



WEEMS CALLED TO PRESERVE AFRICAN-AMERICAN BUSINESS HISTORY

Robert Weems, Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History, has a vision for his work at Wichita State. In addition to conducting research, teaching and mentoring students, he wants to document the history of African-American-owned businesses in Wichita to ensure that their legacy is preserved for posterity.

A scholar of African-American history, African-American business history and U.S. history, Weems discovered early in life that he enjoyed learning about the past. As a child, he was fascinated with reading history books. This interest deepened as he became older. African-American leaders such as James Forten, Anthony Overton and Martin Luther King, Jr. appealed to him.

"Growing up in the late 1960s, there was a lot of discussion of black history and its importance," Weems said.

He became more interested in history as a college major when he attended Western Illinois University. Among his faculty role models he found a mentor in Professor H.O. Ubamadu, director of the black studies program, who told Weems that there was a need for more blacks with Ph.D.s.

"He really convinced me that getting a Ph.D. was something worthwhile," said Weems.

After graduating from Western, he went on to pursue two master's degrees and a doctorate. When it came time to decide on a research area for his dissertation topic, Weems narrowed it to two: the political or business side of African-American history. He chose to study the business aspects, partly to fill in historical gaps.

"Under the capitalist system, no business is guaranteed to last. However, documenting the activities of African-American enterprises ensures on one level that they will survive forever," Weems said.

His dissertation examined the history of the Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, a black-owned insurance firm.

A friend teased him, telling him that studying the history of a black insurance company would be "about as exciting as watching grass grow."

Weems proved him wrong.

His dissertation research, later published as his first book, "Black Business in Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925-1985," consisted of an unprecedented access to company historical resources.

"They were excited about what I wanted to do. They gave me full access to company records and full access to themselves in terms of interviews," said Weems. "They also gave me the names of former employees and others to interview."

This access also presented him with a major dilemma when one company secret was divulged: Robert A. Cole, company president from 1927-1956, was also a professional gambler who used some of his winnings to buttress the insurance company's finances. Weems' initial source did not want the information made public.

"On the one hand, I had to discuss how that helped the company survive the Great Depression," Weems said. "This extra infusion of capital was important, but this informant told me it was off the record."

A break came when he interviewed Cole's son.

"He was proud of the fact his father was a noted poker and black jack player," Weems said. "This appeared to solve my dilemma."

While some might find Cole's source of additional capital problematic, Weems noted that when this episode is placed in the context of historic African-American entrepreneurship, it makes sense.

"When you look at African-American businesses then as well as now, access to capital was and is a lingering problem," he said. "This was especially the case in the early 20th century when very few banks would provide black people with start-up capital."

He reflected again on what his friend had said about watching the grass grow.

"I found that one of the reasons the company was cooperative with me was because some of the employees saw that, by the 1980s, the black insurance industry was in the midst of a real downturn," Weems said. "This was a chance for the company to have its history documented. If I hadn't done that project, Chicago Metropolitan (which ceased operations in 1996) would have literally come and gone without a trace."

One of Weems's later books, "Business in Black and White: American Presidents and Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century," provided him another especially exciting research experience. Like most, Weems entered the project believing that federal government programs to promote black entrepreneurship were born in the 1960s. He was totally unprepared for what he would find.

During his preliminary research for "Business in Black and White," Weems discovered a fleeting reference to a Division of Negro Affairs within the Department of Commerce in the 1949 book "The Negro's Adventure in General Business." He subsequently contacted an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration to determine the size of the Division of Negro Affairs collection in Commerce Department records.

"I was expecting a couple of folders," said Weems. "I was pleasantly surprised to find out there were 26 boxes instead. I was barely able to contain my excitement and wait until Spring Break to travel to College Park, Maryland."

When Weems arrived at the National Archives, he found that the Commerce Department's Division of Negro Affairs collection represented "a historian's dream come true." Besides the records of the government agency, which existed from 1927-1953, there were also photographs associated with the office. Even more exciting, it appeared that Weems was the first scholar to examine the material.

"When I shared my find with a colleague who specializes in the history of U.S. government support of small business," Weems said, "he told me he had never heard of the Commerce Department's Division of Negro Affairs. I knew at that point I had discovered something very special."

Projects such as these are what motivate him to watch the business history grass grow.

One of the difficulties he encounters in his research involves preservation of business records. This challenge was brought to the forefront when working on his current project, a biographical study of Anthony Overton. An important African-American businessman in early 20th century Chicago, Overton headed a major business conglomerate that included the Overton Hygienic Manufacturing Company, the Douglass National Bank, the Great Northern Realty Company, the Chicago Bee newspaper and the Victory Life Insurance Company. By 1983, only OHMC was still an existing enterprise, led by Overton's great-grandson. For whatever reason, he threw out the company records when the personal care products company closed that year.

Weems said, "From the standpoint of history, that's just tragic. However, it's more common than we might think."

Weems wants to prevent the loss of historical records from happening in Wichita. He is developing a course to be offered next fall that will have graduate students meet with African-American business owners to facilitate the process of documenting black-owned businesses in Wichita.

"Based upon my experiences with Chicago Metropolitan, I clearly see the importance of documenting, for posterity, the activities of African-American enterprises," said Weems.



ROBERT WEEMS

Robert Weems, Willard W. Garvey Professor in Business History, is one of few specialists in African-American business history. In this role he has been able to expand the research literature and make important contributions to his field. His arrival at Wichita State complements the curricular offerings in the history department and fills a special niche.

"While ably filling our need for a distinguished professor of business history," said **Robert Owens**, chair of the history department, "Dr. Weems brings an added dimension of expertise in African-American history, allowing us to offer courses we've hoped for years to provide."

A Chicago native, Weems played basketball at Western Illinois University as an undergraduate student and majored in history. Furthering his education, he completed a master's degree in Afro-American Studies from Boston University, a second master's (history) from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Ph.D. in

history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

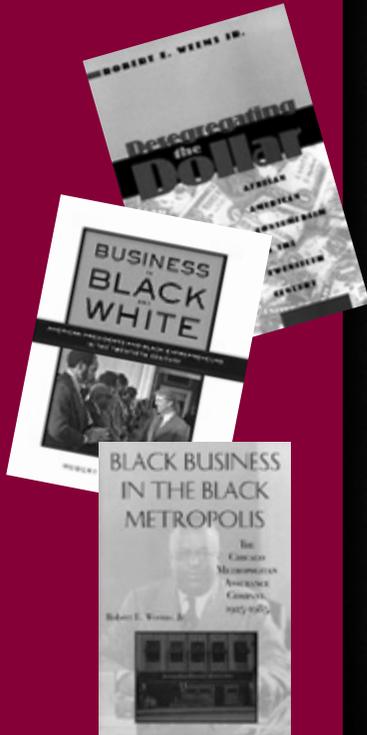
"I feel honored to have this position, especially considering the person who held the Garvey professorship before me," Weems said. "He (**Craig Miner**) was very prolific. I am also very impressed with Willard W. Garvey's work as an entrepreneur and philanthropist."

In a 2005 interview, Miner spoke with prescience.

"Professorships of distinction should recognize good teaching, research and publishing," said Miner. He added that the Garvey professorship would allow the history department to select later a professor from a national pool with an advanced level of experience in teaching and research.

Owens echoed Miner's comments.

"Dr. Weems comes to us with an absolutely outstanding record of scholarly research and publication," he said. "We are thrilled to have him with us."



STUDENT ACCOLADES

Arnold Durel Deffo-Nde, junior, mathematics and aerospace engineering, won second place in the 2011 U.S. National Mathematics Championship at the annual Mathematical Association of America MathFest. His trip was supported by Fairmount College, the Office of Research Administration, Student Government Association, and the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics.

Jason Felihkatubbe, graduate student, liberal studies, gave a paper on André Breton and surrealism at the annual meeting of the Midwest Modern Language Association. His areas of interest are literature, philosophy and anthropology, with a focus on the significance of modern French works that recast ancient myths.

Graduate students **Beau Morris** and **Robert Turner**, along with Professor **Sal Mazzullo**, geology, and WSU alumnus **Brian Wilhite**, were featured in the American Association

of Petroleum Geologists' Explorer, the flagship publication for the petroleum geology industry. The Explorer published two articles in the May issue detailing their newest research.

NEW HIRES

- Neal Allen**, political science
- Kelly Banna**, psychology
- Moriah Beck**, chemistry
- Susan Castro**, philosophy
- Makiko Hori**, sociology
- Deah Miller**, School of Social Work
- Diane Peltier**, School of Social Work
- Nancy Tate**, LAS Advising Center
- Sam Taylor**, English
- Robert Weems**, history
- Li Yao**, biological sciences

KANSAS COURT OF APPEALS VISITS WSU CAMPUS

It is rare when court is brought to the public. It is perhaps more unusual when people are enthusiastic about attending.

More than 150 WSU community members and the public recently observed live court proceedings on campus. The Kansas Court of Appeals heard oral arguments for three cases on Sept. 21 in the CAC Theater. Attendees appreciated a front-row seat to the judicial process. Many students interacted with the judges after each case, in the classroom, or in formal settings.

Daniel Rosendale, a junior studying criminal justice, found their visit to campus fascinating.

"I was able to glimpse into the world I am studying to join," said Rosendale. "This was an amazing experience I will not soon forget."

The court was on campus as part of the university's recognition of Constitution Day. Signed by the Constitutional Convention on Sept. 17, 1787, the Constitution is the basic law of the United States.

Chief Judge Richard Greene was the driving force behind the appellate court's on-campus appearance.

"I often stop and remember the vision of Senator Robert Byrd, who designed and advocated passage of the congressional mandate for Constitution Day tributes at schools receiving federal funding," said Greene. "I think Senator Byrd would have been proud to see what was accomplished at WSU; we did our best to lift up the importance of the Constitution to our democracy and to emphasize the conscientious efforts of our judiciary to embrace and uphold its continuing vitality for Americans."

At Wichita State, the judges spent a considerable amount of time with students, talking about their career paths, the judicial system and their own court experiences. They visited a business law course the evening before the court proceedings and met with the public law class taught by **Neal Allen**, assistant professor of political science, after the court session. They also attended a luncheon with pre-law students and faculty and staff.

Allen was impressed with the judges.

"My students got the opportunity to hear firsthand how judges do their work, and how seriously

judges take their work of protecting the rights of citizens," said Allen.

One of his students agreed.

"I learned about the inner workings of due process and how rare oral arguments are," said **Rachel Degarmo**, political science sophomore. "It was a privilege to have sat in and listened."

Students seemed to also appreciate watching the court in action.

"I was really impressed with how hard the justices worked to bring court to the people," said Rosendale. "By bringing it to the campus, more students and community members were able to see this level of the legal system and study it live and not by just reading about it in a textbook."

Judges heard oral arguments for three cases specifically chosen for the WSU court session. Each case dealt with constitutional issues.

"These (issues) usually occur in criminal cases, and often frame issues requiring interpretation and application of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth amendments to the U.S. Constitution," Greene said. "Although we are also called upon to apply the First and Second amendments, as well as the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, such cases are not quite as plentiful as those in the prior categories."

Rana Fawaz, graduate student in economics and president of the Pre-Law Student's Association, appreciated the selection of cases for the court docket.

"I found it very insightful to be able to closely observe the entire court proceedings and get a better grasp of how constitutional rights challenges are handled in the court system," said Fawaz.

The justices allowed questions from the audience at the end of each case and before the close of the proceedings. Students asked questions about how the court works, what the judges do and how they separate their personal beliefs from the laws they must enforce.

Allen used the opportunity to engage his introductory political science course, requiring students to attend one case.

"We discussed the hearings and the judicial process during our next class," he said. "We will also return to the subject when we get to the courts section of the course later in the semester."

The educational effect was not lost on students who attended the hearings but weren't in the classes the judges visited. Rosendale said, "The justices really sought to use this experience as a teaching tool for students, and I appreciated that very much."



THE KANSAS COURT OF APPEALS HEARS ORAL ARGUMENTS FOR THREE CASES SEPTEMBER 21 IN THE THE CAC THEATER. PHOTO COURTESY OF WICHITA EAGLE/MIKE HUTMACHER.

APPELLATE COURT VISITS COME WITH A PURPOSE

According to **Chief Judge Richard Greene**, Kansas Appellate Court visits to campuses are intended to achieve four goals:

- To educate the student population on the function of the judicial branch relative to safeguarding rights and liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution;
- To permit an interface with those students who may be considering a legal career, especially those in organized pre-law societies or organizations;
- To offer expertise in legal and constitutional questions to faculty who may be teaching courses where such expertise is relevant; and
- To put a face on the appellate courts for the community at large, to answer questions of that community and to demonstrate how the court serves the people of Kansas by deciding significant issues of statutory and constitutional interpretation and by creating precedent on such issues for the practicing bar.

The docket for the Sept. 21 oral arguments at Wichita State included these cases:

104,549 State of Kansas, Appellee, v. Hung T. Dang, Appellant. This case involves the appeal of a drug conviction where the defendant argues that his statements should not have been admitted because he did not receive a timely Miranda warning.

105,229 City of Wichita, Appellee, v. Patricia Stevenson, Appellant. This appeal challenges the constitutionality of a Wichita city ordinance prohibiting overcrowding of a building, here "Harry and Ollie's" tavern.

103,180 State of Kansas, Appellee, v. Marquez L. McCray, Appellant. This case also frames a Miranda issue, but the defendant challenges the constitutionality of the trial court's response to the jury's questions during deliberations.

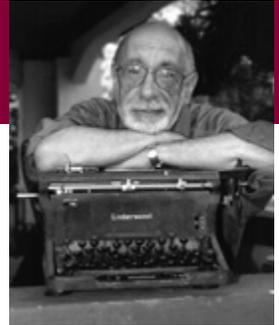
Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Pre-Law Students' Association sponsored this event.

ALBERT GOLDBARTH NAMED RECIPIENT OF 2011 COLDSMITH AWARD

Albert Goldbarth, the Adele M. Davis Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Wichita State University, has been named the recipient of the 2011 Don Coldsmith Award for Lifetime Literary Achievement.

The annual award pays tribute to a distinguished Kansas author whose lifetime contributions have used the written word to enhance the proud literary legacy of the state. The award is sponsored by Lucas, Kan.-based Ad Astra Publishing and was presented during the annual conference of Kansas Association of State Librarians on Oct. 13 in Salina.

Goldbarth, an internationally acclaimed poet, has been a part of WSU's creative writing faculty since 1987. He has published more than 25 collections of poetry, has been a Guggenheim Fellow and won the National Book Critics Circle award in 1991 and 2001, the only poet ever to receive the honor twice. Goldbarth also won the Mark Twain Award for Humorous Poetry, awarded by the Poetry Foundation, in 2008.



IN MEMORIAM

Niall Shanks, Curtis D. Gridley Distinguished Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science, died July 13 following a lengthy illness. He was 52. Shanks' research interests focused on evolutionary biology and its implications for medical theory and practice.

William Thomas Kirkwood Stevenson, 56, chemistry, died July 21. Memorials have been established with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, c/o University of Texas, 1515 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77030 and the Kansas Humane Society, 3313 N. Hillside, Wichita, KS 67219.

Robert "Bob" C. Wherritt, 83, professor emeritus, died June 7. Wherritt taught mathematics at Wichita State for 31 years. Memorials may be made to First Unitarian Universalist Church, 7202 E. 21st Street North, Wichita, KS 67206.

FACULTY & STAFF

Les Anderson, Elliott School of Communication, was honored recently with an Alumni Achievement Award from Fort Hays State University. He also won four first-place awards; two second-place awards; one third place award; and four honorable mentions in the 2011 Kansas Professional Communicators contest.

Wilson Baldrige, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures-French, gave an invited paper, "Reprise de Jumelages," on the work of Michel Deguy at the Regional Association of Aquitaine meeting in France. The Association, in cooperation with the University of Bordeaux, awarded its annual Grand Prize for Literature to Deguy. The International Colloquium on Deguy's work, organized to celebrate this award, involved leading specialists from the Sorbonne, the University of Bordeaux and international scholars from Japan and the United States. Baldrige is a recognized Deguy scholar.

Michael Birzer accepted the position of book review editor for "Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management."

Dan Close, Elliott School of Communication, has been named a DART Fellow, a prestigious journalism fellowship program. Fellows recently met at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism for intensive training on teaching accurate, ethical and sensitive coverage of tragedy. This select journalism training is sponsored by the Dart Center with additional support from the University of Washington Center for Global Studies.

Amy Devault, Elliott School of Communication, was named by the Journalism Education Association as the faculty recipient of the 2011 Friend of Scholastic Journalism Award for the work she has done with scholastic journalism students and advisers in Kansas and throughout the country. Additionally, Devault won one first place award; four second-place awards; and one third place award in the 2011 Kansas Professional Communicators contest. Devault and **Les Anderson** share one of their second-place awards in the 2011 KPC contest for their editing on the 2010 Symphony in the Flint Hills magazine, filled with stories and photographs by communication students.

Patricia L. Dooley, Elliott School of Communication, has been appointed by the University of Kansas Medical School-Wichita

as an adjunct researcher in the Department of Family and Community Medicine.

H. Edward Flentje, Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs, has been named interim president of Emporia State University, his alma mater. He will serve in this capacity until the Kansas Board of Regents names a new president.

Francisco Flores-Cuautle, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures-Spanish, was invited by the faculty of the Benemérita Universidad de Puebla (Mexico) to give the conference "Reflections on Latin-American Literatures and Cultures" in June.

Lou Heldman, Elliott School of Communication, was a keynote presenter at the North American Securities Administrators Association annual conference. The topic was "Social Media in a Regulated Environment: From Prohibition to Participation."

The Elliott School of Communication received a Clarus Award from the Public Relations Society of America Kansas Chapter for its Elliott Engage community outreach and social media campaign.

Kevin Keplar, Eric Wilson, Susan Huxman and Bill Molash accepted on behalf of the school. As a board member of PRSA, Wilson also received a PRSA Excellence Award for internal communications.

Jeffrey May, biological sciences, has been nominated to serve on the board of directors for the Wichita Medical Research and Education Foundation. The mission of the foundation is to promote research, education and community efforts designed to improve the health of Kansans.

Cheryl Miller, assistant dean, won a first-place award for newsletter editing in the 2011 Kansas Professional Communicators contest.

Michael Palmiotto, School of Community Affairs, presented an invited paper, "Policing Football Violence and Ethical Hatred in Bosnia and Herzegovina," at the international police conference sponsored by the Karlskrona Police of Sweden and the Blekinge Technology Institute.

Ramona Liera-Schwichtenberg, women's studies and religion, participated in several refereed activities at the National Communication Association Conference. She created the panel "The End of Heterosexuality: Burning Bridges" and presented the paper "Gaydar Overload or Queering the Binary." She also presented the paper

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WILLIAM D. BISCHOFF

Dear alumni and friends:

As you may recall, we opened the new facilities for the WSU Biological Field Station last fall. Funding for this project came from a successful fundraising effort built upon an NSF grant secured by Chris Rogers, Mark Schneegurt and Leland Russell, all of whom are associate professors of biological sciences.

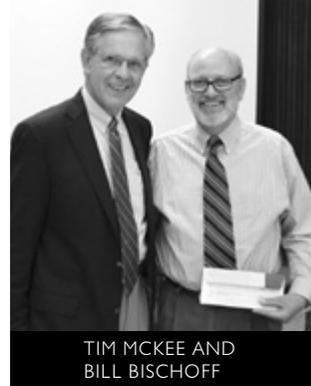
Late last spring, Tim McKee, a 1965 graduate, learned of an opportunity to designate a \$25,000 charitable gift to establish the Biological Field Station Restoration and Maintenance Fund. The gift was made by the Kansas Health Foundation in honor of McKee's 14 years of service as a board member of the organization.

In his remarks before the Fairmount College faculty on Sept. 1, McKee specifically mentioned Don Distler, associate professor of biological sciences, as being influential in his college career. Many of us teach because we love sharing with students what we've learned. What we may not realize is that our work leaves a lasting impression upon them and their gratitude may be expressed in unexpected ways.

Thank you all for your support of Fairmount College.

Sincerely,

William D. Bischoff, dean



TIM MCKEE AND
BILL BISCHOFF

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Donald Beggs, president,
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contact Cheryl K. Miller,
coordinating editor,
(316) 978-6659 or
cheryl.miller@wichita.edu

- continued FACULTY & STAFF ACCOLADES

"Super Women Walk Among Us: Teaching Social Issues with Comic Book Characters" for the panel "Empowering the Next Generation: Strategies for Building Feminist Bridges in the Communication Classroom."

Kathy Perez, sociology, was selected to serve on the Lord's Diner Board of Directors.

Jay Price, public history, was a consultant for KTWU, Channel 5/33, for what is now an Emmy-nominated Sunflower Journey episode on Wichita's Lebanese heritage.

Paul Rillema, chemistry, has been named a 2011 ACS Fellow of the American Chemical Society. He was also recognized with the E. Ann Nalley Award for Volunteer Service to the organization.

Carolyn Shaw was an invited participant in the Learning in Higher

Education Symposium in Sydney, Australia. There she joined fellow authors in finalizing their chapters for the edited volume "Transforming University Teaching into Learning via Simulations and Games."

Debby Werth, biological sciences, has been appointed by **Mayor Carl Brewer** to a two-year term on the city's Community Services Block Grant committee. CSBG funds are a federal funding source designed to assist local agencies in providing services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in the community.

Shang-You Yang, biological sciences, was officially bestowed with a 2011 International Friendship Award by Jinan Municipal Government, Shandong Province, China. Only nine experts in different fields from around the world were recognized with this honor.



**WICHITA STATE
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*1845 Fairmount Street
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