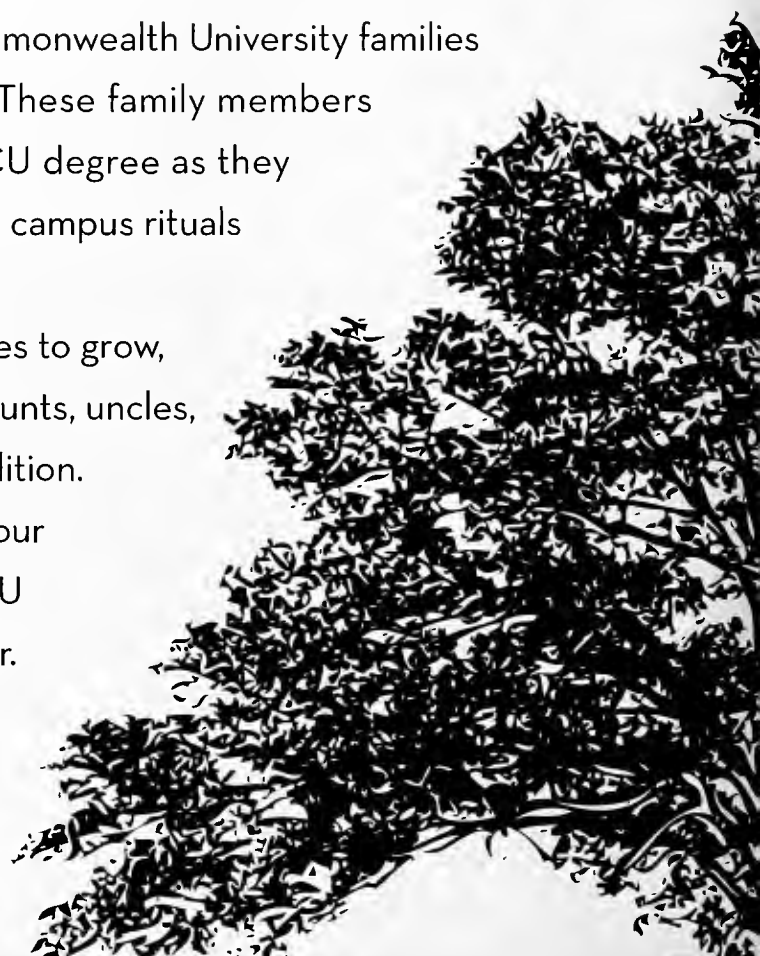
Legacy families link  
the past, present and future  
of Virginia Commonwealth University

*By Erin Egan*

As members of an exclusive club, Virginia Commonwealth University families with multiple graduates share a special bond. These family members appreciate the educational excellence of a VCU degree as they reminisce about their days as students, continue campus rituals and nurture Ram pride.

The number of legacy families at VCU continues to grow, as students with alumni parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers or sisters carry on a family tradition.

Shafer Court Connections recently spoke to four legacy families who reveal how their unique VCU link strengthens their connection to one another.



## Building a *dynasty*

The Robinson clan boasts nine members who attended VCU – and its predecessors – through the years. The eldest member of the Chesterfield County-based family, Everett Robinson, attended the university when it was the Richmond Division of The College of William & Mary. Another brother, **Maurice Robinson** (B.S. '65/B), worked his way through the Richmond Professional Institute. Younger siblings **Ellen Robinson Sheehy** (B.S. '72/SW) and **Norman Robinson** (B.S. '72/B) followed their older brothers to VCU several years later.

"I think I influenced them to go," says Maurice, a retired accountant for CSX Railroad. "I really did like VCU and thought I got a good education. My siblings enjoyed the school and it had what they wanted."

Norman, president of the nonprofit EastPay, earned his degree and met his future wife, **Joan Lemieux Robinson** (B.S. '73/E), at VCU. The two married in 1974. Twenty years later, the next generation of Robinsons, Maurice's children **Catharine Robinson Anderson** (B.S. '94/E) and **Maurice "Joey" Robinson Jr.** (B.S. '98/H&S), and, then later, Norman's son **Spencer Robinson** (B.S. '01/B) and son-in-law **Walter C. Crenshaw V** (B.S. '04/B; M.A. '07/B) continued the family's VCU tradition.

"It was a great fit," says Joey of VCU. He started at the university after high school but put his education on hold to get married and start a family. He now works as a project manager with the New York engineering firm Clough Harbour and Associates.

"I actually went back and got my degree after I had three kids and while I was working full time," he says. "I did it the hard way. I can tell you I appreciated it a lot more. It was quite an accomplishment."

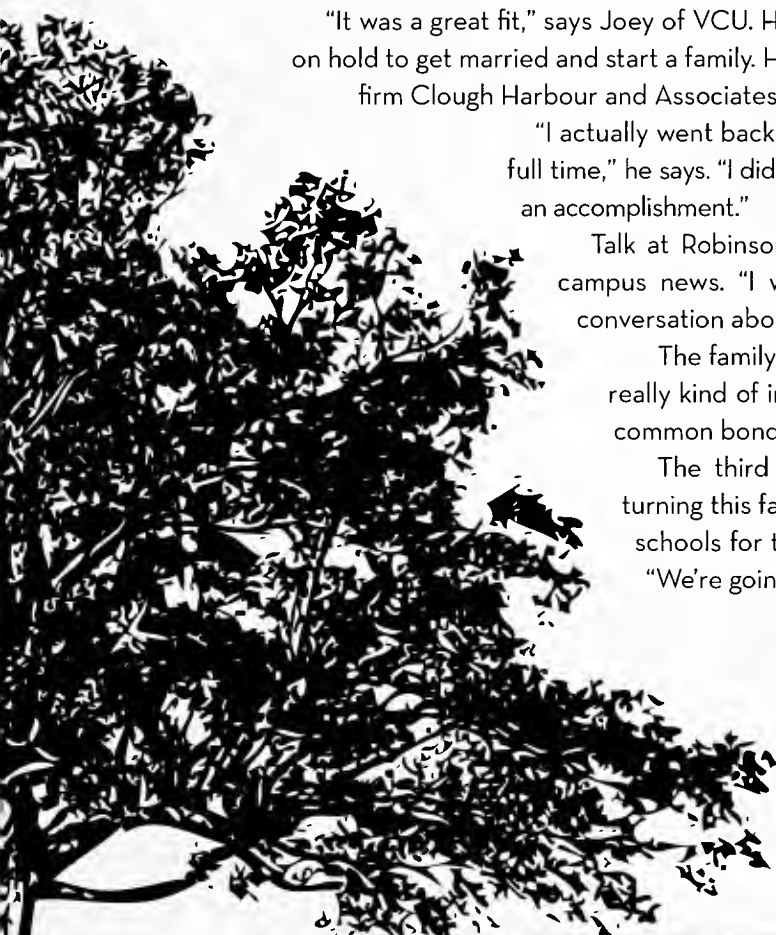
Talk at Robinson family gatherings often gravitates toward VCU and the latest campus news. "I wear my class ring religiously and that seems to always spark conversation about VCU and how it's changed," Joey says.

The family knows their household of VCU diplomas makes them unique. "It's really kind of interesting that we all went there," Norman says. "We have a neat common bond among us. It's just an awesome school. We're all very proud of it."

The third generation of Robinsons might soon be headed to VCU, thus turning this family's legacy into a dynasty. VCU ranks high on the list of possible schools for two of Joey's kids. "We'll get one down there eventually," he says. "We're going to get that third generation."



The Chesterfield-based Robinson family, from left: Maurice Robinson, Catharine Robinson Anderson, Ellen Robinson Sheehy, Spencer Robinson, Norman Robinson and Joan Lemieux Robinson



# Celebrating a *history*

**Catie Besenfelder McConnell** (B.S. '91/B) and **Elizabeth White Baker** (Ph.D. '06/B) practically bleed black and gold. Their mother, **Kathleen Barrett** (B.S. '71/B; M.S. '73/B), gave birth to the two sisters while she attended the university. As one of just four women in the business school at the time, Kathleen received flowers from her dean with a note saying he'd never had a graduate student give birth before. "That's how rare it was for a woman to be in the business school," she says.

When it came time for her daughter to go to college, Kathleen was thrilled with Catie's choice. "It really meant a lot when she decided to come to VCU," Kathleen says. "And then when her little boys were born, we started bringing them."

Kathleen passes down her excitement for VCU to her grandsons. They attended the opening of the Stuart C. Siegel Center and frequently accompany their grandmother to Rams basketball games. Kathleen, who can walk to games from her Fan District home, is a fixture in the stands. "Taking mom to games is like taking the belle of the ball," Elizabeth says. "She knows everyone!"

In October 2008, mother and daughter also attended the outdoor Monroe Park Festival, one of several community events that celebrated VCU's 40th anniversary. "We came down in the pouring rain," Kathleen says, "but those traditions mean a lot."

When Elizabeth, now an assistant dean at the Virginia Military Institute, moved from Arizona to Richmond to pursue her doctorate at VCU, her mother couldn't have been happier. "For her to be in the business school where I had gone, I just thought that was so much fun," Kathleen says.

Elizabeth endured some good-natured ribbing from her Ram family members. "My mom and sister were like, 'We knew it would get you in the end,' " she jokes about her enrollment in VCU. Her family also made sure to outfit her in appropriate VCU gear and teased her by saying she was not a real VCU student until she could parallel park.

Kathleen, CEO of St. Joseph's Villa, keeps up with VCU happenings as a member of the business school alumni organization and as former president of both the VCU Alumni Association and Friends of the Library boards. Because her two daughters know how much VCU and the School of Business mean to their mother, they made a donation to the school, which named a faculty office for her in Snead Hall.

"It seemed like the natural thing to do," says Catie, a nurse at the VCU Medical Center. "Our mother is well-deserving. She spent a huge chunk of her life there."

The gift not only touched their mother, but it also reaffirmed the family's continuous VCU connection. "We felt like we were part of the business building, that we had a stake in it," Elizabeth says.

Kathleen beams at the thought of the lasting reminder of her VCU experience and appreciates her daughters' thoughtfulness.

"That will go on forever, I hope," she says of the office. "It was just a beautiful thing for them to do."



Photo George Lamm, The Richmond News Leader

Kathleen Barrett with daughter Catie Besenfelder McConnell in 1971 at Barrett's VCU graduation (top) and 20 years later at McConnell's VCU Commencement



Daughter and father duo Becky Gregory and Jim Gregory

## Comparing a similar *experience*

**Becky Gregory** (B.F.A. '04/A) totes around a couple of souvenirs that remind her of VCU. The owner and creative director at Protégé Design, Becky keeps her VCU ID and that of her father, **Jim Gregory** (B.F.A. '71/A), with her at all times. "He looks like a hippie," she says of her dad's picture. "It's funny because he doesn't look like that anymore. He looks like a clean-cut businessman."

Today, Jim serves as CEO of CoreBrand, a global brand consulting firm. His and his daughter's similar career paths included a first stop at VCU. Jim's high school guidance counselor recommended VCU as a school that nurtured its art students.

"I came down for a visit and totally fell in love with VCU right from the beginning," he says. "The Art Foundation Program was just outstanding and allowed me to find what I really wanted to do."

When his daughter, a budding artist, began her college search, Jim threw out a suggestion. "I just knew she had to experience VCU," he says. "When we came down from Connecticut for a visit, we actually met some of my old professors who were still here. The vibe was just fantastic. We had a great time."

Becky headed south to VCU and whenever she called home her dad understood completely about her experiences with classes, professors and workload. "I think that my dad really connected with that," she says. "He just thought it was the coolest thing."

As one of the most recognized experts in corporate branding, who speaks widely to business and academic audiences, Jim occasionally returns to VCU to lecture art students. "It is just so gratifying to see how the spirit of the school has remained the same over these many years," he says. "I graduated in 1971. Becky graduated in 2004. But that same energy and excitement about art and design and the spirit of the school hasn't changed one bit. That's just really cool."

The Gregorys work together on many projects but live on separate coasts – Becky in California and Jim in Connecticut. The two communicate constantly on everything from art to advertising. Not even a distance of 3,000 miles can belie their closeness.

"We have a real bond because of our background, what we've done, our interest in art, having gone to the same school with the same major and developing our same business plan," Jim says. "It's really very unusual. It's very rewarding and a lot of fun."

“I just knew she had to **experience VCU.**  
The vibe was just **fantastic.**”

- Jim Gregory (B.F.A. '71/A)



Felix Sarfo-Kantanka and  
Felix Sarfo-Kantanka Jr. at  
VCU's Cary Street Field

## Following a father's *Footsteps*

As a 3-year-old, **Felix Sarfo-Kantanka Jr.** (M.P.A. '01/H&S) watched his father, **Felix Sarfo-Kantanka** (B.S. '77/B; M.P.A. '80/H&S), receive his master's diploma at VCU's commencement. It was the first of many father-son VCU experiences.

Originally from Ghana in West Africa, Felix lived in New York where he worked for the Institute of Public Administration. Wanting to continue his education, he applied to three Virginia schools: VCU, the University of Richmond and the University of Virginia. VCU accepted Felix first, and he scheduled a visit. "I was treated very well when I came to VCU," he says. "I decided after the visit that I wouldn't wait for the two other schools."

In quick succession, Felix earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and joined the Virginia Department of Social Services, where he still works today.

When Felix Jr. began looking at schools for his master's studies, he applied to Virginia Tech and VCU. "A lot of the choice had to do with my father graduating from VCU's M.P.A. program," he says. "I thought it would be a unique experience to follow him."

His son's decision to enroll at VCU pleased the elder Sarfo-Kantanka. "It meant a lot to me in terms of family tradition," he says. "Back home, most parents want their kids to go to the high school or college that they went to. It was a great joy for the entire family when he was accepted into the same program."

At Felix Jr.'s graduation, his father proudly watched his son at the Richmond Coliseum commencement ceremony. The uniqueness of the event hit home. "Just the fact that I was doing the same thing my father had done was really, really neat," Felix Jr. says.

They both keep close VCU ties through soccer. Felix often took his son to VCU games when he was growing up. In fact, Felix Jr. served as the ball boy when the team played at Cary Street Field. Felix, a referee who calls games up to the college level, assists VCU men's soccer coach Tim O'Sullivan by acting as a surrogate father to soccer players recruited from Ghana.

"VCU is very much a part of our lives," Felix Jr. says.

The Sarfo-Kantankas became the first father and son to graduate from the Master of Public Administration program at VCU, an accomplishment they both consider "a great honor" and one that primed them for the workplace.

"VCU prepared my son well to meet his future challenges, and he has answered the call very well," Felix says. "He is highly motivated, hard working, very focused and, above all, a very caring individual."

Felix Jr., an assistant vice president with McGuireWoods Consulting, says his father set a high standard. "My dad was working full time and going to school full time when he graduated," he says. "He showed me that hard work goes a long way. I just try to follow in his footsteps."

*Erin Egan is a contributing writer for Shafer Court Connections.*



## Legacy scholarships benefit freshman family members of alumni

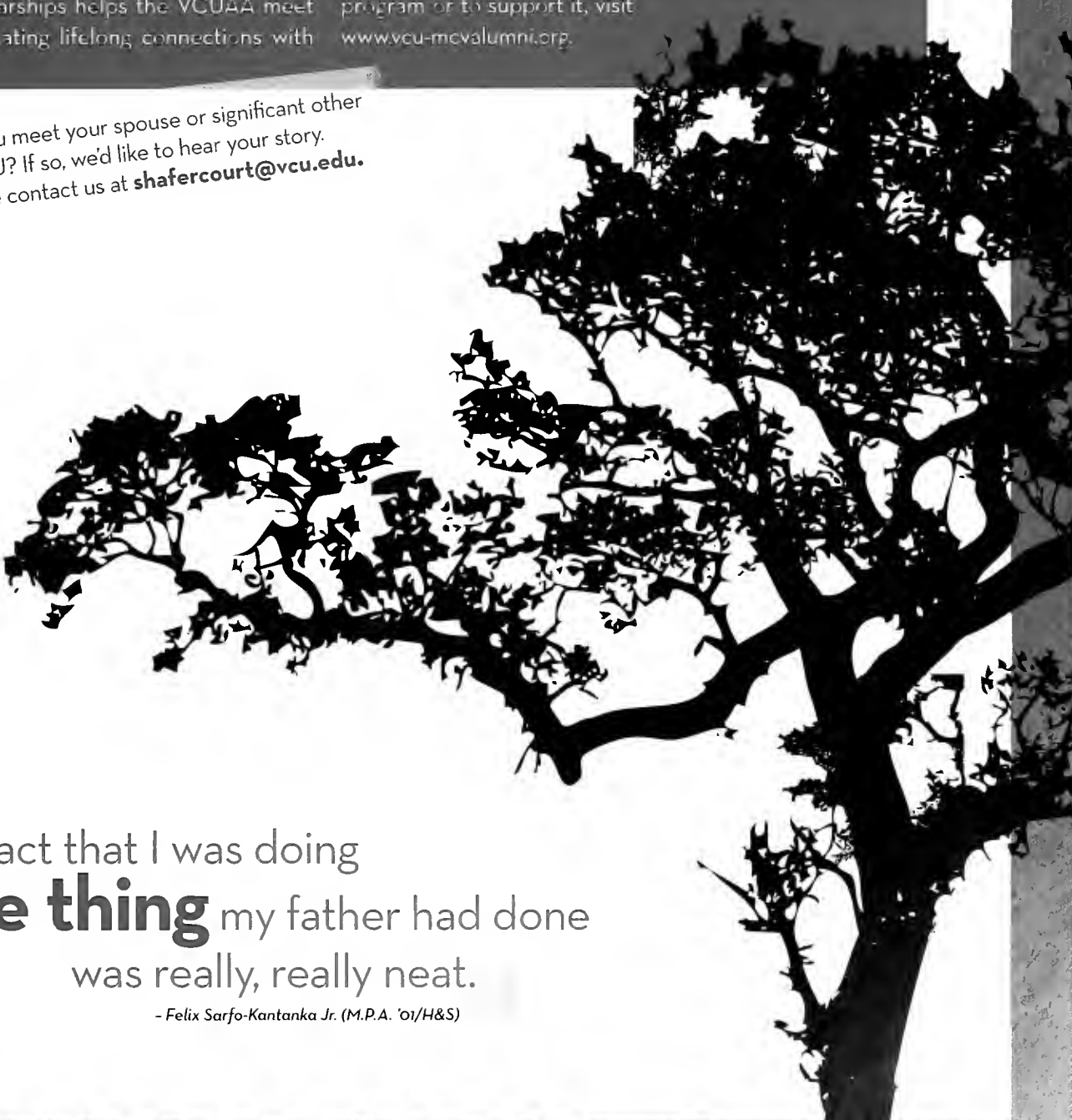
In 2006, the VCU Alumni Association and the MCV Alumni Association of VCU created a Legacy Scholarship to recognize the importance of multi-generation families to the university. Legacy scholarships are awarded to freshman children or grandchildren of dues-paying members of the alumni association.

VCU Alumni Association President **Dan Massey** (B.S. '92/B) sees the Legacy Scholarship program as a vital component to the future success of the association. "Awarding Legacy Scholarships helps the VCUSA meet a core objective by creating lifelong connections with

students as they become alumni," he says. "This scholarship program supports students financially, supports the university in attracting and retaining top students and helps to grow the influence and impact of the VCU alumni community."

The scholarship awards of \$1,000 each are made possible through the generosity of donors and dues-paying members of the association. For an application, additional information about the Legacy Scholarship program or to support it, visit [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org).

Did you meet your spouse or significant other at VCU? If so, we'd like to hear your story. Please contact us at [shafercourt@vcu.edu](mailto:shafercourt@vcu.edu).



Just the fact that I was doing  
the **same thing** my father had done  
was really, really neat.

- Felix Sarfo-Kantanka Jr. (M.P.A. '01/H&S)



## Dress it up: VCU PROFESSOR EXPLAINS HOW FASHION HELPS KIDS WITH CANCER

Karen Videtic knows how to put on a fashion show. So it was a natural fit for Videtic, chair of the Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising at Virginia Commonwealth University, to help organize a fashion show fundraiser for the Association for the Support of Children with Cancer, known as ASK. Videtic liked the idea of using fashion to raise funds for ASK, an organization that supports the VCU Children's Medical Center hematology/oncology unit, but proposed taking it a step further. "How about if we come up with something else," she suggested, "something that would benefit the kids and raise money?"

She enlisted students and faculty to design youthful fabrics and a line of loungewear for children and young adults with cancer being treated at VCU Medical Center and then invited patients to model the apparel in a fashion show during ASK's Kourageous Kids Week last fall. "They wanted to be fun and in fashion," Videtic says of the patients they worked with. The ASK for Comfort garments feature port-friendly access for chemotherapy treatment in stylish designs, including capri pants, board shorts, hoodies, T-shirts and swing and wrap tops.

Videtic recently sat down to talk about the unique apparel.

What was the design process like? In this kind of project, you have to understand your customer and what their needs are, so the design process began with researching the needs of kids with cancer. From there, we started to look at silhouettes and functionality, where the accessible seams are going to be and how are they going to get to their ports.

Then the garment is fit to a real body so you can see how it moves and fits. And there's a really important reason why: Dress forms are not totally anatomically correct and every body's slightly different. There's probably nothing funnier to see than a garment that's been made poorly put on a child, because kids will wiggle, squirm and pull on them to tell you right off that it's not comfortable.

How do the garments differ from standard loungewear? They look pretty much like pajamas or loungewear, but all of them have an easy-access opening to the typical port areas. Most of the port areas are on either side of the chest. So the seams would either be a shoulder seam or a seam that came across the

front of the chest that is held together by small, plastic snaps that are easily opened and re-closed. We can custom make other things, like breakaway pants for a child who needs to remove their pants.

What was the response to the loungewear? We held a fashion show in September, and we had about a hundred people at the Children's Museum of Richmond — people who were supporters of ASK and friends and family of kids who are cancer survivors. The models were kids who were in treatment, as well as their siblings — we tried to make all of them feel special. One of the best parts was to see how excited the kids were. I think that was a really good feeling for me and the faculty and students who had participated, to know how much they were appreciated and how special they were to the kids receiving treatment.

What's in store for the program's future? We're going to initially meet the needs of the kids right here, but people can also order the garments from our Web site — [www.askweb.org](http://www.askweb.org)

— and they will be custom-made. What we hope is that we can copyright the textiles and sell them to a fabric company and they sell that fabric during Pediatric Cancer Month with a percentage going to ASK. Maybe if we got really lucky, someone would actually buy the production and make these accessible garments, and they could sell them and give a percentage, again, to ASK. We would also like our team to design once a year both the textiles and the garments.

How has the program benefited VCU fashion students? Our key goal all along has been that students get to understand that fashion isn't all 7th Avenue and 5th Avenue and runway and exotic, crazy garments. It's very functional — it helps people and it's sometimes function over form. We really want them to understand fashion — that there are lots of things you can do with fashion that serve the community.

*Interview conducted by Kim Witt, a contributing writer for Shafer Court Connections.*

# INDEPENDENT-MINDED FESTIVAL

The James River Film Festival

serves as home for the area's  
eclectic film community

appropriate for the artist," says James Parrish, director of development at the VCU School of Nursing, who joined the festival organizing committee in 1998.

One perfect match of artist and location featured guitarist Gary Lucas at the Virginia Holocaust Museum in 2003, when he accompanied "The Golem," a 1920s silent-era film about the Jewish myth.

The festival relies heavily on dedicated volunteers to plan and execute the week-long event, as well as attend the programs. "Richmond is the kind of creative community that comes out and supports this kind of thing," Parrish says. "Lots of artists, photographers, musicians and painters come to be inspired in what they do by this medium."

In 1999, Jones and Parrish set up a nonprofit for the growing festival, and the Richmond Moving Image Co-op will turn 10 this year. Today, the co-op runs the festival, which includes a juried competition with \$2,000 in prize money, and supports independent media artists with screenings, classes and workshops.

Jones and Parrish delight in the unique festival that brings together established and emerging artists and feel satisfied that the fundamental purpose remains.

"Our original mission was to use local talent to put on programs and get these guest artists face to face with potential young filmmakers," says Jones proudly. "I'm just hoping for another 15 years."

For more information about the James River Film Festival, visit [www.rmicweb.org](http://www.rmicweb.org).

*Erin Egan is a contributing writer for Shafer Court Connections.*

by Erin Egan

RICHMOND MOVING IMAGE CO-OP

A celebration of cutting-edge film, video and animation, the festival brings renowned independent filmmakers to Richmond to screen and discuss their work.

**R**ichmond-area cinema lovers need look no further than the annual James River Film Festival for an impressive lineup of independent film, video and animation. Since April 1994, the festival has welcomed nationally and internationally known filmmakers to town to screen and discuss their works.

The brainchild of **Mike Jones** (B.S. '76/MC; M.F.A. '86/A), an adjunct instructor in the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Art History, the festival began to fill a community void after the demise of the Biograph Theater, a popular repertory cinema located a block from campus on Grace Street. Jones and other community members lamented newly released films with nowhere to go. "We started talking to see if we could pull off a festival that VCU would host," he remembers.

Support from **Bruce Koplin** (B.F.A. '61/A), then chair of VCU's art history department, and numerous other VCU alumni, including **Harrison Trent Nicholas**

(B.F.A. '74 /A), an adjunct instructor in the department, and **Ashley Kistler** (M.A. '85/A), the current director of the Anderson Gallery, got the inaugural festival off the ground. The initial program featured William Wegman, the New York-based artist famous for his videos and photographs of Weimaraners. After Jones and his troupe of unpaid volunteers pulled off the event successfully, "we thought we'd keep on keeping on for years," he says.

The festival did just that, and since then luminaries of the independent film world have descended upon Richmond. Among them were prolific filmmaker Stan Brakhage, Albert Maysles, director of "Gimme Shelter," and Scott MacDonald, a well-known avant-garde film critic.

Various venues throughout the city, including many VCU building auditoriums and theaters, the Byrd Theatre and local art galleries, host screenings. Festival organizers take great pains to pick the right venue for each film. "We look for spaces that are



# THE BIG PICTURE

LIVING LABORATORY › On Virginia Commonwealth University's Monroe Park Campus, students study, learn and conduct research in state-of-the-art facilities with Richmond's bustling Fan District as their backdrop. But only 23 miles east of the city in Charles City County sits the VCU Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences, a 342-acre field station, including a 70-acre wetland restoration site, that promotes hands-on learning along the banks of the James River. Here, classroom lessons expand to the water's edge and beyond, providing faculty with a bevy of natural resources and wildlife at their fingertips and the opportunity to share their research and teaching with students and the community. The center's 5,100-square-foot Raymond Lee Gordon Jr. Research Pier accommodates boats and offers space for easy loading of research equipment, while the new Walter L. Rice Education Building — a \$2.6 million, 4,900-square-foot facility designed with a goal of the highest national certification level for sustainability — houses classrooms overlooking a bluff on the James River, an uncommon setting for the most comprehensive urban university in the state.



# Scholarly



The Trani Scholars program, created through a gift from Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright (inset), allows freshman Afton Trent (above) to live on campus near her classes in the School of Engineering.

# pursuits

## Gifts support, contribute to student success

By Melanie Irvin Solaimani

To freshman engineering student Afton Trent, 19, earning a scholarship drastically altered her college experience.

She was accepted to several schools, including one with a nationally ranked engineering program.

"The interdisciplinary nature of VCU's program really appealed to me. At other schools, I would have had to piece together my own interdisciplinary program," she says. "Also, having this scholarship is the only way I was able to live on campus."

Living in Gladding Residence Center puts her in close proximity to the School of Engineering, allowing her the convenience of meeting with students in the computer lab to work on projects and giving her easy access to visit professors for extra help, Trent says.

Trent is one of 10 Trani Scholars, who were selected by a blue-ribbon committee to be awarded the university's highest student honor. The Trani Scholars program was created in 2006 by an initial \$1 million gift from longtime benefactors Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright.

The Wrights wanted to honor the vision, leadership and accomplishments of VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., as he neared retirement.

"Dr. Trani is the most confident and professional person I have ever known in the academic field," Ken Wright says.

Funding scholarships, the couple decided, provided the perfect source of recognition for Dr. Trani as a symbol of his devotion to making a college education accessible to everyone.

The scholarships given to the Trani Scholars represent just some of the more than 250 scholarships that donors have endowed.

"Over 70 percent of our students require some form of financial assistance in order to continue their education," says Reuban Rodriguez, Ed.D., associate vice provost and dean of student affairs. "Scholarships provide an excellent source of support for our students as well as an important connection to our generous VCU community."

Scholarships make it possible for many deserving students to attend VCU, as well as help attract the brightest, most meritorious students to the university. Endowed scholarships are created with a minimum \$10,000 gift (see "Starting an endowed scholarship"). The principal is invested and the interest of 5 percent is

used each year for student support. These named, endowed scholarships last in perpetuity.

For Yusufu Bampia Kamara, a sophomore chemistry major, winning the Trani Scholars award kept him in school and on the path to becoming a doctor.

But his journey began long before he enrolled at VCU. Kamara fled his native Sierra Leone, a tiny nation along the west coast of Africa, during a bloody civil war in the country, which claimed the life of his father. He spent several years as a refugee in the Republic of Guinea while waiting for permission to move to the U.S.

Arriving in Northern Virginia in 2006, he adjusted to living without his father as well as learning a new culture and language. He allowed himself to imagine life on a college campus.

"A Western-style education is the dream of most underprivileged and disenfranchised souls around the world. Sierra Leone is an underpopulated nation rich in mineral resources. But the biggest irony about that African nation is that it is still one of the poorest nations on Earth, with an average individual income of less than a \$1 per day," he says. "Given these facts, the chances that I could have afforded a college education in Sierra Leone are almost zero. Attending college in the U.S. is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. Hard work pays off here."

But once at VCU, his bills started to mount and he considered dropping out. That's when he learned he had been chosen as a Trani Scholar.

"Growing up in a family whose only flag bearer (my mom) is disabled, there is no way I could have afforded to stay in college if it wasn't for the Trani Scholarship," Kamara says. "Though I sometimes see myself as a deserving recipient of the Trani Scholarship, I must confess that the news of being awarded the Trani Scholarship was a miracle to me since I was almost on the verge of dropping out of college due to lack of finance. I shall be ever grateful!"

Dr. Trani is a leader in the push for creating more scholarships for VCU students and recognizes that aid truly makes a difference in many lives. As VCU and other state institutions cope with dramatic budget downturns, he sees a bright future.

"As difficult as these conditions are for VCU and for other institutions of higher education,

### Starting an endowed scholarship

	<i>Fund minimum</i>
Partial scholarship .....	\$10,000
Tuition and fees scholarship .....	\$100,000
Full scholarship* .....	\$200,000
Graduate fellowship .....	\$200,000
Full out-of-state scholarship** .....	\$400,000

\* Covers in-state tuition, fees, room and board and provides funding for books.

\*\* Covers out-of-state tuition, fees, room and board and provides funding for books.

## Legacy fund honors presidential leadership

A \$1 million gift from Dianne and C. Kenneth Wright to the VCU Rector and Visitors Presidential Legacy Fund made the Trani Scholars program possible.

The VCU Board of Visitors established this new fund as a way to honor President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., and all future presidents by providing a source of funding to support the university's mission of research, teaching and service. To accomplish this goal, the board designated four areas of need that the money from this fund would support: student scholarships, faculty achievement, community outreach and university initiatives.

"We are extremely grateful to Dianne and Ken Wright for making the initial gift to the VCU Rector and Visitors Presidential Legacy Fund," says Anne D. Jacobson, associate vice president for advancement. "I am certain many donors will wish to honor Dr. Trani upon his retirement and this fund is the perfect vehicle to do so. We hope to create a means for his successors to carry on his legacy of great leadership."

To make a gift to the VCU Rector and Visitors Presidential Legacy Fund, contact Anne D. Jacobson, associate vice president for advancement, at (804) 828-1223 or [adjacobson@vcu.edu](mailto:adjacobson@vcu.edu).



Scholarship support allows Sierra Leone native Yusufu Bampia Kamara, a sophomore chemistry major, to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor.

I remain confident that we are well positioned to survive and prosper in this uncertain time. VCU remains affordable, with tuition and required fees which remain below those charged at all Virginia doctoral institutions and James Madison University," Dr. Trani says. "This has been the case for at least the last 10 years, and we remain sensitive to our standing as Virginia's university of opportunity.

"Our devoted donors who have established generous student scholarships have helped position our university to continue to provide an outstanding education to all deserving students. Establishing a scholarship is one of the most meaningful ways of ensuring that VCU's tradition of excellence and accessible education will continue to be available to the most talented students, whatever their family circumstances."

Melanie Irvin Solaimani (B.S. '96/MC) is a contributing writer for *Shafer Court Connections*.



Donors C. Kenneth and Dianne Wright with the 2008-09 class of Trani Scholars: (front row, second from left) Yusufu Bampia Kamara, Katharina Rienks, Ranya Abi-Falah, (back row, from left) Parth Patel, and Jonathan Hundley

## VCU office aids alumni in scholarship search

Interested in exploring postgraduate educational opportunities abroad? The Fulbright Student Scholarship Program — the largest U.S. international exchange program — offers grants for graduate study, advanced research or English teaching assistantships in more than 140 countries. In the past three years, four VCU alumni received Fulbright awards, with the help of VCU's National Scholarship Office.

Created in 2005, the NSO assists VCU students and alumni in competing for a number of national and international scholarships, such as the Fulbright.

"We work with alumni just like we work with students on campus," says Jeff Wing, national scholarship coordinator in the VCU Honors College. At no cost, the NSO provides support and resources throughout the application process, including helping alumni develop their project, make connections in their country of choice and secure recommendation letters. The office also prepares candidates for interviews by organizing faculty panel reviews.

"I would not have received the Fulbright Scholarship to Dubai for the 2007-08 year without Jeff Wing's support and patience," says Hanan A. Abed (B.S. '04/H&S; M.S.W. '07/SW). "The NSO assisted me at every step of the application process, from narrowing down a research topic to mailing in my application."

Abed spent 10 months at Zayed University studying the perspectives university-aged

women have of their roles in the United Arab Emirates. Other VCU Fulbright scholars have studied Alzheimer's disease and water-pipe smoking in Jordan and pursued artistic interests in Iceland.

The Fulbright program annually awards approximately 1,500 grants, Wing says. His goal is to submit 25 to 35 applications from VCU each year. He's already halfway there, with 15 applications submitted for the 2009-10 grant cycle.

"I don't think students and alumni realize how many grants and scholarships are available for all different kinds of work and in all types of disciplines," Abed says. "The NSO helps find funding to study topics of the student's or alumnus's own interest and in places all over the world. It's a wonderful resource that is not available at all universities, and more alumni and students should take advantage of it."

FULBRIGHT

The application process for 2010-11 Fulbright scholarships begins in May. To get started, call (804) 828-1803 or visit the NSO Web site [www.honors.vcu.edu/nationalscholar](http://www.honors.vcu.edu/nationalscholar).



# VCU Alumni Association

The VCU Alumni Association, AHI Travel and Gohagan and Co. have teamed up to develop an extensive program of adventures abroad for 2009. Whether observing unique wildlife while cruising down the Amazon, experiencing the stunning coastal scenery of Italian villages or exploring the Gothic cathedrals and medieval castles of Europe, the VCU Alumni Association offers a multitude of adventures for the avid traveler. For more information on these exciting opportunities, visit [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org).

## The Great Journey Through Europe

June 15-25

## Scotland

Aug. 23-31

## Swiss Alps and the Italian Lakes

Sept. 20-30

## Budapest, Vienna and Prague Discovery

Oct. 14-24

## Best of the Mediterranean and Greek Isles

Oct. 16-27

## Italian Riviera

Oct. 17-25

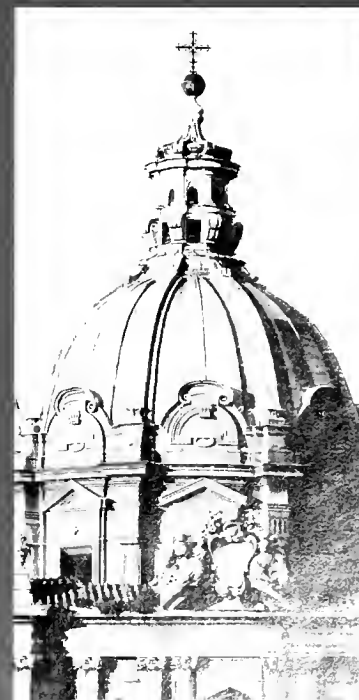
## Austrian Holiday Markets Discovery

Nov. 27-Dec. 3



"Everyone should have the opportunity to visit Tuscany in the fall. The highlight of our trip was our visit to Florence. It was filled with incredible art galleries, Gothic cathedrals, great restaurants, fountains and wonderful shops. Our guide and bus driver were extremely knowledgeable, spoke English and planned little surprises for us throughout the trip. It was particularly nice to spend time in this incredible setting with other members of the VCU family."

— Jo Lynne DeMary (M.Ed. '72/E),  
reminiscing about her 2006 trip to Italy



# Alumni Connections

News, highlights and event photos from the Virginia Commonwealth University Alumni Association and the African-American Alumni Council.

## VCU Business Society elects new board members

The VCU School of Business alumni organization adopted a new moniker, the VCU Business Society, and welcomed five new board members.

**Rhonda L. Bishop** (B.S. '02/B; M.B.A. '06/B),  
university compliance officer, VCU

**Vernon M. Daniels** (M.B.A. '07/B),  
consultant, Prism Innovative Solutions

**Michael Malinsky** (B.S. '89/B; M.B.A. '96/B),  
vice president, funds manager, Genworth Financial

**Regina Nguyen** (B.S. '03/B),  
marketing and research coordinator, GVA Advantis

**David J. Stirrup** (M.B.A. '99/B),  
Principal Financial Group

The society's board consists of 33 members, up from 14 last year. The society's goal is to help further the educational and career goals of School of Business students and graduates. Anyone holding a degree or postgraduate certificate from the VCU School of Business is a member. Online networking sites for the VCU Business Society have been initiated on LinkedIn and Facebook.



## Reunion Weekend salutes classes of 1984 and 1959

VCU welcomes alumni back to campus for the annual Reunion Weekend, April 24-26. This year, the association honors the Class of 1984, celebrating its 25th anniversary. Alumni from classes 1982-86 also are invited to come back to campus to relive fond memories and see the many changes that have occurred since graduation.

For Richmond Professional Institute alumni returning to campus, the annual RPI Alumni Reunion will honor the Class of 1959 with an induction into the 50 Year Golden Circle Alumni Club.

Weekend events include campus tours, a concert on Shafer Court and a casino night. For a complete schedule of events, visit [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org).

---

---

## Benefit spotlight Long-term care insurance

Your alumni association membership provides access to a variety of essential services. One important option available to all alumni is long-term care insurance, which provides help to those who are no longer able to function independently, such as during an extended illness or disability.

According to the Administration on Aging, roughly 70 percent of people older than 65 will need some type of long-term care service. For more information about this issue, visit [www.longtermcare.gov](http://www.longtermcare.gov).

To find out more about the insurance option offered by the VCU Alumni Association, please visit [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org). This insurance program is offered by one of the industry's leading carriers. VCU alumni receive a special group discount.

---

---

---

---

## New membership director joins Alumni Relations

Rob Brodsky has joined the VCU Office of Alumni Relations as the director of membership and marketing. Brodsky, former president of Sabre Marketing in Houston, led the Houston Area Yale Club for his alma mater before moving to Richmond. He will work with the VCU Alumni Association and the MCV Alumni Association of VCU to increase awareness and membership.

Contact Brodsky at [rebrodsky@vcu.edu](mailto:rebrodsky@vcu.edu).



Rob Brodsky

## Commencement breakfast recognizes newest alumni

More than 2,400 students received professional, graduate and undergraduate degrees during VCU's December 2009 Commencement exercises.

The VCU Alumni Association and the MCV Alumni Association of VCU welcomed these new graduates into the alumni fold at the associations' annual Commencement Breakfast.

About 130 graduates and their families enjoyed breakfast at the Sports Medicine Building before the Commencement program at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.



New graduates celebrate at the annual Commencement Breakfast, sponsored by the VCU Alumni Association and the MCV Alumni Association of VCU.

## Online resume database aids job-seeking alumni

In response to the recent upturn in unemployment, the VCU Business and Engineering Career Center has launched an online resume database, which allows VCU business and engineering alumni to post their resumes for employers to view.

Available online at [www.business.vcu.edu/alumniresume](http://www.business.vcu.edu/alumniresume), the resume database gives employers a convenient way of searching for job seekers. The VCU Alumni Association sponsored the database, which could be expanded to all VCU alumni.

Likewise, the University Career Center, which serves all VCU students, can share resources with alumni related to resume writing, interviewing skills and professional networking.

For more information, contact the VCU University Career Center, (804) 828-1645 or [www.students.vcu.edu/careers](http://www.students.vcu.edu/careers), or the VCU Business and Engineering Career Center, (804) 827-1801 or [www.business.vcu.edu/career](http://www.business.vcu.edu/career).

## Homecoming 2009 events draw alumni, students

Homecoming 2009 at VCU kicked off Jan. 28, offering current students and returning alumni a variety of festive events to attend, including concerts, tailgate parties, service projects, dances, pep rallies and the crowning of the homecoming king and queen.

An eight-member student organizing committee developed this year's theme "Go Gold." Alana Johnson, a senior fashion merchandising major and the committee's co-director, said the theme plays off "Go Green," a popular topic in the news.

"Everyone is into saving the environment," she says. "We came up with a spin on that with 'Go Gold' to continue to build spirit at VCU."

During the weeklong event, the VCU Alumni Association sponsored Hoops, a basketball game social at the Siegel Center. In its second year, the event features a pre-game pep rally, best-dressed fan contest, and fun and food for alumni families.

The association also partnered with VCU Residential Life and Housing to sponsor an RA reunion, held at and co-sponsored by the new Chili's restaurant on the Monroe Park Campus Addition. Past and current RAs mingled before touring the new Gary and Belvidere Residential College atop the restaurant.



Above: Alumni and friends joined the VCU Greater Richmond Alumni Chapter at the second annual VCUAA Hoops event Feb. 7, before watching the Rams defeat in-state rival Williams & Mary, 76-54. The event marks the conclusion of the Homecoming week at VCU. Right: Past and current resident assistants mingle at the RA reunion, held at the VCU Chili's.



### Alumni Association Organizes Chapter

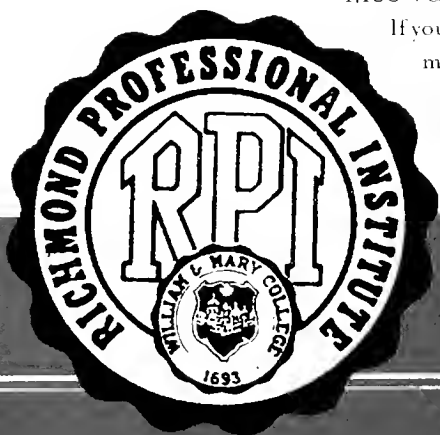
Alumni and their guests turned out to cheer on the men's basketball team at a VCU Alumni Association-sponsored social held Jan. 21 in Atlanta. The event at Georgia State drew about 20 alumni who enjoyed refreshments and fellowship before the Rams' win.

Dalentina Robertson (B.S. '87/H&S) is spearheading an effort to organize an Atlanta chapter of the association. About 1,100 VCU alumni live in the area.

If you are interested in learning more or joining the chapter, e-mail the association at [vcu-alum@vcu.edu](mailto:vcu-alum@vcu.edu).



Dalentina Robertson (left) chats with Carla Shands and Lee Shands in Atlanta.



## RPI Report

### New RPI Alumni Council forms and sets next project

The VCU Alumni Association is looking for alumni of Richmond Professional Institute interested in joining a new affiliated organization, the RPI Alumni Council of the VCU Alumni Association. The council is organizing a Book of Honor, which will represent memories from RPI alumni who contributed to the RPI sculpture project.

You can help carry the RPI heritage in other ways, such as purchasing tickets to be entered into a drawing to win one of two free mounds of golf at Birkdale Country Club and Stonehenge Country Club. Funds raised will help support initiatives to keep the history of RPI alive at VCU. Tickets are \$5 each or five for \$20.

After a successful fundraising effort to erect the RPI commemorative sculpture "Tableith," the council now plans to raise funds for a cobblestone terrace to complete landscaping around the sculpture.

If you are an RPI graduate and would like to serve on the council or would like to purchase tickets for the drawing, contact Diane Stout-Brown, executive director of the VCU Alumni Association, at (804) 828-7020 or [dstout@vcu.edu](mailto:dstout@vcu.edu).

### RPI alumna recounts her travels to New York paper

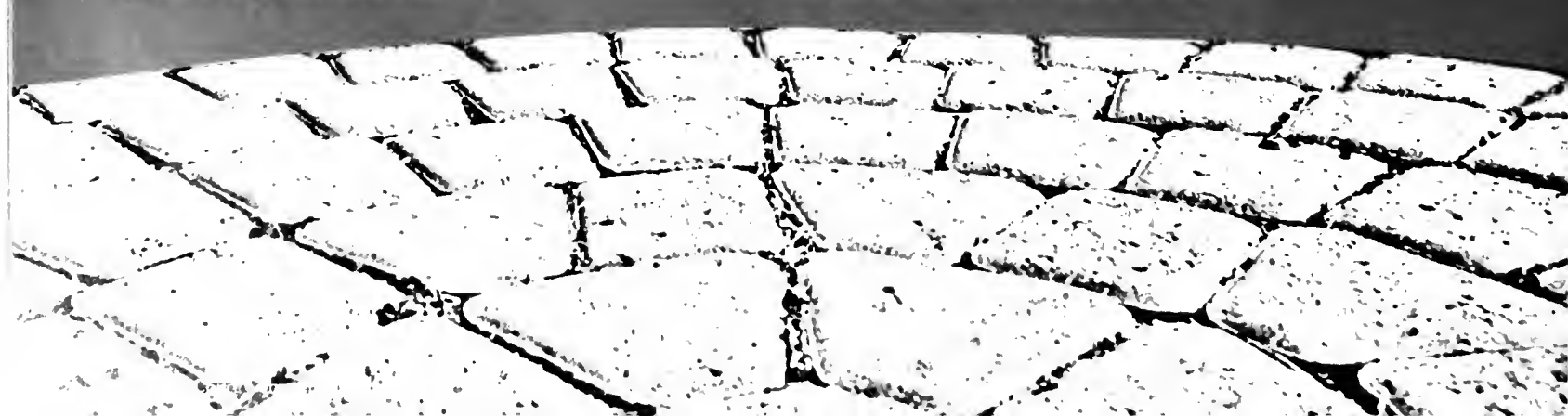
A two-page feature in the December 2006 Chatham Press, a monthly newspaper reporting on the village of Chatham, N.Y., and surrounding towns, focused on the worldly travels of RPI alumna **Molly Harding** (B.S. '41/E). In the article, Harding, a Chatham native, talked about her love for travel and how it took her to Japan after World War II.

The article notes, "Harding girdled the globe on a trip from 1946-1948 that was, for a young woman of 27 years, alone in that post-war era, quite an accomplishment. She did it on cargo ships and ocean liners. She walked the gaunt streets of post-apocalyptic Hiroshima. And she ushered in a new era of commerce in Japan in the textile industry."

Harding sailed home from Japan on a three-month tour that took her to exotic ports around the Arabian Peninsula, Tangiers and Ireland.

"This trip, overall, gave me an appreciation of and insight into the habits, customs and way of life of different nationalities. It was a great education," Harding told the paper.

Back in the States, she became a successful educator, including serving as a college dean before retiring.



# connect

with the alumni association

The VCU Alumni Association is your lifelong connection to Virginia Commonwealth University. Your continuing involvement with the university is critical to its sustained excellence.

When you become a member, you're not only supporting the alumni program but also your school and student scholarships.

## ENJOY THE REWARDS.

As an **ACTIVE MEMBER**, you receive special association benefits including:

- Access to a new online alumni directory where you can connect with classmates
- Discounts on international travel programs
- Discounts on Internet access and computer repairs
- Discounts on athletic events and invitations to exclusive watch parties
- Discounts on VCU merchandise online and from the campus bookstores
- Discounts on Recreational Sports memberships
- Invitations to members-only events
- Scholarship opportunities for your children and grandchildren
- Hotel and car rental discounts

Register on our recharged Web site, [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org), to learn more and to **CONNECT** to the new online directory and other exciting members-only features.

To **JOIN** or **RENEW** your membership, visit [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org), e-mail [vcu-alum@vcu.edu](mailto:vcu-alum@vcu.edu) or call (804) 828-2586.

# VCU

[www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org)

Virginia Commonwealth University



discounts  
celebrations  
networking  
benefits  
opportunities  
friendships  
updates  
reunions  
special events



# Update your record and share the news

[www.vcuupdate.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcuupdate.vcu-mcvalumni.org)

Save time! Visit the VCUIAA Web site to update your contact, employment and personal information.

**ABOUT YOU**

Name ..... Maiden name (if applicable) .....

Class year .....

Street address .....

City ..... State ..... ZIP .....

Home phone ..... Cell phone .....

Home e-mail address .....

**EMPLOYMENT**

Job title ..... Start date ..... Retirement date (if applicable) .....

Company .....

Street address .....

City ..... State ..... ZIP .....

Work phone .....

Work e-mail address .....

**MARRIAGE**

Spouse's name .....

If VCU alumnus/alumna, class year .....

Wedding date ..... Spouse's employer .....

**FAMILY**

Boy     Girl

Name ..... Date of birth/arrival .....

Spouse/partner's name .....

If VCU alumnus/alumna, class year .....

To report a death, please also provide a news clipping of the death notice.

Name of deceased ..... Class year .....

Date of death ..... Relationship to deceased .....

**Please note:** News for publication must be no more than one year old because of space constraints. If you do not wish to publish this information, please check the box at right.

**Mail your update to:** Office of Alumni Relations, Virginia Commonwealth University, 924 W. Franklin St., P.O. Box 843044, Richmond, VA 23284-3044; or fax (804) 828-8197; or e-mail [vcu-alum@vcu.edu](mailto:vcu-alum@vcu.edu); or visit [www.vcuupdate.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcuupdate.vcu-mcvalumni.org).

I am submitting information on the following:

Promotion

New job

Address change

Wedding

Family addition

Death notice

Other (Please attach separate sheet to report awards, etc.)

Do not publish this information. I am submitting for record purposes only.

# Class notes

Send information about your professional and personal accomplishments to [shafercour1@vcu.edu](mailto:shafercour1@vcu.edu). Or, mail your news to Shafer Court Connections, Virginia Commonwealth University, 924 W. Franklin St., PO. Box 843044, Richmond, VA 23284-3044

## 1950s

**Malcolm D. Farmer** (B.S. '58/H&S, M.S. '60/AHP) provides counseling and case management services to disabled veterans on campus at Marshall University.

## 1960s

**David Eddleman's** (M.M. '64/A) new song cycle to texts of Hal Sirowitz's "My Therapist Said" premiered at Symphony Space in New York City.

**Patricia Morris\*** (B.F.A. '69/A, M.P.A. '02/H&S) was promoted to vice president of philanthropy for Feed More, a nonprofit organization that brings together the Central Virginia Foodbank and Meals on Wheels.

**David Norris\*** (B.S. '63/B) is a contributing writer for USA Deep South online, which features stories of special interest to Southerners. Visit <http://usads.msfl.net>.

**Ernest Clayton Wright** (B.M. '68/A, M.M. '77/A) has released several jazz piano trio albums, including "Serenade in Blue," "Jazz Escapades" and "Jazz Voyages."

**Willie Anne Wright** (M.F.A. '64/A)\*, **Anne Savedge** (M.A.E. '78/A), **Marsha Polier Grossman** (B.F.A. '72/A)

and **Barbara Ames** (M.A. '69/A, M.F.A. '91/A) were part of a "Wondrous Women from VCU" exhibit at Avenue Arts Studio Gallery in Lynchburg, Va.

## 1970s

**H. Cary Adams\*** (B.S. '79/MC, M.S. '87/B, Cert. '99/B) is a senior automation analyst with Chesterfield County's Department of Utilities.

**Nancy Burks\*** (B.M. '75/A) is the organist and choir director at Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va.

**Robert Davis\*** (B.S. '76/B) received a Doctor of Management degree from the University of Maryland University College in May 2008.

**Peter S. Eckert, CRE, MAI** (B.S. '75/MC) was elected president of the Hampton Roads Association for Commercial Real Estate.

**Ellen Flint** (B.M. '78/A) has been promoted to director for undergraduate education at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

**Margaret "Kathy" Hite Hollar** (B.S. '71/H&S) retired after 33 years at the University of Virginia Health System and four years at the VCU Medical Center.

**John M. Krolak, Ph.D.** (B.S. '76/H&S, M.S. '78/H&S) earned his Ph.D. and is a supervisory health scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

**Stanly B. Mitchell Jr.** (B.S. '78/B) is a buyer with Univar USA.

**Patricia Rowell** (B.S. '70/H&S, B.S. '74/N, Ph.D. '90/AHP) is employed as a scientific program manager at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Jackie Taylor Thornton** (B.S. '77/B, M.S. '78/B) serves as director of human resources for Kelly Aerospace in Montgomery, Ala.

## 1980s

**Rhonda L. Bishop** (A.S. '88/AHP, B.S. '02/H&S, M.B.A. '06/B) is university compliance officer for VCU. She recently joined the board of the School of Business alumni organization, VCU Business Society.

**Keven LaVerdad Casey** (B.S. '89/MC) is an anchor and reporter for Clear Channel Houston's NewsRadio 710 KTRH in Texas.

**Clelia Amari Fry** (B.M.E. '83/A) received her license to practice law in North Carolina and joined Kincaid and Associates, a general practice law firm.

## Spotlight

### Former Commonwealth Singers reunite for VCU Music benefit concert

When a group of former Commonwealth Singers first met in July 2008 to discuss the idea of a reunion concert, they wanted it to be more than an opportunity for them to perform together again.

They also wanted to make a difference in the education of current Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Music students.

"We really had two goals," says **B.J. Barlow** (B.A. '05/A), reunion concert committee member and minister of music at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va. "One, just to get together and sing again, remember the old days, and experience wonderful music as a group. Second, we wanted to give back to VCU Music."

After weeks of rehearsal, both goals came to fruition. About 30 of the choral group's alumni — including one member who traveled from New York — performed in a Feb. 8 concert at the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts. The 400-member audience helped raise nearly \$3,000 for the Friends of VCU Music Scholarship Fund.

"It was a very emotional, wonderful evening," says **Kimberly Shepherd Hassmer** (B.M. '06/A), reunion concert committee member and music specialist at Salem Church Elementary School in Chesterfield County, Va. She joined the stage with her husband, **David Hassmer** (B.A. '06/A).

"The Commonwealth Singers is where we met, so it was nice to go back and sing on the stage with him and remember that part of us being together," she says.

Another familiar face on stage was John Guthmiller, Ph.D., Department of Music chair and director of choral activities. Guthmiller says he

found the alumni's commitment to the performance and the music department inspiring.

"That's the kind of thing you hope for when you're teaching them at age 18, 19 — to see that growth and development for them," he says.

Guthmiller helped the committee select 11 songs for the concert, which also included three pieces by the current Commonwealth Singers and a powerful performance of "Virginia" presented by both groups.

The concert reminded the alumni of what they loved most about their time at VCU.

"Dr. Guthmiller's way of directing, pulling the group together, rehearsing — he drew out more than notes on a page but created a family," Barlow says.

For Hassmer, the performance reinforced her desire to stay involved with her alma mater. She recently became a member of the VCU Music Alumni Board and hopes the first-time concert event becomes a tradition.

"I love VCU and I'm very proud to be a Ram," she says. "After the concert, we all said 'When can we do this again?'"



Lauren Gierre (B.M. '07/A) (left) and Andrea Harris (B.M. '07/A) sing with alumni at the February performance.

# Recently published alumni and faculty members



**Carl F. Ameringer, Ph.D.**, professor of health policy and politics at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, is the author of a new book, "The Health Care Revolution: From Medical Monopoly to Market Competition."

**Joyce O. Beckett, Ph.D.**, published a new book, "Lifting Our Voices: The Journeys Into Family Caregiving of Professional Social Workers," in August.

**Mary Boyes**, an instructor in Focused Inquiry in the VCU University College, developed a literary anthology focused on work experiences with co-editor Peter Scheckner, a literature professor at Ramapo College. "The Way We Work: Contemporary Writings from the American Workplace" features a number of contributors that have a VCU connection, including Larry Levis, late VCU English professor and poet, **Nathan Long** (M.F.A. '99/H&S), **Paula Champa** (M.F.A. '97/H&S), **Clay Blancett** (B.F.A. '97/A) and **Darren Morris** (M.F.A. '98/H&S).

**Christopher Brooks**, professor of anthropology and African-American studies, collaborated with **Joe Evans**, an alto saxophonist, on a book about Evans' life and 30-year career in the music industry, "Follow Your Heart: Moving With the Giants of Jazz, Swing, and Rhythm and Blues."

**Doug Burford\*** (B.S. '65/MC) recently published the book "Agency Reveals All" about the advertising industry.

**Susann Cokal**, assistant professor in the Department of English, published "Breath and Bones," a novel about an elusive 19th-century artist and the young woman who follows him from Europe to the American Southwest.

**Patrick Dattalo** (M.S.W. '80/SW; Ph.D. '93/H&S), associate professor in the School of Social Work, wrote a book about sample-size determination in research, "Determining Sample Size - Balancing Power, Precision, and Practicality."

**Brian J. Daugherty, M.A.**, instructor and assistant to the chair in the Department of History, is lead editor of a new book examining and evaluating the implementation of the Brown v. Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1954 that ended school segregation, "With All Deliberate Speed: Implementing Brown v. Board of Education."

**George Davis** (B.S. '71/B) published his first novel, "Arizona Son Rise," that tells the story of a young Native American boy who uses the game of baseball to find his destiny.

**Robert Deigh\*** (B.S. '77/MC) is the owner of RDC Communications/PR in Fairfax, Va. He recently published the book "How Come No One Knows About Us?"

**Clint McCown**, associate professor of English, recently published his third collection of poetry, "Dead Languages," including 25 poems previously published in journals such as the Sewance Review, the Southern Review, the Southern Poetry Review and the North American Review.

**Maiké I. Philipsen, Ph.D.**, professor in the School of Education's Department of Foundations of Education, published "Challenges of the Faculty Career for Women: Success and Sacrifice." The book offers recommendations for reform and advice for female faculty members coping with issues such as balancing work and family and working in a historically male-dominated field.

**Maurice Robinson** (B.S. '65/B) wrote "Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida: A History," published by the History Press in Charleston, S.C.

**Paul Steucke\*** (B.F.A. '62/A) has been an author, graphic designer and fine artist for more than 35 years. He recently published his memoir, "Burbia Boy," about growing up in the early suburbia days of Northern Virginia, as well as his time as a student at Richmond Professional Institute.

**Charles West**, coordinator of winds and percussion in the Department of Music, was the lead author and compiler for "The Woodwind Player's Cookbook: Creative Recipes for a Successful Performance," published by Meredith Music Publication. The book includes articles by VCU faculty members, including **West**, **Bruce Hammel** and **Albert Regni**, as well as alumnus **Victor Goines** (M.M. '90/A).

**Nelson Wikstrom, Ph.D.**, professor of political science and public administration, is a contributing writer for "Urban and Regional Policies for Metropolitan Livability," a new book that examines the importance of a regional approach in solving issues such as transportation, the environment, affordable housing, crime, employment, poverty and education.

**Kevin L. Goodwyn** (B.S. '86/B) is a database administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools.

**Andy Hulcher\*** (B.S. '84/B), owner of Richmond-based Partnership Staffing, ran the coat-check operations at six of the 10 inaugural balls in Washington celebrating President Barack Obama's Jan. 20 swearing-in.

**Lora J. Katz** (B.F.A. '80/A) is director of architecture at the Roanoke, Va., office of Clark Nexsen.

**Kristina "Tina" Kendall** (B.S. '84/B) is a Sarbanes-Oxley manager for Hilb, Rogal and Hobbs.

**Cynthia McMullen** (M.A. '89/H&S) is director of public relations and communications for the VCU School of Pharmacy.

**Rosetta Rolan** (B.S. '89/MC) is the director of diversity at KIN Television Corp.

**Charles H. Smith Jr.** (M.P.A. '81/H&S) completed his first tour with the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command on the USNS Rainier.

**Patricia I. Wright\*** (M.Ed. '84/E) was appointed to the Education Commission of the States by Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine. She also has been named to a task force of the Council of Chief State School Officers that will advise the Obama administration.

## 1990s

**Paul Lancaster Adams** (B.S. '90/H&S) joined Microsoft Corp. as associate general counsel to head its labor and employment litigation.

**Tom Bailey** (B.M. '91/A) moved to Long Island, N.Y., and serves as organist and choirmaster at St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church.

**Lisa L. Brock** (B.S. '97/B) is a director with McGladrey and Pullen.

**Kelly Hundley Brooks** (B.A. '97/H&S; Cert. '06/H&S; M.P.A. '06/GPA) is the director of operations of the Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition.

**Hudson "Rusty" Byrd\*** (B.S. '91/B) is deputy budget officer for the Bureau of Consular Affairs and serves on the board of directors for the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association at the U.S. Department of State.

**Kelly Conner** (B.A. '99/H&S) is employed at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business as a client services manager.

**Gabe Corbett** (B.S. '95/B) is a Realtor with Keller Williams in Richmond, Va.

**Heather Eades\*** (B.S. '97/B) is an emissions specialist for Dominion Resources.

**Terry G. Ferguson** (B.S. '98/B) is employed by Charles Schwab.

**Clarence A. Forman Jr.** (B.S. '90/H&S) is an investigator and attorney at the commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Mental Health's Office of Investigations.

**Kilian James Garvey, Ph.D.** (B.A. '91/H&S) was named to the editorial boards of the Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology and the Journal of Evolutionary Studies. Garvey is an assistant professor of psychology at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine.

**Matthew W. Greene** (B.S. '95/MC) is employed by JetBlue Airways as a pilot.

**Mary Heller** (B.S. '99/H&S) recently graduated from George Mason University with an M.A. in Teaching Literature and Writing.

**Shawn Henry** (M.S. '97/H&S) was named assistant director of the FBI's Cyber Division.

**Ronette Jacobs\*** (B.A. '90/H&S) is the CEO of Tools for Life.

**Charlotte Jensen\*** (B.A. '94/H&S; M.T. '94/E) serves as president of Cole James Associates.

**Kanishka Kapil\*** (B.S. '91/B) is employed as an executive marketing specialist at VELUX America.

**Marty Kline\*** (M.P.A. '97/H&S) is the assistant director of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Va., and a practicing licensed nursing home administrator.

**Diamond H. Lassiter** (B.S. '97/B) is a systems engineer for Verizon Communications.

**Nancy McAtee** (M.S. '96/H&S) is a fire and explosion investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

**Melanie C. Morgan** (B.A. '90/H&S) is a freelance business writer.

**Elizabeth (Karle) Pierce** (B.S. '93/B) earned a degree in biology and a doctorate in immunology. She is a research associate at Case Western Reserve University, where she is researching bone marrow transplants.

**Svetlana C. Ross** (B.S. '97/E) was recognized by Guinness World Records for having the longest legs of any woman in the world. Standing at 6 feet and 5 inches, Ross' legs measure almost 4 feet and 4 inches.

**Alika Rosser** (M.S. '99/MC) is a reporter and photographer for the Jones County News.

**Rhonda Scott** (B.S. '93/B) is a real estate coordinator for the city of Norfolk, Va.



**Nealiette "Terri" Murphy Simpson** (B.M. '97/A) was recognized in the vocalist category of the 2008 Theresa Pollak Prizes for Excellence in the Arts.

**Dwitoyo Akoro Soeranto** (M.U.R.P. '97/H&S) lives in Jakarta, Indonesia, and works as the subdirector of data and information at the Ministry of Public Works.

**Robb Spewak** (B.S. '93/MC) is co-host and in-studio producer for the nationally syndicated "Mike O'Meara Show."

**Matthew Sullivan** (B.S. '90/H&S), an attorney with White & Allen, P.A., has been elected to the Lenoir Committee of 100's board of directors, which provides funding for economic development projects in Lenoir County, N.C.

**Wendy Vick-Willis** (B.A. '95/H&S) was appointed organ donation awareness spokesperson in conjunction with Methodist Hospital and Multi-Organ Transplant Center.

**Denise Walters\*** (B.S. '85/H&S, Ph.D. '91/D) is a principal research scientist in nutritional product development at Wyeth and has won two Global Pride Awards.

**Jacquelyn White** (B.S. '98/H&S, M.S.W. '02/SW) is a prevention specialist at Henrico Area Mental Health.

## 2000s

**Taylor Barnett** (B.M. '02/A, M.M. '04/A) and **Bryan Hooten** (M.M. '06/A) are members of the No BS Brass Band,

which was honored in the ensemble category of the 2008 Theresa Pollak Prizes for Excellence in the Arts.

**Mary Bergman** (B.M. '01/A), a member of the Virginia Army National Guard, was accepted into the Interservice Physician Assistant Program, where she will earn a master's degree from the University of Nebraska.

**Kitty J. Boitnott** (Ph.D. '07/E) was appointed to the P-16 Education Council by Virginia's governor.

**John Comstock** (B.S. '04/B) is a senior account executive with UPS.

**Ryan Corbitt** (B.M. '04/A) and **Trey Pollard** (B.M. '05/A) composed the score for "Border Town," directed by Chris Williams of Studio 108 in Richmond, Va.

**Aftab Datta** (M.S. '02/H&S) worked as a synthetic chemist at the Naval Lab before earning his M.B.A. He currently works as a management consultant.

**Ryan Davis** (B.S. '01/B) is a network software engineer for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

**Darin A. Duehl** (B.A. '06/MC) is an account manager at Benedict Advertising in South Daytona, Fla.

**Jaroa A. Favilla\*** (B.S. '08/H&S, M.T. '08/E) is employed as a Spanish teacher for Henrico County Public Schools.

**Erin Fitzpatrick** (B.S. '07/B) is employed by Saatchi and Saatchi in New York.

**Katherine Lynn Gallagher\*** (B.S. '07/MC) works in operations at the Barber Martin Agency in Richmond, Va.

**Jesus A. Garcia** (B.A. '08/H&S) completed U.S. Navy basic training with honors at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill.

**Rebecca E. Haase** (B.S. '08/B) is a human resources student program manager with the Defense Commissary Agency at Fort Lee, Va.

**Robert C. Hedman** (B.S. '04/B) is a police officer with the city of Richmond, Va.

**Gayland Hethcoat\*** (B.S. '07/MC) is a student at the University of Miami School of Law.

**Ji Kim\*** (B.S. '05/B) is the controller for Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas, a social services agency operating in North Carolina and South Carolina.

**Angela Kirk** (M.B.A. '00/B) is one of 31 residents in the Broad Residency in Urban Education program with the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems.

**Greg Loewer** (B.M. '08/A) performed with CalArts Percussion Ensemble at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in November.

**Angela Mack** (B.S. '04/MC) moved back to Virginia to become an elementary school teacher after spending three years as a print journalist in Wilmington, N.C.

## Spotlight

### Biology alumnus concocts 'Cirrusly' great vodka

Virginia Commonwealth University alumnus **Paul McCann** (B.S. '92/H&S) always imagined running his own business but never expected that dream would stem from a night out.

In 2004, McCann was out with a friend in Richmond and noticed all the available vodkas were imported. He started doing some research and testing on his own and found he could make a good natural, additive-free, potato-based vodka. The majority of vodkas are made from grains, but McCann says, to him, potatoes make the best and smoothest vodka.

From there, McCann grew Parched Group Distillery, best known for its Cirrus brand vodka – a spirit that's received numerous accolades and awards in the past four years, including earning in 2007 the "Virginia's Finest" seal from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"A lot of folks tend to think that to have a quality product you have to have something imported," McCann says. "I think that the 'Virginia's Finest' designation helps give added recognition to products that are made here in Virginia."

Confident that Cirrus vodka could stand up against the imported brands, McCann started entering it into national competitions in 2005. The label earned its first silver medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition just six months after the distillery opened. A year later, Cirrus vodka took home the gold at the same competition. That's when McCann decided to distribute the product commercially, beginning in his home state.

"We really wanted to enter a couple competitions and see how competitive Cirrus is with other top brands that are well-established," McCann says. "We got it to where we really wanted it, and once we received the gold, we decided to get it out on the market."



Paul McCann creates Cirrus vodka at his 1,100-gallon distillery – Parched Group Distillery.

More than 170 Virginia ABC stores carry Cirrus vodka with an equal number of bars, restaurants and hotels serving the brand. McCann has already expanded into the Washington, D.C., and Tennessee markets and is looking to capture additional market share in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia this year.

"When you are working for yourself, you are constantly growing the brand," McCann says. "You get a lot of satisfaction out of being able to start, build and achieve your goals."

# Alumni Association

## VCUAA officers

C. Dandridge Massey (B.S. '92/B), president  
Donna M. Dalton (M.Ed. '00/E), president-elect  
Patricia E. Green (M.S.W. '74/SW), secretary  
Kenneth "Ken" A. Thomas (B.S. '91/B), treasurer  
Thomas H. Beatty (B.A. '93/H&S), officer-at-large

## Board of directors

### Term expiring 2009

Peter A. Blake (B.A. '80/H&S; M.S. '88/MC)  
Suzette P. Denslow (B.S. '79/H&S)  
Irvin "Jack" Farmer (B.S. '69/B), presidential  
appointment  
William R. O'Connell Jr. (B.M.E. '55/A)  
Thomas A. Silvestri (M.B.A. '86/B)  
Patricia I. Wright (M.Ed. '84/E)

### Term expiring 2010

Rejena G. Carreras (B.F.A. '70/A; M.A.E. '80/A)  
William L. Davis (B.S. '74/H&S; M.S. '79/H&S)  
David R. Dennier (B.S. '75/B)  
Gary M. Inman (M.A. '93/A)  
Stephen H. Jones (B.S. '75/B)  
Shirley R. McDaniel (B.G.S. '99/H&S)  
Mary E. Perkinson (B.F.A. '91/A; B.S. '03/En)  
John J. Schwartz (B.S. '69/B)  
Vickie M. Snead (B.S. '76/B)

### Term expiring 2011

Leah L.E. Bush (M.S. '79/H&S; M.D. '84/M)  
Gregory B. Fairchild (B.S. '88/MC)  
Aaron R. Gilchrist Jr. (B.S. '03/MC)  
Christopher R. Jones (B.S. '01/En)  
Paul D. McWhinney (B.S. '74/SW; M.S.W. '79/SW)  
Elizabeth J. Moran (M.P.A. '92/H&S)  
Jacqueline Tunstall-Bynum (B.S. '82/H&S)  
John S. Phillips (M.S. '78/B), presidential  
appointment

## Alumni group representatives

### School alumni board chairs

Steven B. Brincefield, C.P.M., (M.S. '74/B),  
School of Business  
Stephanie L. Holt (B.S. '74/H&S), School  
of Education  
Julia M. Cain (B.S. '01/En), School of Engineering

## African-American Alumni Council

Faith Wilkerson (B.S. '03/MC; M.Ed. '05/E),  
president

## Young Alumni Council

Gaurav "G" Shrestha (B.S. '03/B), president

## Did you know?

Since 1990, VCU's international student population has increased nearly fivefold, adding to the diverse makeup of the university's student body. A record 1,612 international students, representing 111 countries, enrolled in VCU this year. Students from India (273) constitute the highest number of international students on campus, followed by Saudi Arabia (211), China (182) and South Korea (157).

Mark Steven Miles Jr. (B.A. '02/H&S) recently published, along with his colleague Emily Kate Snyder, a featured article in *The Spire*, the theological magazine of Vanderbilt Divinity School. "Strangers No Longer: Faithful Voices for Solidarity" portrays their experiences founding a nonprofit organization.

Yuqi Shi\* (B.S. '08/B) is an analyst for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

Nathan Smith (B.A. '05/H&S) is enrolled in the Library and Information Sciences master's program at the Catholic University of America.

Garry Spriggs (B.S. '03/H&S) works in the Department of Prosthetics of Loma Linda Healthcare System in Loma Linda, Calif.

Dale Stuart (B.S. '05/H&S) is working toward a Ph.D. in chemistry at VCU under Everett Carpenter, Ph.D.

Stephanie R. Summers (M.S. '06/MC) lives in Chicago and works as the art director of Energy BBDO.

Amanda Burton Winger (M.M. '04/A) is the executive director of the Conductors Guild, an international nonprofit organization for music conductors. She's also a board member of the National Music Council.

Sara Zavik (B.A. '06/H&S) works in Spain as a language and conversation assistant at an elementary school.

Sara M. Jessee ('44/SW), of Richmond, Va., Oct. 23, 2008, at age 85.

Roberta T. Luce (B.S. '44/H&S), of Richmond, Va., Jan. 1, 2009, at age 86.

Mary C. Rowan ('48/A), of Banks, Ore., Aug. 10, 2008, at age 81.

Hannah B. Tucker (B.S. '47/B), of Tallahassee, Fla., Nov. 3, 2008, at age 82.

Charlotte Williams ('48/SW), of Greenville, Va., Sept. 3, 2008, at age 82.

## 1950s

Mary M. Barker (B.S. '50/E), of Midlothian, Va., Oct. 17, 2008, at age 79.

Robert L. Bowers (B.M.E. '54/A), of Richmond, Va., Sept. 24, 2008.

Grace Dorey Gallagher\* (B.S. '52), of Virginia Beach, Va., Sept. 5, 2008.

Frances W. Johns (M.S.W. '58/SW), of Hampton, Va., Sept. 13, 2008.

Suzanne R. Levett ('59/B), of Glen Allen, Va., Dec. 6, 2008, at age 67.

John R. Melia (B.S. '59/B), of Richmond, Va., July 30, 2008, at age 76.

Charles P. Nash III (B.F.A. '53/A), of Charlottesville, Va., Oct. 21, 2008.

Rev. Morgan Shelton Smart (B.M.E. '52/A), of Mechanicsville, Va., Sept. 15, 2008, at age 70.

William Allen Steinbach ('50/B), of Midlothian, Va., Sept. 30, 2008.

Barrington E. Wash (B.S. '58/E), of Mechanicsville, Va., July 8, 2008, at age 76.

## 1960s

Edith Abbot (B.S. '63/E), of Salem, Mass., Sept. 25, 2008, at age 85.

Carolyn A. Hammond Ball (B.S. '68/E), of Tappahannock, Va., July 1, 2008.

Mary Jennie Bates (B.S. '67/E), of Chester, Va., July 17, 2008, at age 65.

Katherine T. Branner (M.Ed. '69/E), of Hanover, Va., Sept. 27, 2008.

Betty O. Brown (B.S. '69/E), of Midlothian, Va., Oct. 14, 2008.

Jean G. Comess (B.S. '65/SW), of Virginia Beach, Va., Dec. 15, 2008, at age 66.

Charlotte M. Crayton (B.S. '60/H&S; M.Ed. '70/E), of Kenbridge, Va., Sept. 5, 2008, at age 82.

Bernard L. Harlow (B.S. '67/B), of Mechanicsville, Va., Oct. 1, 2008, at age 77.

E. Fred Kahwajy (B.S. '62/H&S), of Richmond, Va., July 27, 2008.

Byron J. Kirkman\* (B.S. '60/B), of Richmond, Va., July 19, 2008, at age 92.

Joseph J. Markow Jr. (B.S. '67/B), of Hanover, Va., Sept. 12, 2008, at age 66.

Joel C. McGurk (M.S. '67/E), of Richmond, Va., Aug. 25, 2008.

Jack S. Mettee (A.S. '60/En), of Sandston, Va., Jan. 30, 2008.

## Faculty and staff

Darryl Harper, assistant professor in the Department of Music, toured the Western Caribbean with the Regina Carter Quintet and led his own Onus Trio on a tour to Madison, Wis., in November.

Kris Keeton, assistant professor in the Department of Music, was awarded a Dean's Exploratory Research Grant to study ragtime xylophone music with Bob Becker, the foremost practitioner in the field.

Rex Richardson, associate professor in the Department of Music, gave a solo performance in Chicago's Millennium Park and a master class at the Manhattan School of Music.

Michael Schutz, percussion instructor, presented a clinic at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Austin, Texas.

Sonia Vlahcevic, professor in the Department of Music, will give a lecture recital at the International Conference of the College Music Society in Zagreb, Croatia, in June 2009. She will present on the solo piano music of Andrzej Dutliewicz, composer and director of contemporary music at the Chopin Institute in Warsaw, Poland.

## In memoriam

### 1930s

Dorothy T. Efta (B.S. '38/H&S), of Punta Gorda, Fla., Sept. 26, 2008.

### 1940s

Anne E. Harris (B.S. '45/H&S; M.Ed. '71/E), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 30, 2008, at age 87.

Douglas C. Houchens (B.F.A. '40/A; M.F.A. '52/A), of Davidson, N.C., Aug. 19, 2008, at age 92.

## New lifetime members

John R. Abram  
 Sara E. Anderson  
 Fran Avery  
 William C. Baber  
 Connie A. Beard  
 Robert A. Beard  
 Joseph E. Becht Jr.  
 Michael A. Bell  
 Melissa V. Berent  
 Paul R. Bethel  
 Marie T. Bliss  
 Jan Bolger  
 Nancy C. Boutchyard  
 Jefferson L. Buruss  
 Henryetta C. Callahan, L.C.S.W.  
 Shirley E. Carney  
 Elizabeth Anne Carter, Ph.D.  
 Daniel E. Clark  
 Gianna C. Clark  
 Joice E. Conyers, Ph.D.  
 Jessica S. Cope  
 Lynn A. Cowles  
 Carol A. Cox, Ph.D.  
 Edward W. Dadez, Ph.D.  
 Kristen N. Davis  
 Holly S. Delano  
 Michael R. Dickinson  
 Lana I. Digges  
 Philip G. Disharoon  
 James H. Dudley  
 Carol V. Dunlap  
 Letitia M. Edwards  
 Alan J. Enjetti  
 John E. Farrell  
 Rebekah A. Felty  
 Anita H. Garland  
 Randolph D. Glasscock  
 Martha Lou Green, Ed.D.  
 Robert J. Grey Jr.  
 Gwendolyn J. Gunderson  
 Felicia Anderson Hatch  
 Jane A. Hatcher  
 Linda S. Heath  
 Laura Q. Heinle  
 Joseph M. Heppert  
 Judy Heppert  
 Sharon Stark Hooper  
 Jennifer A. Huffman  
 Michael C. Huffman  
 Malinda H. Johnson  
 Kanishka Kapil  
 Nancy S. Kesler  
 John G. Kloke II

Bruce E. Lasswell  
 Trang T. Le, D.D.S.  
 Dean L. Lewis  
 Heather Kyle Lewis  
 Christopher G. Loftin  
 Matilda Bradshaw Loftin  
 Robert P. Malyska  
 James J. McDonough, Ph.D.  
 Elizabeth W. Meggs  
 Thomas P. Michelli  
 Gwen E. Miller  
 Keith H. Miller  
 Joanne K. Mudd  
 Channing M. Nuckols  
 Carol Olson  
 Catherine L. Porter  
 Laura D. Rexroad, Pharm.D.  
 John D. Roberts  
 Marcia Ann Robertson  
 Merle E. Robertson III  
 Susan B. Robertson  
 Carrie P. Rose  
 Rodney L. Rose  
 Gregory E. Salyers  
 Michael A. Scruggs  
 Cassandra A. Sermons  
 Nikki A. Sheridan  
 Amar Shrivastava  
 Cathaleen B. Skinner  
 JoAnn R. Spiegel, Ph.D.  
 John J. Stenger  
 Katrina H. Stephens  
 Michael J. Stephens  
 Andrea M. Stewart  
 Sarah Werner Swope  
 Shing Yue Tang  
 Marvin R. Tart Sr.  
 Alice Gaskill Taylor  
 Jessica M. Thies  
 Jeffrey R. Thompson  
 Lisa K. Thompson  
 Thomas R. Thompson  
 James D. Thurman Jr.  
 F.H. Wakefield  
 Paul D. Ward  
 Ruth H. Watkins  
 Byron L. Whitted  
 Cristy Whitted  
 Sandra Bell Wilkins  
 Grace L. Williams  
 Timothy O. Williams  
 James P. Zook

List includes individuals who joined the VCU Alumni Association as lifetime members between July 1, 2008, and Dec. 31, 2008.

Louis A. Michaux (B.S. '69/MC), of Ford City, Pa., Oct. 21, 2008, at age 74.  
 Preston E. Morris\* (B.S. '69/B), of Charlottesville, Va., July 14, 2008, at age 63.  
 James E. Proffitt (B.S. '62/B), of Powhatan, Va., Aug. 8, 2008.  
 Martha C. Purcell (M.S. '69/H&S), of Richmond, Va., July 5, 2008, at age 91.  
 Nelda B. Roehm (B.S. '60/H&S, M.S. '61/AHD), of Hot Springs National Park, Ariz., Dec. 28, 2008.  
 Judith T. Rotella (B.S. '61/B, M.Ed. '85/E), of Richmond, Va., July 8, 2008, at age 69.  
 John M. Syria (M.S.W. '67/SW), of Raleigh, N.C., July 20, 2008, at age 71.  
 Sophia P. Teel (M.S. '65/H&S), of Bluffton, S.C., June 10, 2008.

### 1970s

William G. Bell III (B.F.A. '76/A), of Roanoke, Va., May 27, 2008, at age 54.  
 William R. Bowers (B.F.A. '72/A), of Americus, Ga., Oct. 12, 2008, at age 59.  
 Joseph M. Browning Jr. (M.B.A. '77/B), of Richmond, Va., Aug. 31, 2008, at age 83.  
 Claudine G. Bryant (M.Ed. '74/E), of Richmond, Va., July 8, 2008, at age 82.  
 Carolyn H. Cromwell (B.S. '79/B), of Midlothian, Va., Dec. 12, 2008, at age 61.  
 William F. Cumbo Jr. (M.Ed. '74/E), of Richmond, Va., Jan. 1, 2009, at age 72.  
 John O. Dolan (B.S. '71/E, M.S. '82/E), of Powhatan, Va., July 4, 2008, at age 60.  
 Rebecca H. Duncan (B.S. '72/E, M.Ed. '77/E), of Atlanta, Ga.  
 Ricky A. Griffith\* (B.S. '79/B), of Richmond, Va., July 16, 2008, at age 52.  
 Linda A. Heacock (B.S. '75/H&S, M.Ed. '77/E), of Ashland, Va., Sept. 12, 2008, at age 64.  
 Kenneth J. Herndon\* (B.S. '70/B), of Palm Harbor, Fla., Dec. 7, 2008.  
 Alfred B. Houghton (M.S. '78/H&S), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 4, 2008, at age 65.  
 Mildred W. Jenkins (M.Ed. '78/E), of Tempe, Ariz., July 22, 2008, at age 86.  
 Michael H. Kostinsky (B.S. '77/E), of Ellicott City, Md., Aug. 28, 2008.  
 Denny R. Lambert (B.S. '78/H&S), of Abingdon, Va., July 15, 2008, at age 53.  
 Julian C. Morris (B.S. '73/B), of Richmond, Va., July 26, 2008, at age 61.  
 Steven H. Mott (B.F.A. '71/A), of Middletown Springs, Vt., June 17, 2008.  
 Carl W. Murdock Jr. (B.S. '74/H&S), of Glen Allen, Va., Dec. 28, 2008, at age 68.  
 Russell E. Naumann III (A.S. '70/En), of Mollusk, Va., Aug. 3, 2008.  
 C.A. Rhudy Sr. (B.S. '72/B), of Lynchburg, Va., Aug. 4, 2008.  
 Kirk Ring (B.S. '74/B, M.B.A. '75/B), of Richmond, Va., Nov. 1, 2008, at age 64.  
 Aubrey L. Sawyer (M.M.E. '77/A), of Virginia Beach, Va., Aug. 7, 2008, at age 73.  
 Tom Skinner\* (B.A. '77/H&S), of Kannapolis, N.C., July 9, 2008.  
 John J. Vavala (M.B.A. '79/B), of Rockledge, Fla., May 27, 2008, at age 55.  
 Cortez Howard Williams (B.A. '72/H&S), of Richmond, Va., July 12, 2008.  
 Linda Stoner Winslett (M.Ed. '71/E), of Georgetown, S.C., Sept. 3, 2008, at age 71.  
 Frances P. Wright (B.S. '78/E), of Kinsale, Va., Oct. 16, 2008, at age 90.

## In memoriam

### Martha Elisabeth Riis Moore, oldest alumna, passes at 94

Alumna **Martha Elisabeth Riis Moore** (B.S. '37/H&S) died Dec. 6, 2008, in Richmond, Va. She attended Westhampton College and in 1937 graduated from The Richmond Division of the College of William & Mary, a predecessor to Virginia Commonwealth University. Moore worked for more than 30 years as a social worker in Hanover, Henric and Richmond before retiring in 1973. She also worked in the 1950s as a part-time newspaper correspondent for the city's evening paper, *The Richmond News Leader*, and the *Hanover-Herald Progress*, which published her articles and photographs documenting black schools in the county.

To read more about Moore's storied life and her professional and civic contributions, visit the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* online at [www.timesdispatch.com](http://www.timesdispatch.com) and search the site for "Martha Riis Moore."



**James N. Yerby** (B.S. '75/E), of Richmond, Va., July 23, 2008, at age 55.

#### 1980s

**Milo S. Bidou** (B.A. '85/H&S), of Glen Allen, Va., Aug. 7, 2008, at age 46.

**Franklin D. Collins** (B.G.S. '88/H&S), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 11, 2008, at age 74.

**Elaine M. Fauth** (B.S. '82/B), of Chesterfield, Va., Aug. 18, 2008, at age 49.

**Jonathan S. Gilbert** (B.S. '80/H&S), of Roosevelt, N.Y., Nov. 20, 2008, at age 49.

**Scott J. Grow** (B.S. '86/B), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 24, 2008, at age 46.

**Dianne N. Hoppes** (B.A. '87/H&S), of Manakin-Sabot, Va., July 18, 2008, at age 62.

**Marshall Knox\*** (B.S. '81/B), of Richmond, Va., Oct. 4, 2008, at age 52.

**Karen V. Lafley** (B.S.W. '87/SW; M.S.W. '88/SW), of Philadelphia, Pa., July 8, 2008, at age 65.

**Patricia T. Moore** (B.F.A. '80/A), of Richmond, Va., Oct. 14, 2008, at age 66.

**A. Carl Shelton III** (B.A. '80/H&S), of Chesterfield, Va., Aug. 7, 2008, at age 51.

**Jennifer K. Sweeney** (B.S. '80/E), of Midlothian, Va., July 2, 2008, at age 58.

**Edward O. Tate** (B.S. '80/H&S), of Kents Store, Va., Sept. 5, 2008, at age 69.

**William G. Trout** (B.F.A. '83/A), of Richmond, Va.

**John C. Turner** (M.B.A. '82/B), of Richmond, Va., Oct. 17, 2008, at age 73.

**Cindy Woods** (B.F.A. '85/A), of Richmond, Va., Nov. 21, 2008, at age 52.

**Thomas L. Wright** (B.S. '84/B; M.T. '99/E; Cert. 05/E), of Richmond, Va., Oct. 6, 2008, at age 48.

#### 1990s

**Carl B. Atkins** (B.S. '96/En), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 9, 2008, at age 57.

**Aloma L. Harris** (B.S. '98/H&S), of State College, Pa., Sept. 9, 2008, at age 36.

**Mendy A. Mathena** (B.A. '96/H&S; M.T. '96/E), of Easley, S.C., Sept. 20, 2008, at age 35.

**William C. Seay** (B.A. '94/H&S; M.T. '98/E), of Richmond, Va., Jan. 1, 2009, at age 36.

**Robert R. Stutzman** (M.Ed. '94/E), of Fredericksburg, Va., June 30, 2008, at age 46.

#### 2000s

**Jeffrey C. Andrick** (B.F.A. '03/A), of Richmond, Va., Sept. 13, 2008, at age 27.

**Josephine A. Artis** (M.Ed. '05/E), of Richmond, Va., July 15, 2008, at age 37.

**Shandi S. Sutton** (B.A. '08/H&S), of Richmond, Va., Dec. 9, 2008, at age 27.

### Faculty and staff

**David French Sauer** (B.F.A. '50/A), a professor in the VCU School of the Arts, died Jan. 12, 2009. Sauer received the distinction of being the youngest exhibitor to be admitted to a national art exhibit — at the age of 16 — with his painting "Still Life Number 14," which was included in the Fifth Biennial of Contemporary American Painting at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. During his 60 years as a painter, he exhibited in numerous cities including New York, Atlanta and San Francisco, and a number of his works were included in the Duncan Phillips collection in Washington, D.C.

**John Sutherland, Ph.D.**, a professor of information systems who taught at VCU for 28 years, died Dec. 26, 2008. Sutherland came to VCU in 1980 and served as the department's lead Ph.D. adviser for several years in the 1980s and 1990s.

## Abbreviation key

Alumni are identified by degree, year and college or school. An asterisk (\*) identifies members of the VCU Alumni Association.

### College and schools

H&S	College of Humanities and Sciences
A	School of the Arts
AHP	School of Allied Health Professions
B	School of Business
D	School of Dentistry
E	School of Education
En	School of Engineering
GPA	L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
GS	Graduate School
LS	VCU Life Sciences
M	School of Medicine
MC	School of Mass Communications
N	School of Nursing
P	School of Pharmacy
SW	School of Social Work
WS	School of World Studies

### Degrees

A.S.	Associate Degree
Cert.	Certificate
B.F.A.	Bachelor of Fine Arts
B.G.S.	Bachelor of General Studies
B.I.S.	Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies
B.M.	Bachelor of Music
B.M.E.	Bachelor of Music Education
B.S.	Bachelor of Science
B.S.W.	Bachelor of Social Work
D.D.S.	Doctor of Dental Surgery
D.N.A.P.	Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice
D.P.A.	Doctor of Public Administration
D.P.T.	Doctor of Physical Therapy
M.A.	Master of Arts
M.Acc.	Master of Accountancy
M.A.E.	Master of Art Education
M.B.A.	Master of Business Administration
M.Bin.	Master of Bioinformatics
M.D.	Doctor of Medicine
M.Ed.	Master of Education
M.Env.	Master of Environmental Studies
M.F.A.	Master of Fine Arts
M.H.A.	Master of Health Administration
M.I.S.	Master of Interdisciplinary Studies
M.M.	Master of Music
M.M.E.	Master of Music Education
M.P.A.	Master of Public Administration
M.P.H.	Master of Public Health
M.P.S.	Master of Pharmaceutical Sciences
M.S.	Master of Science
M.S.A.T.	Master of Science in Athletic Training
M.S.D.	Master of Science in Dentistry
M.S.H.A.	Master of Science in Health Administration
M.S.N.A.	Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia
M.S.O.T.	Master of Science in Occupational Therapy
M.S.W.	Master of Social Work
M.T.	Master of Teaching
M.Tax.	Master of Taxation
M.U.R.P.	Master of Urban and Regional Planning
O.T.D.	Post-professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate
Pharm.D.	Doctor of Pharmacy
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy

### Correction

The fall 2008 issue of *Shaffer Court Connections* listed incorrect degree information for Leah Rush, a member of the VCU Alumni Association board of directors. She earned an M.S. in biology in 1979 and an M.D. in 1954. *Shaffer Court Connections* regrets the error.

# Campus bookstore redefines the college shopping experience

By Kelli Anderson

Large, gold-and-black banners line West Broad Street drawing the attention of passers-by to Virginia Commonwealth University's newly renovated Monroe Park Campus bookstore. Opened in spring 2008, Barnes & Noble @ VCU serves students as well as community members living and working near campus with textbooks and an array of traditional Barnes & Noble products. In addition, the store carries an expanded selection of Rams apparel — another eye-catching draw.

"One of the first things we wanted to do was bring all our general and VCU merchandise to the windows so students and Richmonders could see it from the street front," says Amy Randolph, Barnes & Noble @ VCU general manager.

Once inside the 30,000-square-foot store, customers can browse the best-sellers, pick up school and art supplies or settle into one of several seating areas to chat with friends or to study.

In the mid-1980s, space was much more limited in the 6,000-square-foot Hibbs Hall bookstore, then operated by the university, as stacks of books lined the interior.

The bookstore gained more breathing room 10 years later, in 1998, when VCU opened e<sup>2</sup> Bookstore on the ground floor of the West Broad Street Parking Deck. The store's technology- and energy-oriented design reflected the e-commerce trend popular at the time.

"The store had a harder and edgier feel," says Dan McDonald, VCU Business Services assistant director.

In contrast, Barnes & Noble @ VCU offers a more comfortable atmosphere, with a mix of dark hardwood floors and carpeting, warmer colors, and comfy seating. Students now visit the store to hang out with friends, grab lunch at Quiznos or attend one of the many book signings, with appearances by alumni authors such as **David Baldacci** (B.A. '83/H&S) and **Doug Burford** (B.S. '65/MC).

"My favorite thing about the store is seeing students sitting at the study tables reading or talking with friends," Randolph says. "I think it's a place where students feel very welcome."

Campus and student snapshots appear throughout the store on posters and murals, promoting VCU pride in the community. Alongside VCU gear, customers can easily find all the things they've come to expect from Barnes & Noble.

"They made a real commitment to sell books you would find in a regular Barnes & Noble," McDonald says. "They've been more aggressive in reaching out as a neighborhood resource, adding community activities on the weekends to encourage people to come in and shop."

The bookseller worked closely with the university to marry VCU's unique character with the larger brand, creating an opportunity to cater to students as well as to the community.

"We had a vision of this bookstore being part of the downtown Richmond community as well as serving as the VCU bookstore," Randolph says.

*Kelli Anderson is a contributing writer for Shafer Court Connections.*



The VCU bookstore evolves in sync with the growing student population and societal trends, while integrating the downtown Richmond community.

**[then]** In the 1960s through the mid-1980s, the VCU bookstore — located in Hibbs Hall — supplied students with university materials, such as used textbooks and art supplies.

**[now]** Barnes & Noble @ VCU on the Monroe Park Campus welcomes students and shoppers into a comfortable environment to read a best-selling novel, study for a test, or meet friends over coffee.

# Datebook

Mark your calendars for these Virginia Commonwealth University and VCU Alumni Association events. For more alumni activities, go to [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org), [www.vcu-aaac.org](http://www.vcu-aaac.org) or visit <http://events.vcu.edu> for campus happenings.

## APRIL

April 9-26  
**Theatre VCU – “Chicago”**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-6026

April 10-19  
**Juried Student Fine Art Exhibition**  
 Anderson Gallery  
 (804) 828-1522

April 22  
**Outdoor Adventure Program: Canoeing Under the Stars**  
 (804) 828-6004

April 24-26  
**Reunion Weekend\***  
 Various events/locations  
 (804) 828-2586



Outdoor Adventure Program

April 24-29  
**Outdoor Adventure Program: New River Rafting Trip**  
 (804) 828-6004

April 1-4-May 3  
**M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition, Round 1**  
 Anderson Gallery  
 (804) 828-1522

April 24-26  
**Opera Theatre VCU – “Suor Angelica” and “Gianni Schicchi”**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1169

## MAY

May 8-17  
**M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition, Round 2**  
 Anderson Gallery  
 (804) 828-1522



Spring Commencement

May 13  
**Graduates Reception Gala\* “Your Passport to the World!”**  
 Science Museum of Virginia  
 (804) 828-2586

May 14  
**Graduating Student Scholars Reception\***  
 VCU Scott House  
 (804) 828-2586

May 16  
**Spring Commencement**  
 Richmond Coliseum  
 (804) 828-1917

May 17-26  
**Outdoor Adventure Program: Costa Rica Adventure**  
 (804) 828-6004

May 21  
**VCUAA Board of Directors Meeting\***  
 University Student Commons  
 (804) 828-2586

## JULY

July 10  
**Maggie Sansone’s Celtic Trio**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1166



Stephen Bennett

July 17  
**Stephen Bennett**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1166

July 24  
**Quatro na Bossa**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1166

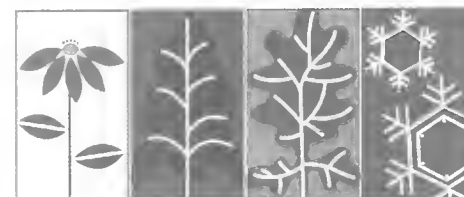
July 26  
**VCU Community Guitar Ensemble**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1166

## OCTOBER

Oct. 10  
**Chestnut Brass Company**  
 W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts  
 (804) 828-1166

Oct. 19-23  
**Friends of the Library Annual Book Sale**  
 James Branch Cabell Library  
 (804) 828-1105

\* VCUAA event



## CIRCA

### University Student Commons: 1984

Catering to a student population nearing 17,000 in 1977, the Virginia Commonwealth University Office of Student Activities, desperately needs more room. A proposal for a new student commons building gains approval, and after years of planning and lobbying by students, faculty and administrators, the University Student Commons opens its doors Jan. 17, 1984. Offering indoor and outdoor spaces where students congregate and relax, the 69,135-square-foot facility features a large staircase, glass atrium and 350-seat theater.



## Connect online [www.vcu-mcvalumni.org](http://www.vcu-mcvalumni.org)

The updated VCU Alumni Association Web site offers new features to keep you plugged in.

- NEW** Personal Web pages and social networking
- NEW** Searchable alumni directory
- NEW** Career center
- NEW** Calendar of events and online event and membership registration
- NEW** Easy access to association partners
- Easy access to VCU links
- Alumni magazines – current and previous issues
- University and alumni association news and information

Visit the site today for a test drive!

For more information and to join your VCU Alumni Association, please visit the Web site and select "Become a Member."



IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BE A MEMBER!