FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
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WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

MFA TO CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

For some, the idea of turning 40 is a frightening prospect. However, in the life of an academic program, 40 years is not old, nor is it particularly considered middle-aged. The vibrancy of Wichita State's graduate program in creative writing certainly speaks to its robust vitality and promising future.

Founded in 1974 by **Bruce Cutler**, the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing became one of 13 programs nationwide. Whereas most MFA programs at the time were two years in length, Cutler shaped WSU's MFA to be a three-year, in-residence, studio-academic program. Following the same model today, the program is competitive and attracts students wanting an in-depth, immersion experience.

Zack Strait, a Florida native in his second year of the MFA program, appreciates the three-year format.

ZACH STRAIT

"What made WSU's MFA unique among the programs I considered is that it's a three-year program and offers me the opportunity to spend my third year exclusively working on a creative thesis," Strait said. "Also, it encourages interdisciplinary studies by requiring an enrichment course outside of the English department, which I love."

"Students really want the extra time and to be in a place where they are a resident," said **Margaret Dawe**, associate professor and director of the creative writing program. "They want to be here, physically present, seeing each other week after week. They're going to readings together and sharing their work all the time. There's a lot of camaraderie and encouragement. The new fashion is 'low residency programs' and they don't want that."

The students' cohesiveness and interaction diminish any resistance that might exist among themselves in sharing their writing. Strait especially values the opportunity to participate in critiques of his work and that of his contemporaries. He believes the activities strengthens their creative efforts.

"For me, the most appealing aspect of the program here is how the entire department not only allows, but encourages me to take a sharp, critical lens to my work and the work of others, including my peers, as a way to foster creativity," he said.

Dawe said the small faculty-to-student ratio and intense tutorial exercises allow students to receive feedback from their professors and classmates immediately and individually. Experiences such as these prime students like Strait for success. Poetry Magazine, one of the nation's most prestigious literary publications, recently published his poem "Another Moon."

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"In other programs, in their final year, rather than one-on-one work with a professor on that student's poetry collection or story collection, the students might meet as a whole class and help one another, but they don't get the one-on-one tutorial," said Dawe. "It's a very special thing to offer that one-on-one work for students. Students who talk to me later say, 'Oh, that was so great, that one-on-one. It really propelled me in my stories.' It's another of our strengths."

In order to become a great writer, authors and poets must write, and they must write voluminously. MFA students get significant writing practice in their program through workshops and tutorials. Their MFA final project continues their one-on-one work with a professor on a collection of stories, a novel or a poetry collection. Additionally, reviewing their creative works with invited in-residence writers and poets further enhances the amount and quality of feedback they receive.

Each semester an accomplished fiction writer or poet such as **Lee Abbott**, **Scott Cairns**, **Greg Glazner**, **Achy Obejas** or **Leslie Pietrzyk** spend one month in residence. These visiting writers provide tutorial instruction, seminars and public readings. In 2013-2014, Peter Behrens and Ed Skoog will be the writer- and poet-in-residence, respectively.

"What's most helpful to me about the writer/poet-in-residence guests is that each approaches our work with a unique aesthetic and a fresh set of eyes, which stretches our abilities and reinforces our strengths as emerging writers," Strait said.

More than imagining and writing

Other means to becoming an accomplished writer are to read, study and teach others about writing. MFA students in WSU's program not only take graduate-level literature courses, but they also teach undergraduate students over the three-year program period.

"We do really well with our students getting teaching jobs after they leave here because they have so much experience teaching English 101 and 102 and business writing," Dawe said.

This teaching feature helped lead Poets & Writers magazine in 2012 to rank WSU 28th out of 126 MFA programs for job placement.

Strait plans to pursue teaching opportunities and additional academic work.

"After I finish my MFA I'm planning to apply for creative writing teaching positions and post-graduate fellowships," he said.

For the future

As the MFA continues to gain recognition, the creative writing faculty is looking for additional ways to improve the program. One priority is to keep the program small.

"In the last five years we have become more selective in whom we admit to the program," said Dawe. "We now have two fiction faculty and two poetry faculty, so ideally we'll admit four new fiction students each year and four new poets each year. Our goal is to have each of the four professors working with two students per year on an MFA final project."

There are also plans for increasing the depth of writing experiences with craft courses. This fall Dawe will introduce proposed curriculum changes to help students with fine-tuning and honing their skills in a practical way. New courses may be dedicated solely to plot, character or setting. These kinds of craft courses allow students to focus on one part of the writing process at a time.

"When we teach our workshops, each student comes in with a rough draft. We address setting, plot and character during that time," said Dawe. "Our hope is that our students who graduate will write even more wonderfully with these extra classes. They will be working very practically as President Bardo wants us all to enhance applied learning. It's very applied work."

To mark the MFA's 40th anniversary, WSU's creative writing faculty will present a reading at the spring 2014 Association of Writers & Writing Programs conference in Seattle. The reading will include their own work as well as selections written by accomplished alumni.

MORE ABOUT THE MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING

Faculty

- **Josh Barkan**, fiction writer. Barkan is the author of "Before Hiroshima" and "Blind Speed," the latter of which was a 2009 finalist for the Paterson Fiction Prize.
- **Margaret Dawe**, fiction writer. Dawe is the author of "Nissequott." Her story "Maze" appears in the spring 2013 issue of Antioch Review.
- **Albert Goldbarth**, poet. Two-time winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for "Heaven and Earth: A Cosmology," 1992 and "Saving Lives," 2002. He is also the recipient of a Guggenheim and two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships.
- **Sam Taylor**, poet. Taylor is the author of "Body of the World" and a forthcoming second poetry collection "Nude Descending an Empire." "Body of the World" is a finalist for Foreword Magazine's Poetry Book of the Year.

Program

- The Huffington Post listed WSU's program as one of the Top 25 Underrated Creative Writing MFA Programs in 2011 and 2012.
- In 2012, Poets & Writers magazine's ranking of WSU's MFA program climbed to 77th in the nation from 122nd in 2011.
- Students come from across the United States for the program: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, South Carolina and Washington State.

Websites

- mojo, MFA student-produced online: **journalmikrokosmosjournal.com/wordpress/**
- Writing Now, Reading Now schedule: **bit.ly/151RmV0**

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: MARGARET DAWE

MARGARET DAWE

Margaret Dawe loves to read and she wants to share this passion with others. In addition to directing WSU's creative writing program, Dawe also coordinates the Writing Now, Reading Now series, which brings successful authors to the WSU campus for public readings.

"I would love to see more people on campus enjoy hearing poetry and enjoy hearing prose," she said. "Those readings are the complete opposite from the way our culture is going in that we are usually sitting at our computer, alone, and to go to a reading is a very different experience. I'd love more people to be reading, and that's a great way (to start)."

In her free time, Dawe spends time with her teenage son, **Charles Baughman**, and is proud that he loves to read. In addition to chauffeuring him around town for activities, she swims three times a week, runs and bakes. Her kitchen specialties are pound and marble cakes that may be taken with tea. She also is working on a novel she hopes to send to agents this winter.

"Missing Woman" is about a newspaper reporter investigating the disappearance of a woman in her town. Seeing the crime scene tapes evokes the reporter's memory of seeing a murder scene a long time before on a walk with her grandfather. As she investigates, she realizes the current murder and the old murder have family implications.

Before arriving at Wichita State in 1993, Margaret Dawe worked as a reporter for the East Hampton Star. In addition to completing her MFA in fiction writing from Brooklyn College, City University of New York, she also completed a master of science in journalism from Northwestern University and a bachelor of art in literature from the University of Virginia. She said working as a reporter first and then earning her MFA was a great path to take because she had a lot of writing experience before beginning her graduate program.

WICHITA STATE STUDENTS DISCOVER FROG-KILLING FUNGUS IN KANSAS

By Lainie Rusco

For nearly 15 years, biologists around the world have been watching as millions of frogs succumb to an infectious fungus called chytrid.

Now a group of Wichita State University students has discovered evidence of the deadly chytrid fungus in the Wichita area. This is the first report of chytrid in Kansas.

The pathogenic fungus is found in all neighboring states and has caused the decline and extinction of amphibian species globally.

Wichita State's findings are based on two years of undergraduate and graduate research as part of a field ecology class in WSU's Department of Biology.

"This research is a wonderful collaboration between graduate and undergraduate students," said **Mary Liz Jameson**, the associate professor of biological sciences who teaches the class.

MARY LIZ JAMESON

"The discovery is a classic example of the role of WSU in science education in Kansas and our community, helping us to understand this epidemic."

Jameson said the research results fill a gap in the middle portion of the United States where the fungus has never been reported. The only other study conducted in Kansas was in 2007. It studied five frogs in Johnson County, none of which tested positive.

THE BLANCHARD'S CRICKET FROG (ACRIS CREPITANS) SHOWN HERE WAS ONE OF 10 CAPTURED AND SWABBED AS PART OF THE FIELD ECOLOGY RESEARCH PROJECT ON DETERMINING THE PRESENCE OF CHYTRID IN KANSAS. THIS DEADLY FUNGUS IS FOUND IN MANY SPECIES OF FROGS AND TOADS IN THE STATE AND WORLDWIDE. THIS FROG TESTED POSITIVE FOR CHYTRID.

The next step, Jameson said, is for the students to publish their findings in the peer-reviewed scientific journal Herpetological Review.

MFA STUDENT ACCOLADES

Garrett Quinn's story "Licks" appeared in the winter 2013 issue of Heavy Feather Review; "Meat-Red Leaves" in the summer 2013 issue of r.kv.r.y.; and "Fighting, Chewing, Shooting" in the summer 2013 issue of Adirondack Review. "Creatures of Unproven Existence" appeared in Barely South Review in fall 2013.

Joey Lemon's poems "Shadow Self" and "Focal Points" won the Academy of American Poets prize.

Kallie Falandays' poems were accepted by a variety of publications. "If You Are Going to Sing, Know the Words" appeared in issue 6 of ILK journal. "I Want to Tell You Yes" and "If Morning Never Comes" were published in PANK magazine, Issue 8.2. "How to Create Realistic Characters With Depth" appeared in the January 2013 issue of Paper Darts. Her poem "We Are Already Full" was published in the 2012 Poet's Billow, named second runner-up in the 2012 Atlantis Awards, and earned a nomination for the Pushcart Prize. She is the 2014 editor of Mikrokosmos, the literary journal of Wichita State's MFA program.

And she hopes to spread word to the community as a whole. As with the white nose fungus in bats—which for years has been causing a severe decline in bats—education on how to prevent spreading chytrid is key.

'Potential trickle-down effect'

The research conducted by the group of 10 students was conducted at WSU field stations near Wichita, Viola and Waterloo.

It involved catching frogs and identifying them, swabbing them in a sterile fashion and recording water quality of the surrounding habitat. In addition, there's a molecular component of DNA extraction and amplification.

It has been a community effort, Jameson said, requiring the skills and participation of many students. It also builds on the aquatic toxicology research of WSU professor **Karen Brown** and students in her lab.

Graduate student **Timothy Eberl**, who conducted the DNA analyses this summer, hopes the new research will be valuable for the future of the state's amphibian populations.

"We are speaking of possible keystone species within the aquatic environments of this state, and the potential trickle-down effect may have a longer reach than even we realize," said Eberl.

Jameson said there are steps people can take to help prevent the spread of chytrid. Never move a frog from one lake or pond to another. Always clean wet or muddy boots and tires, and fishing, camping, gardening or frog-survey equipment. Avoid touching frogs. And use disposable gloves, sample bags and sterile equipment.

TIMOTHY EBERL SEARCHES FOR FROGS AT CHISHOLM CREEK PARK.

AROUND THE COLLEGE

Partnership to benefit criminal justice majors

Wichita State University has entered into an articulation agreement with Butler Community College that allows students getting their associate's degree in homeland security to work toward completing a bachelor's in criminal justice at Wichita State. WSU's criminal justice program offers online courses for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Social work programs receive reaccreditation

The bachelor's and master's programs in Wichita State University's School of Social Work have been reaccredited through June 2021 by the Council on Social Work Education. During the 2012-13 academic year, WSU social work students completed more than 90,000 unpaid practicum hours at local social service agencies, equaling about $1.7 million in economic impact. Since 2007, more than 600 students have graduated from WSU's School of Social Work.

Three out of 40

Three Fairmount College faculty and staff were named 40 Under 40 winners by The Wichita Business Journal: **Angela Buzard**, director, Environmental Finance Center, Hugo Wall School; **Amy DeVault**, assistant professor of communication; and **Natalie Grant**, assistant professor of social work.

Erach R. Talaty, 86, died June 13, following an illness. Described by students and faculty as a teacher, mentor and friend, Talaty taught chemistry for 44 years at Wichita State. An author of nearly 100 publications over 60 years, he held two doctorate degrees and completed a post-doctoral fellowship with Nobel Prize chemist Robert Woodward at Harvard University. During his tenure at Wichita State, he procured numerous external grants for his research and for renovations and improvements to McKinley Hall. In 1999, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education named him Kansas Professor of the Year. Wichita State honored him with an Academy for Effective Teaching Award and a Leadership in the Advancement of Teaching Award. Memorial contributions may be made to the WSU Chemistry Department, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260 or Catholic Charity of Hope, 400 N. Emporia, Wichita, KS 67205.

ERACH R. TALATY

Gary H. Toops, 59, died Oct. 14, from complications caused by lymphoma. A professor in the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures department since 1989, Toops taught Russian and linguistics. He earned his Ph.D. in Russian and Slavic Literature from Yale in 1985 and received his formal training in Russian at the Leningrad Moscow and Petrozavodsk State universities. A memorial has been established with Wichita State University, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, 1845 Fairmount St., Wichita, KS 67260.

NEW HIRES

Rebeccah Bechtold, English

James Beck, biological sciences

Jessica Bertapelle, communication

Chase Billingham, sociology

Noell Birondo, philosophy

Matthew Cecil, director, Elliott School of Communication

Cuitláhuac Chavez, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

BreAnn Collins, social work

Kenneth Kriz, Regents Distinguished Professor of Public Finance

Enrique Navarro, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Rachel Showstack, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures

Steven M. Skinner, geology

Arwiphawee Srithongrung, Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs

Susan Sterrett, Curtis D. Gridley Distinguished Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science

Sarah R. Taylor, anthropology

Jennifer Tiernan, communication

Deborah Willsie, social work

EMERITI FACULTY

Dorothy K. Billings, anthropology
Ronald G. Iacovetta, criminal justice
William H. Richardson, mathematics

FACULTY & STAFF

Wilson Baldridge, professor and chair of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, is the recipient of the WSU Foundation Faculty/Staff Fundraising Award. The award recognizes WSU faculty or staff members who have played a key role in cultivating and securing a major gift for WSU. Baldridge's longstanding friendship with John Buck and his brother, Jim, resulted in the university receiving two estate gifts from the brothers totaling $9.5 million. The legacy gifts benefit the areas of education, aerospace engineering, fine arts, business and the French program.

Josh Barkan, assistant professor of English, had a work, "The American Chef and El Chapo," named to the Top 25 story list by Glimmer Train magazine.

Tina Bennett, professor of English, gave an invited paper, "Code- and Script-Switching in Written Language," at the Code-Switching in Literature Conference, University of London, Birkbeck.

Michael Birzer, professor and director, School of Community Affairs, was the keynote speaker at the Northern Oklahoma/Southern Kansas Peace Officers Association's quarterly meeting. Birzer has also been invited by the Kansas African American Museum to participate on a panel discussion about the Prison Industrial Complex, the dramatic growth of the U.S. prison system that disproportionally impacts poor and minority populations.

William Groutas, WSU Foundation Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, received the Dolph Simons Award in Biomedical Sciences, part of the prestigious Higuchi-KU Endowment Research Achievement Award Program. Groutas is internationally known for his work combating such diseases as West Nile virus, Dengue virus, norovirus and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Doris T. Chang, associate professor of women's studies, will serve on the editorial board of the Journal of Gender and Power, Adam Mickiewicz University Press, Poznan, Poland.

Karen Countryman-Roswurm, assistant professor of social work and director of the Center for Combatting Human Trafficking, was an invited speaker at the Cambridge University TEDx event in the United Kingdom.

Following a refereed, blind-reviewed paper competition with a 50 percent acceptance rate, two Elliott School of Communication faculty presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference. **Amy DeVault**, assistant professor, presented "Grab a Team, Mob Report: Using a Team Storytelling Approach for a Multimedia Journalism Experience," and also was an invited panelist for the magazine and visual communication divisions' joint panel, "The Ideal Visual Curriculum." **Madeline McCullough**, lecturer, presented "Tweeting in Haikus/ Teaches Brevity and Rhythm/to IMC Class."

Amy DeVault, assistant professor, Elliott School of Communication, earned two awards in the National Federation of Press Women's 2013 Communications Contest: first in overall magazines and third in page design for magazine, newsletter or other non-newspaper publication.

Marché Fleming-Randle, assistant dean, received the Office of Multicultural Affairs Unity Award. This recognition is given each year to someone who supports the mission of the OMA and who has a commitment to diversity at Wichita State.

Albert Goldbarth, Adele M. Davis Distinguished Professor of Humanities, English, recently wrote "The End of Space," a chapbook nominated for a Midwest Booksellers Association Award.

Mel Kahn, professor of political science, was recognized by the Student Government Association with an Individual Meritorious Commendation for his roles as an educator and on-campus coordinator of the WSU Washington-Topeka internship program.

Nancy Krehbiel and **Rebecca Rawls Croskey's** joint presentation, "iAdvise: Strategies for implementing a Paperless Advising Workflow," earned the designation of "best of the best" at the Kansas Academic Advising Network conference. They will make a return presentation to the February regional meeting in St. Louis. Both are academic advisors in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Advising Center.

Greg Meissen, professor of psychology, was presented with the John Kalafat Award in Applied Community Psychology at the American Psychological Association Community Psychology conference. The award is bestowed upon "an individual who exemplifies John Kalafat's unique characteristics as mentor, teacher and advocate and especially his passion in making the benefits of community psychology accessible to all."

Jay Price, professor of history, and **Fletcher Powell**, KMUW, earned an honorable mention from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters for their collaboration, "Past and Present: Kellogg, The Lost Thoroughfare."

Marti Smith, associate professor, School of Community Affairs, was selected to serve on a panel to review grants for the Transportation Research Board, part of the National Research Council of the National Academies (formerly known as the National Academy of Science). She was also an invited speaker at the Safety in Transit Environments seminar, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, Royal Institute of Technology, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Jim Snyder, professor of psychology, procured a National Institutes of Health grant to fund research to assess the impact of military service members' deployment on post-deployment family interaction and on service members', spouses' and children's adjustments. Snyder also recently accepted an invitation to serve as a member of the Psychosocial Development, Risk and Prevention Study Section, Center for Scientific Review under the National Institutes of Health.

Sam Taylor, assistant professor of English, won a first prize poetry award from the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fund for his poems "American Mystic," "Mountain Cottage" and "First Taxi."

Kerry Wilks, associate professor, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, has been named associate dean of the graduate school.

STUDENTS

Matt Conklin, political science, received second place in WSU's Undergraduate Research Forum for his comparative paper on the Arab Spring.

Noah Trammel, English, was a runner-up in the Academy of American Poets competition for his poems "Cider-Making How Many Years Ago" and "Ode to Your Cigar."

Four students completed the Washington, D.C. intern program during the spring semester: **Pascal Hiraw** worked for **Rep. Mike Pompeo**; **Zinnia Kahn** was with **Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand**; **James Reynolds** worked in **Sen. Pat Roberts'** office; and **Rachael DeGarmo** served with **Sen. Jerry Moran**. The interns participated in a weekly seminar with guest speakers and weekly briefings on current political events.

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Ron Matson

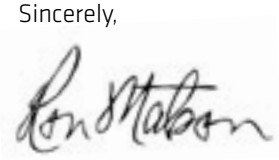
Dear alumni, faculty, staff and friends -

Changes, activity and motion all speak to the climate of Fairmount College in the current academic year. As President Bardo's first year comes to a close and his second begins, under his leadership WSU's strategic plan will become operationalized by each academic college no later than May 2014. All departments and centers in Fairmount College will be positioning themselves in relation to the WSU strategic plan through lengthy discussions of each unit's strengths, their mission for the next three-to-five years as it relates to WSU's mission and plan, and assessment of their success. The Fairmount College Strategic Plan Steering Committee will write a college-level strategic plan based on the departments' and centers' written plans that will direct much of our collective energy for the next five years. Elemental to all of this activity is an eye to growth in our student population, research dollars, WSU Foundation support, and moving patents and intellectual property to the marketplace.

I hosted the first meeting of the Fairmount College Advisory Council at the end of September, and more than 20 dedicated alumni, five faculty and five students brought their creative energies to supporting the growth, change and direction of the college. Five groups within the council will accomplish specific goals in the areas of 1) marketing and positioning, 2) recruitment and the student experience, 3) internships and real-world experience, 4) funding and fundraising, and 5) moving forward through technology. This vigorous agenda will help reshape and build a bright future for Fairmount College. The energy and excitement emanating from this group may well in fact touch you; please consider supporting our common commitments as this year unfolds. Your engagement through monetary donations, gifts of your time and ideas and offering opportunities to our students needing internships will be greatly appreciated. As we reach out to you, please respond and join our effort to build a better education and future for Fairmount College students and faculty!

The extraordinary success of our faculty and students is partially documented in the newsletter. Together with our alumni, and while holding onto the core values of a liberal arts and sciences education, Fairmount College is entering a phase of remarkable transformation.

Sincerely,



Ron Matson
Interim Dean

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John Bardo, president, Wichita State University

Ron Matson, interim dean, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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