

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

SUMMER 2013

# reach

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



## CREATIVITY AND THE AGILE MIND

Seeing the forest, the trees,  
and the spaces in between

A young child wearing a denim cap, a yellow and blue striped sweater, and brown patterned pants is sitting on a thick tree branch. The child is looking upwards towards the sky. The background is a dense forest of green trees.

# 6 CREATIVITY AND THE AGILE MIND

How they work, how to make  
them work better

BY SUSAN PERRY

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## > AN ARGUMENT FOR AGILITY

The liberal arts are once again at the center of the national discussion of American higher education.

During the month of June, arts and humanities faculty at Harvard publicized *Mapping the Future*, an investigation of current teaching in the humanities in the face of waning student interest. A few weeks later, the long-anticipated study of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences*, commissioned by a bipartisan congressional group, presented a compelling case for the foundational role of the humanities and social sciences in training the knowledgeable global citizens of the 21st century.

Underlying both reports is the anxiety that the arts, humanities, and social sciences are underfunded and endangered, and that the welfare of our society is consequently at risk. Both documents are clarion calls to action: scholars are enjoined to present the arts and humanities in ways that engage undergraduates thirsting for a broad training in the humanistic fields, and politicians are reminded that the liberal arts are essential for the future well-being of our society.

It is unfortunate that the humanities and social sciences find themselves in continual need of apologists. Part of this “crisis” arises from the current emphasis on STEM (science, technology, and mathematics) in the public conversation, and part from a lack of understanding of the ways in which the humanities and social sciences can help resolve the big challenges of our time — social inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, economic decline. Part is due to the understandable concern about whether arts and humanities majors can find stable employment, and part to the perception that research and teaching in the humanities and social sciences may have little relevance to today’s undergraduates.

Such concerns are reasonable, and we in the academy have the responsibility to articulate clearly why we believe the humanities and social sciences are central to American higher education. I invite alumni and friends to help; I have heard repeatedly from many CLA graduates how invaluable their liberal arts education has been to the fashioning of their careers.

The articles in this issue present ample evidence of the value of the liberal arts. Indeed, our focus on agility and creativity make abundantly plain the ways in which a liberal arts education prepares undergraduates for the future. Agility — the ability to negotiate quickly and even unconsciously between conceptual and practical action — is embedded in the distinctive education provided by the liberal arts. The liberal arts tack repeatedly between theoretical and practical training: one learns, for example, not only about the nature of justice, but also about how best to argue for justice. One can study diverse approaches to pressing socio-economic issues — and acquire the skills to communicate them in a second language. One can make art about the ill effects of climate change on the biosphere — and formulate solutions to staunch further harm. The ability to formulate judgments, occasionally with conflicting and incomplete information, and to take action grounded in principles, knowledge, and experience is the hallmark of a liberal arts graduate; these are characteristics many employers desire and other nations seek to emulate.

As you may know, I am stepping down as dean of the College of Liberal Arts to return to research and teaching in the Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch. The University will conduct a national search for a new dean. Meanwhile, Professor Raymond (Bud) Duvall, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor, has agreed to serve as interim dean. Bud is highly regarded for his scholarship and leadership of the political science department since 2007. I know he will serve the college very well during this transition.

It has been a privilege to serve as dean and to learn from our faculty, students, alumni, and friends about the diversity that comprises the liberal arts. As we continue to work together to promote the arts, humanities, and social sciences, we should never lose sight of the excitement of connecting these areas to other spheres of knowledge. It is not the liberal arts versus STEM, or the humanities at odds with the social sciences. Instead, in practicing the agility of a liberal arts education, we should remain mindful of the interconnections between all disciplines and the ways in which each of them illuminates the other.



JAMES A. PARENTE, JR.  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts

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## SEXUAL POLITICS – OF CHIMPS

Human beings don't have a corner on sexual politics. Chimpanzees, our closest living relatives, engage in them, too.

Nicole Scott, cognitive sciences Ph.D. student, made headlines recently when she reported in the *American Journal of Primatology* on communication differences among chimps.

For one thing, she found that female chimps curry favor with males. “[F]emales sort of ‘suck up’ to them,” using gestures of greeting and submission, she told BBC Nature. Meanwhile, among themselves, females are more aggressive and “apologize” less.

Males, on the other hand, have a more positive relationship strategy, using the four categories of gestures – aggressive, submissive, greeting, and reassurance – equally with both sexes.

Scott relates the varying behaviors to social structure. Both sexes cater to males, because they are physically stronger. Both sexes treat the opposite sex well, in the interest of finding a mate. And females, some of whom are immigrants from other groups, may be aggressive with each other to assert their roles in the community.

Her study was based on videos of 17 female and 5 male chimps made in spring of 2007 at Chester Zoo in the United Kingdom. She recorded and identified some 60 gestures used in social interactions – for example, reaching, patting, kissing, mounting, crouching, hitting – then classified and analyzed them.

Scott's work contributes to our knowledge about the links between communication and the nature of social groups. ∞

- TESSA EAGAN



Female chimps prefer to “make nice” to males more than to each other – behavior that can be explained by social structure.

[Read Scott's article at z.umn.edu/chimps](http://z.umn.edu/chimps)

## THE EXISTENTIAL FRESHMAN

Remember freshman year in college? And baffling questions like: *Which classes should I take? What should I major in? Who can help me?* Not to mention: *Who am I, anyway?*

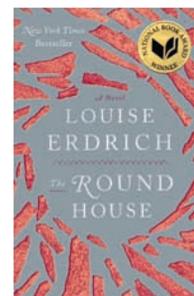
A course piloted last year, the CLA First-Year Experience, offers help. Designed to assist new students in figuring out what they want out of life and how to make their college years prepare them for it, the new, required course offers one credit per semester on a pass/fail basis.

FYE combines online learning (learn your way around the U on your own schedule), a mentor in the form of a successful upperclassman (find out from an expert how to survive and thrive at a major research university), and academics (engage in discussions with faculty and students about a common reading). At the end of the

year, students created video essays in which they reflected on what they had learned and how they had changed over their first year of college.

First-year-experience programs are flourishing around the nation, and it's likely no two are exactly alike. CLAs, which is among the largest, is thought to be unique in that it integrates three components essential for student success: peer mentoring, introduction to college life, and help mapping an academic plan based on a student's strengths, values and goals.

Before-and-after surveys showed that the course contributed to measurable differences



in students' abilities to take advantage of the University's vast resources. For example, the number of students who were confident in their ability to connect with faculty rose, as did the number who were confident they could create an effective academic plan. And advisers said that students came to them more prepared for productive discussion than in years past.

Curious about the common readings? Last year's was the dystopian novel, *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro; this fall students will read Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*, winner of the National Book Award for fiction. ∞

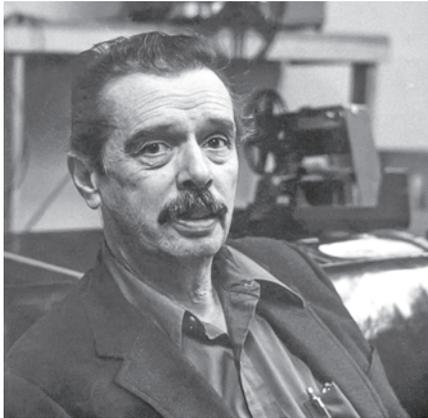
- MARY PATTOCK

## SONGS FOR HER FATHER

The *New York Times* called her voice “thrilling, chameleonic” — and so it was onstage at Ted Mann Concert Hall in March. Lila Downs, Grammy winner and CLA alumna (B.A. '93, anthropology), performed to a nearly full house in a concert dedicated to her late father, CLA art professor Allen Downs.

*Una Canción para Mi Padre* (A Song for My Father) drew from her album *Pecados y Milagros* (Sins and Miracles), which won both a 2012 Grammy for best regional Mexican music and a Latin Grammy for best folk album.

Between songs, Lila invited her father's former students, some of whom had traveled from as far as Florida and California, to share memories of him and their experiences at the Winter Quarter in (Tlaxiaco) Mexico program, which he founded in 1972. Decades later, the dual impact of Down's mentorship and immersion into Mexican culture still resonated with them. One recalled the young Lila: “I was there when you were about six years old. You were so shy, you wouldn't



The late photographer was celebrated in concert by his GRAMMY-winning daughter.

even smile for the camera. I'm so proud of you now!”

Meanwhile, to coincide with the concert, the art department staged an exhibition of work by Downs and his Winter Quarter in Mexico students in the Katherine E. Nash Gallery.

The exhibition and concert signaled the launch of the Allen Downs Photography and Moving Image Fellowship (see [z.umn.edu/downsgift](http://z.umn.edu/downsgift)).

While on campus, Downs visited with Latino students from the University, Academia César Chavez grade school in Saint Paul, and El Colegio Charter High School in Minneapolis, sharing the story of finding her path at CLA in the face of the isolation she felt as one of the few Latinos attending the University in the early 1990s. ∞

- KELLY O'BRIEN

See and hear the music of Lila Downs:  
[z.umn.edu/l Downs](http://z.umn.edu/l Downs)

Learn more about Allen Downs and Winter Quarter in Mexico: [z.umn.edu/adowns](http://z.umn.edu/adowns)



May gave his valedictory lecture on May 9.

## LARY MAY AT CLA: IT'S A WRAP

An overflow crowd gathered to hear Lary May, professor of American studies and history, mark his imminent retirement with a lecture on how Hollywood since 9/11 has shifted its perspective on war — a signature topic for a man with an international reputation for building the study of film and popular culture in the United States.

Unlike films made during the Korean and Vietnam wars, May said, Hollywood films about war since 9/11 have been mostly critical of the traditional narrative of American virtue and national security: think *Babylon*, *Flags of Our Fathers*, and the Bourne series. The reasons are many, and sometimes surprising. For one thing, movie-goers' tastes have moved away from westerns and Cold War themes. For another, public opinion in the United States turned away from the Iraq War. But just as important, Hollywood is responding to international attitudes and tastes now that it makes films for a global society; in fact, today's international box office contributes about 60 percent of Hollywood's revenues, he said.

May is expanding on the theme of his valedictory lecture in a book tentatively titled *Foreign Affairs: Global Hollywood and America's Cultural Wars*, scheduled for publication in 2015 by the University of Chicago Press.

In 2002 May was named Morse Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor. His work in CLA over the last 35 years has made the Department of American Studies one of the premier sites for the study of the political dimensions of film and other forms of popular culture. ∞

- KELLY O'BRIEN

## TURNING TEMPS TO TUNES

If you listen carefully, you'll hear the climate changing.

That's thanks to a brainchild of Scott St. George, assistant professor in the Department of Geography, Environment and Society. He uses dendrochronology, the scientific analysis of tree rings, to study changes in the Earth's climate over long periods of time.

St. George had an idea: take data about climate change, and make it into something you can hear. His goal was to help people understand climate change through listening rather than by reading. It's an experiment, says St. George, "but music touches people in a different way."

Enter Daniel Crawford, CLA sophomore. He'd joined the Dendro Center as a research assistant after taking St. George's class on biodiversity. Knowing that Crawford is a musician, St. George asked him to work on the project. Crawford jumped at the opportunity, and with support from an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) grant, was able to convert NASA climate data into musical notes.

"We're blending art and science," says St. George.

He plans to use the recording as a tool in his undergraduate courses, and the U's Institute on the Environment has produced a video to be used in outreach — all to help listeners understand climate change.

Each year UROP funds around 200 CLA undergraduates, 75 of them first-year students, to work on a research project with a faculty mentor. Program participants come from across the college, from art to anthropology, music to



Sophomore Dan Crawford, left, with his mentor, Scott St. George

psychology. They do not receive academic credit for their work, but they do receive a small stipend, and, of course, have a significant mentored research experience. It's a benefit of attending one of the world's great research universities. ∞

- KELLY O'BRIEN

*Watch Dan Crawford perform his composition on the cello: [z.umn.edu/dancrawford](http://z.umn.edu/dancrawford)*

*Visit the Dendro Center on Facebook: [z.umn.edu/dendro](http://z.umn.edu/dendro)*



LISA MILLER

## ACCOLADES

**Elaine Tyler May** was named a Guggenheim Fellow.

**Brenda Child** was appointed to the board of directors of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian.

**Clint Carroll** and **Jimmy Patino** won Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowships.

**Andrew Oxenham** and Professor **Barbara Welke** were named Distinguished McKnight University Professors.

**Andrew Elfenbein** and **Regina Kunzel** received fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies.

**These and more at: [z.umn.edu/accolades](http://z.umn.edu/accolades)**

## UNTANGLING THE WEB

Ever been frustrated on a website, trying to find even basic information? If so, you've bumped into the problem of "usability" — the quality of human interaction with design and technology.

Several months ago the Hennepin County Library asked a Department of Writing Studies class to review its site section-by-section for usability and to suggest changes.

The graduate and undergraduate students in Associate Professor Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch's class, Usability and Human Factors in Technical

## THINKING BIG

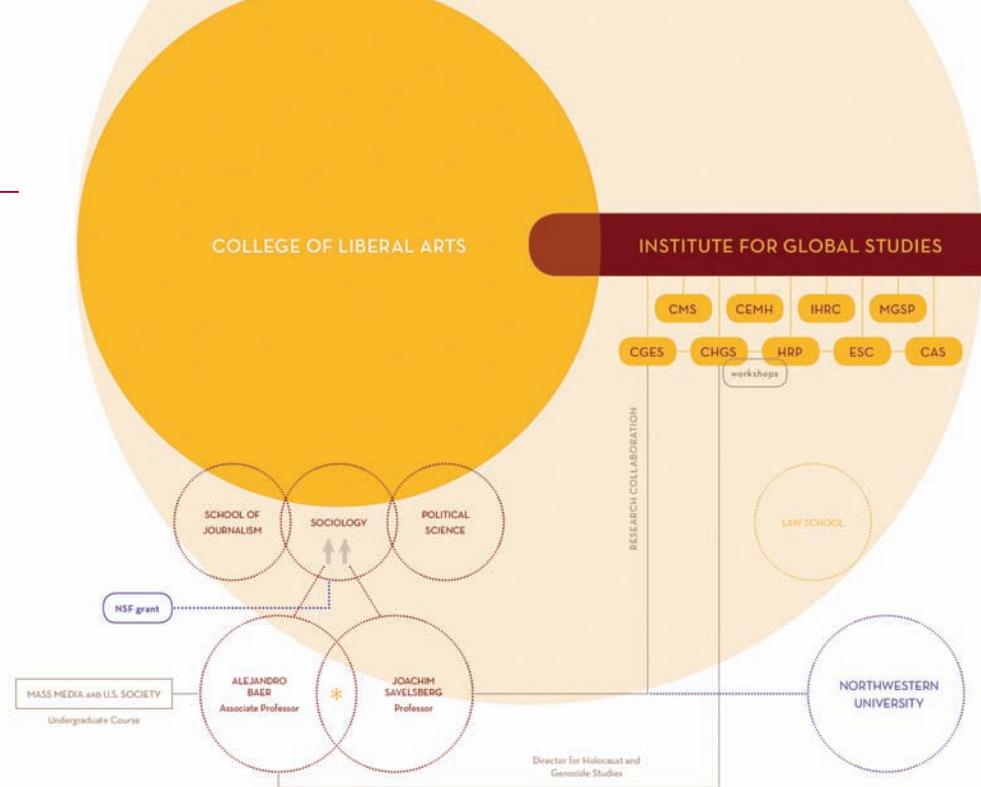
Ancient Greek philosophers had no qualms about roaming freely among the disciplines, professing not just philosophy, but also rhetoric, ethics, politics, poetry, math and science. But with the rise of specialization over two millennia, their interdisciplinary approach gradually lost currency.

Today, though, it's making a comeback, perhaps because our era is stoked with expansive ambitions like the pursuit of a "theory of everything," or perhaps because of a natural swing of the intellectual pendulum.

CLA has long had a national reputation as an interdisciplinary pioneer, going back, for example, some 50 years with American studies, and 40 years with feminist, American Indian, and Chicano studies.

That point was made emphatically to the University Board of Regents when they visited the college last March. Calling interdisciplinarity a CLA signature, CLA Dean Jim Parente pointed out one of its significant benefits: "It is enormously attractive to bold, brave, and innovative thinkers—the kind coveted and pursued by every University—and helps us compete successfully for the top faculty."

How does interdisciplinarity work? Parente cited a project that got its start with sociology professors Joachim Savelsberg and Alejandro Baer—a study of how genocide is



represented in the media, law, and society. The Representing Genocide project had both local and international impact, including the production of international scholarship in several disciplines, an international symposium held at the Law School, a public screening at the Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul, and curriculum workshops for Twin Cities K-16 teachers on how to integrate the study of genocide into their curriculum. ∞

- MARY PATTOCK

The Representing Genocide project, mapped above, illustrates how CLA focuses the power of many thinkers and disciplines on a topic, amplifying its influence in the world.

Communication, observed and interviewed library patrons who use the site. They explored questions like: How do patrons use these pages? What are their expectations? Can users find answers quickly? Is the language clear or confusing?

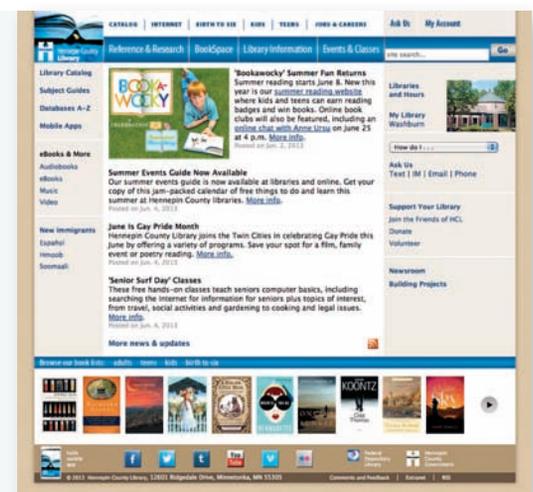
Based on their findings, they made suggestions to the library about language use, placement of search bars, icons versus text, and more.

"It's been eye-opening for us," said Hennepin County senior librarian Amy Luedtke, "and exciting to watch the user tests and listen to the test subjects think out loud."

The library—not to mention the many thousands of patrons who made 21 million visits to its home page alone—benefited from U of M knowledge and research capabilities, while the students got valuable experience working with a real-world client. ∞

- KELLY O'BRIEN

*Watch a video of the Usability Testing Lab used by the students: [z.umn.edu/usability](http://z.umn.edu/usability)*



Writing studies students helped Hennepin County Library make its website more user-friendly.

# CREA

*and the Agile*





# TIVITY

## Mind

Most of us would like to be more creative. We may wish we could write, or draw, or play a musical instrument better. Or invent a new bestselling product, like a blockbuster toy or an app for a smartphone. » But even those of us who do not aspire to become another Toni Morrison or Steve Jobs may wish to bring more imagination and originality to our everyday activities, from cooking to gardening to remodeling the house.

Or we'd just like to be better at problem solving, both on the job and in the home.

For centuries, philosophers and scientists have been trying to understand the creative mind. Why do some people appear more creative than others? What internal and external factors influence creativity? How can individual creativity be cultivated and developed?

In her lab at the University of Minnesota, cognitive neuroscientist Wilma Koutstaal, has been exploring these and other fascinating questions about the human mind's capacity to innovate. That research has led her to develop a unique framework to describe what she refers to as *agility of mind* or *agile thinking*.

In simplest terms, Koutstaal defines the agile mind as one that moves nimbly back and forth between specific and abstract thoughts and between automatic (intuitive) and controlled thinking processes. And it does this under the continuous influence of emotion, action, motivation, and environmental cues.

Agile thinking is not the same as creativity. It's a much broader concept. But creativity does require an agile mind.

Koutstaal has given her framework for the agile mind a distinctive acronym: iCASA, which stands for integrated Controlled-Automatic, Specific-Abstract. Drawing on evidence from neuropsychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, and other related disciplines, as well as on insights from the arts and literature, the iCASA framework offers a more encompassing and nuanced theory about adaptive thinking than the standard two-system model of cognition that divides thinking into "intuitive" and "rational" categories.

"We—and our minds, brains, environments—are much more improvisational than we recognize," says Koutstaal, "and we should learn and develop habits of thinking and acting that enable us to best capitalize on this to optimize creativity and innovation."

Last year, Koutstaal published a massive book on her research, aptly titled *The Agile Mind* (Oxford University Press). It received wide praise from other scholars—and won the American Psychological Association's prestigious 2012 William James Book Award, which honors exceptional books that bring a unique and interdisciplinary approach to the field of psychology.



JONATHAN BINKS

Psychologist Wilma Koutstaal is developing step-by-step thinking procedures that can help us enhance creativity and solve problems.

### Detailed vs. abstract

For Koutstaal to win an award named after William James, the Father of American Philosophy, seems more than fitting, for his writings were a major early influence on her research. Of particular interest to Koutstaal were James's observations on the importance of finding the appropriate level of detail and abstraction in thinking.

James emphasized the human need for abstract concepts, such as truth, knowledge, happiness, and reality. Such concepts, he wrote in his 1911 treatise, *The Meaning of Truth*, enable us to travel "with a hop, skip and jump over the surface of life at a vastly rapider rate than if we merely waded through the thickness of the particulars."

Yet, while not getting bogged down in particulars is important, so, warned James, is the opposite: not taking a concept so far out of its context (the experiences from which it emerged) that it loses its original meaning. James dubbed this problem "vicious abstractionism."

Koutstaal has focused much of her research on exploring the question of how and why the mind maneuvers through different levels of abstraction and detail.

"There are problems that arise from being overly abstract," she notes. "This could include

being overly global and not sufficiently related to the local circumstances. We see this in chronic worry, for example, where rumination takes over, and there are negative flights of fancy. Or we may see it in theater or sports, where sometimes one worries too much about the overall broad implications of the performance rather than focusing more closely on the performance itself."

On the other hand, overfocusing on specifics is also problematic. "Then things can become fragmented, and we fail to see the big picture," she explains. "We can become too literal and fail to see the relations among things and events. When this happens, we may fail to benefit from our past experiences because we cannot see how something that we did that was similar might be useful in our current context."

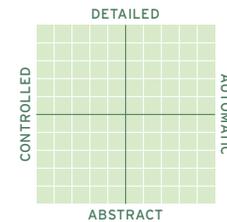
Koutstaal's laboratory research has revealed just how important it is to the creative process to be able to move flexibly between levels of abstraction and specificity. In one experiment, published in 2010 in the journal *Psychology and Aging*, 72 adult volunteers were shown pictures of objects and then later asked to remember whether each picture had been presented to them in a specific or an abstract way. (For example, did they remember a picture of an old sofa as "a sofa" or as "old"?)

The volunteers' accuracy in performing this task was measured. Then they were given a standard on-the-spot problem-solving test. Those who had exhibited the greatest ability to shift in their memories between levels of abstraction and detail also tended to be the ones who were most successful at problem solving.

These findings suggest, says Koutstaal, "that flexibility of thinking depends on our ability to encode, recall, and use information at differing levels of abstraction." She is currently extending this research to develop detailed, step-by-step thinking procedures that individuals might use to enhance their creativity and on-the-spot problem solving.

## Creativity: It's Complicated!

Your brain continuously receives and registers information from your senses, interprets it, and organizes new information based on your prior experiences.



Throughout the creative process, you and your brain respond to information in ways that are more or less automatic or controlled, and in ways that are more or less abstract or detailed. This process encompasses all of your creative reactions— involving concepts, perceptions, emotions, and motivations.

When you act in response to your environment, you alter it, and your perception of it. Then you respond to the new environment. In this way you are engaged in a constant cycle of “finding” (your environment) and “making” (a new environment).



### Controlled vs. automatic

For a mind to be agile, therefore, it must slide effortlessly between abstraction and detail, finding the appropriate level at the moment when it is most helpful. But this aspect of agile thinking pertains only to the content of thought. Agile thinking also requires that the processes by which thought occurs be fluid, says Koutstaal.

In other words, the mind must move smoothly back and forth through levels of controlled (highly deliberate) and automatic (intuitive) thinking.

And that can be difficult. “Sometimes we try too hard, when really what we need to do is let up,” says Koutstaal. Or, conversely, she adds, we sometimes let our minds “drift” for too long, when bringing more deliberation to our thoughts would be more advantageous.

Creativity, or “improvisation,” says Koutstaal, “is about allowing your brain to be more integrative and to pick up on conceptual and physical opportunities that you didn’t ‘know’ were there. But it doesn’t mean that you go completely off course. You will have a goal, but it is how you hold on to the goal that makes all the difference. You hold on to your goal with a permissive or less-tight ‘grip.’”

### ‘Making’ and ‘finding’

Another central element of Koutstaal’s iCASA framework is the idea of “making and finding,” which, she points out, comes directly from the art world.

“‘Making’ is mostly about our abstract goals and plans and what we overall hope or expect to accomplish,” she explains. “‘Finding’ is what our initial attempts at making produce or accomplish in the world. In finding, we look at what we have done or accomplished and then modify our goals or process.”

Or, as Pablo Picasso once said: “You don’t make art, you find it.”

The human mind is constantly engaged in this perception-action cycle. You perceive (“find”) your environment one way, and then you take some kind of action based on that perception. That action alters your environment, which in turn alters your perception of it. So you act again, based on your new perception. And so on.

Throughout this cycle, the content of your thoughts alternates between specific and abstract, and the way you think swings back and forth between automatic and controlled. The more smoothly and appropriately you make these shifts in content and processing, the more agile your mind—and the more creative you are likely to be.

Obvious examples of the making-finding creative process can be seen in the sculptor who constantly readjusts her vision for a granite statue based on how the stone responds to her chisel, or in the jazz pianist who improvises based on the musical responses of the other musicians with whom he’s performing.

But examples can also be found in less obvious places, such as a hospital operating room. A surgeon is in a perception-action cycle as she takes out an appendix, for example. She may begin the operation in “automatic mode” (most appendectomies are routine and the surgeon may have done hundreds of them in her career), but should something unexpected occur—the appendix is found to have ruptured, for example—then she responds with more focus (control) as she works

The agile mind slides effortlessly between abstraction and detail, finding the appropriate level at the moment when it is most helpful.

# Most of life is improvisation – the world is always different

on solving the new medical problem she has “found.”

Understanding the perception-action cycle helps get us past the idea that cognition is either intuitive or deliberative, explains Koutstaal. “It’s much more fluid and dynamic than that,” she says.

It’s also why innovative people start working and problem solving without waiting for their creative muse. “Steve Jobs once sent an email to someone that had just one word—‘Go!’—in it,” says Koutstaal. “At some point, you just have to go. You can’t wait for inspiration. The inspiration comes in the making.”

## Outside influences

Many factors, including memory, experience, mood, and sensory cues from the immediate environment, affect where on the continuums of control and specificity our thoughts are at any given moment.

Imagine, explains Koutstaal, being asked to come up with creative alternative uses for a simple common object—say, a penny. You are likely to draw on your memory first. You may remember something unconventional that you once did with a similar coin, such as using it as an impromptu screwdriver or as a steadying wedge under a wobbly table leg. Or you may remember observing or reading about somebody else using a penny in a memorable way, such as to check the tread wear on automobile tires.

Through persistence, however, and by studying and interacting with the physical properties of the coin, you may soon generate other ideas, ones that don’t come from your own memories. By banging the penny on a table, you may envision using it as a miniature gavel. Or by rolling the coin on its edge, you may imagine using it to scratch messages into soft surfaces.

“In other words,” says Koutstaal, “the processes of thinking about novel uses involve [more than] concepts, but also what you perceive and

how you imagine yourself physically interacting with an object in the world.”

Scientists have long used such alternative-use tasks as a way of measuring and assessing creativity. But research in Koutstaal’s lab and elsewhere has demonstrated that just by engaging in such tasks, people can develop more flexible thinking.

In one experiment, published in the *British Journal of Psychology* in 2009, Koutstaal and her colleagues randomly assigned 160 undergraduate volunteers to one of three groups. One group was asked to spend 10 minutes generating nonconventional uses for several different objects, such as a chair and a pencil. Another group was given the same amount of time to do a word-association task (writing down the first word that comes to mind in response to a list of words). The third group was assigned neither of these tasks.

All the students were then asked to perform two different problem-solving tasks within a set period of time. One of these tasks was a series of six “insight” problems that require people to think outside the box or to creatively restructure the problems in order to solve them. The other task was a series of wordless paper-and-pencil tasks designed to assess people’s ability to do on-the-spot visual-spatial reasoning (such as selecting which of five abstract shapes do not belong with the others).

Half of the students from each group were given the insight problems first; the others were given the visual-spatial reasoning problems first.

The results showed that the volunteers in the alternate-use task group solved significantly more of both types of problem-solving tasks within the given timeframe than did those in the other two groups.

“Simply doing the task for as little as 10 minutes increased insight problem solving and novel on-the-spot visual-spatial relational reasoning,” says Koutstaal, noting that these findings have since been replicated in her lab and elsewhere.

than it was before.

### 'Life is improvisation'

Is everybody creative? Yes, says Koutstaal. "The fact that we use language suggests so. We rarely use the same sentence twice."

We have to be creative in order to successfully navigate our environment, she says. "The world is always different than it was before, so we're always adjusting or inferring what we need to do in the current circumstances."

Having an agile mind, therefore, is essential to the creative process, whether we're writing the Great American Novel or creating a software program or launching a company. With an agile mind we can pay attention to details when it's important to do so, but then pull back and consider the bigger picture when necessary. We can control our thought processes when deliberation is needed, but then relinquish that control and "go with the flow" at other times.

People who seem particularly creative are often individuals who have developed optimal agile-thinking habits or who have a deep understanding of their own creative processes, says Koutstaal. "They may be doing something that works particularly well for them," she explains.

Fortunately, the rest of us can develop those habits, too. And understanding the underlying framework of the agile mind will help. "Most of life is improvisation," says Koutstaal. "We always have ideas coming in and out of awareness. But some ideas might be beneath awareness. We need to access those ideas and hold on to them when we need to." ∞

Susan Perry covers consumer health for *MinnPost*. She has written several health-related books and her articles have appeared in a wide variety of publications. She is a former writer/editor for Time-Life Books and former editor of *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, published by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.



# WAYS to Boost Mental Agility

Everybody can develop a more agile – and creative – mind, says University of Minnesota cognitive neuroscientist Wilma Koutstaal. All that's required are some simple changes in the way we approach the content and processing of our thoughts. Here are her nine key tips:

- 1 Regularly expose yourself to new things, including new environments. Novelty is an important stimulus for the brain – and for creative, agile thinking.
- 2 Vary the level of control in your thinking. When your thinking feels "stuck," try harder to exert control – or try less hard.
- 3 Vary the level of specificity in your thinking. Avoid what William James called "vicious abstractionism" (taking statements out of their context), but don't get too bogged down in specifics, either.
- 4 Reward yourself – and others – for using varying levels of control and specificity when problem solving and innovating.
- 5 Capture ideas as they happen. Because our mental accessibility to our environment is always changing, reconstructing ideas that occurred even a few moments earlier can be difficult.
- 6 Develop ideas in parallel rather than one at a time. Doing so will help keep you from overinvesting in a single idea or version of an idea.
- 7 Pay attention to your inner voices – your sensory perceptions, mood, memory, and knowledge.
- 8 Use and respond to your environment as part of your mind. The environment is not entirely separate from your mind, and it is often easier to control.
- 9 Capitalize on the interplay of intrinsic motivation (doing something for the love and joy of it) and extrinsic motivation (doing it for financial or other rewards). Realize that each can contribute to creativity.

CLA researchers ride the crest of brain research to unlock mysteries of the most complex structure in the known cosmos.

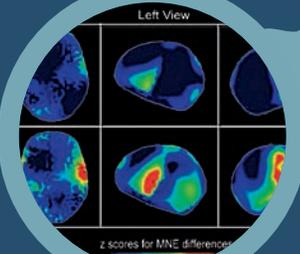
# MAKING [BRAIN] WAVES

**CLA'S DECADES OF BRAIN FAME**

**1939**  
MINNESOTA MULTIPHASIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY (MMPI), most-used tool for assessment

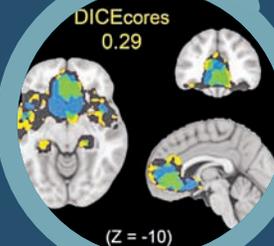
**1989**  
TWIN FAMILY STUDIES explore how genes and environment interact

**TODAY**  
Behavioral observation + high tech neuroimaging to investigate brain function



**THE PATH AHEAD**  
This spring, President Obama told US scientists: Get a dynamic picture of how the brain thinks and remembers (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies).

B.R.A.I.N. advances **\$100 MILLION** for scientific study



**ONE GIANT PUZZLE**

**6 MILLION** people have **PARKINSON'S**  
↑ **50,000** each year

by 2050 victims of **ALZHEIMERS**  
↑ to **16,000,000** and will cost **\$1.2 TRILLION**

**RISING URGENCY**

**100 BILLION NEURONS + EVEN MORE OTHER CELLS = 100 TRILLION SYNAPSES**

**1 IN 88** children have **AUTISM**

↑ **× 10** over 40 years

SOURCES:  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, BRAIN RESEARCH THROUGH ADVANCING INNOVATIVE NEUROTECHNOLOGIES (BRAIN) INITIATIVE. [WWW.NIH.GOV/SCIENCE/BRAIN/](http://WWW.NIH.GOV/SCIENCE/BRAIN/)  
WHITE HOUSE, BRAIN INITIATIVE. [WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV/INFOGRAPHICS/BRAIN-INITIATIVE](http://WWW.WHITEHOUSE.GOV/INFOGRAPHICS/BRAIN-INITIATIVE)  
AUTISM SPEAKS. [WWW.AUTISMSPEAKS.ORG](http://WWW.AUTISMSPEAKS.ORG)  
NATIONAL PARKINSON FOUNDATION. [WWW.PARKINSON.ORG](http://WWW.PARKINSON.ORG)  
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION. [WWW.ALZ.ORG](http://WWW.ALZ.ORG)

## CLA'S RESEARCH MATRIX

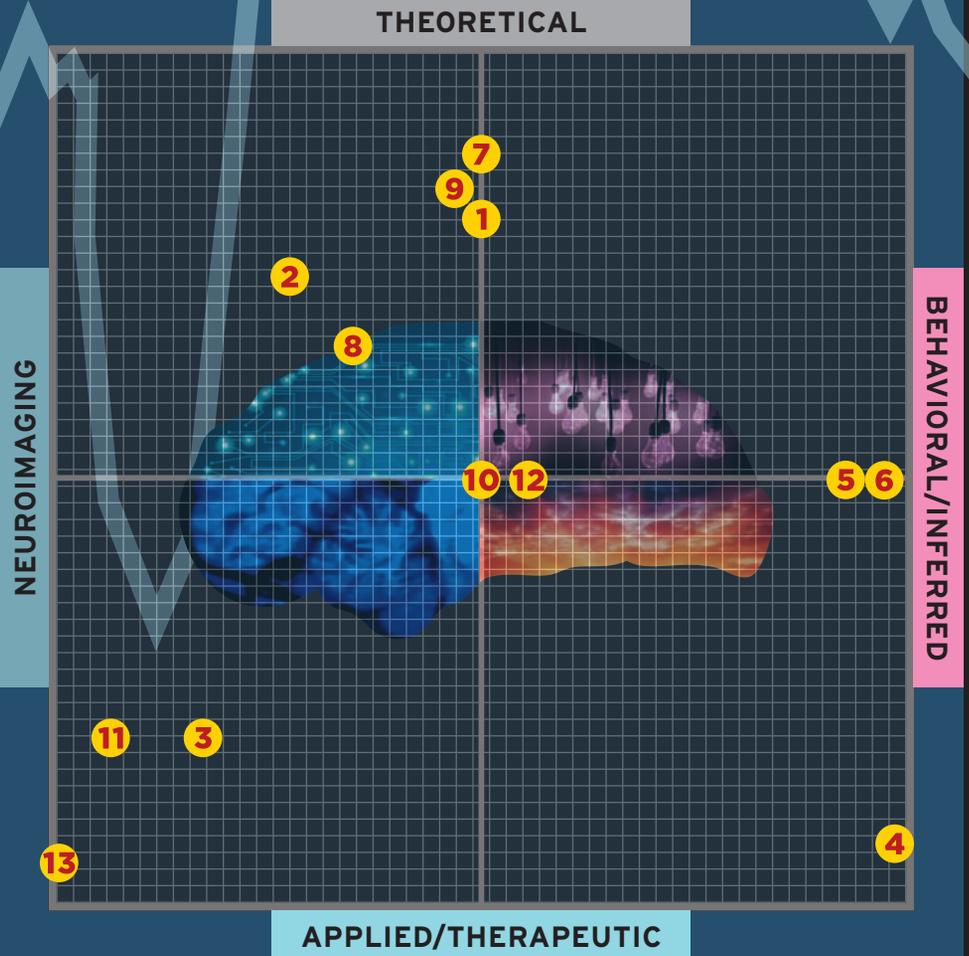
### TOOLS of the TRADE

Some CLA researchers use neuroimaging. Others infer brain function based on behavior.

### VARIED RESEARCH

Some CLA research is theoretical. Other is applied or therapeutic, to treat or understand brain disease or disorder.

### CLA EXAMPLES OF BRAIN RESEARCH



**1 WILLIAM IACONO, Psychology.** Brain electrical activity and genetic predisposition for substance abuse.

**2 YANG ZHANG, Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences.** Infant brain mechanisms supporting language learning.

**3 CHERYL OLMAN, Psychology.** fMRI reflecting different neural computations at different depths in the cortex.

**4 MARY KENNEDY, Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences.** Outcomes of college students during recovery from traumatic brain injury.

**5 STEPHEN ENGEL, Psychology.** Testing neural mechanisms involved in overcoming visual challenges.

**6 YUHONG JIANG, Psychology.** Directing attention and incidental learning in children with autism spectrum disorder.

**7 CHAD MARSOLEK, Psychology.** Practice in seeing and identifying objects impairs ability to identify other objects.

**8 WILMA KOUTSTAAL, Psychology.** Semantic cognition—representing and dynamically combining abstract and concrete concepts.

**9 DAN KERSTEN, Psychology.** Computational functions of the visual cortex.

**10 ANGUS MACDONALD, Psychology.** Affective reactions and executive function processing associated with antidrug messages.

**11 MONICA LUCIANA, Psychology.** Changes in brain structure and sensitivity to rewards among adolescents.

**12 ALDO RUSTICHINI, Economics.** Causes of social reward differences encoded in human brain.

**13 SCOTT D. LIPSCOMB, Music.** Neural processing of pitch as revealed by MEG.



# Success After TBI

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER AGAIN

BY JOEL HOEKSTRA

It was spring 2008 and David Reimann was where tens of thousands of Minnesotans are that time of year — up north. He was driving near his parents' cabin, his sister-in-law in the passenger seat. » A pickup truck coming from the opposite direction hit them head-on. Reimann woke up in the hospital with multiple fractures in his hands and right leg. Several surgeries and more than a year of physical therapy later, he made, almost miraculously, a full recovery.

At least that's what he thought. But returning to the University to resume his studies in studio art, he had trouble completing his homework. His abilities to focus and organize were compromised. He couldn't process information as quickly as he used to.

As it turned out, the traumatic brain injury (TBI) he sustained from the accident, while less visible than the fractures he suffered, was every bit as challenging to overcome and more enduring in its effect.

TBI—it's called the "hidden epidemic." According to the Center for Disease Control, more than five million Americans have survived accidents of various kinds only to find themselves in a long struggle with TBI. Symptoms include headache and fatigue, irritability and depression, memory impairment, and loss of the ability to concentrate.

And while TBI is devastating at any age, its toll is amplified throughout a lifetime when it affects its most frequent victims—young people, impairing their ability to prepare themselves for the future.

Fortunately for Reimann, a therapist suggested he work with Mary Kennedy, an associate professor in CLA's Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences, to rehabilitate his brain's "executive function"—the ability to reflect on one's past and use it to shape the present.

Reimann jumped at the chance.

"If it were not for Mary and her program, I would not have graduated," says Reimann, who walked across the stage last May in CLA commencement exercises. "Those first few semesters I was back depended on her help."

As founder and director of the fledgling College Program for Students with Brain Injury, Kennedy works with TBI victims who can benefit directly from her research. Here, she talks about her work and its impact.

**Researchers estimate there are 1.7 million new cases of TBI in the United States each year. That seems like a lot.**

Most injuries are considered mild, and the majority of those individuals will not have any long-lasting speech, language, or cognitive-processing problems. But among every 100 who have a mild injury, there may be 10 or 15 who have enduring problems.

**When it comes to TBI, do you have a personal connection or motivation?**

I had a cousin who had a severe brain injury when he was 19—the result of a car accident. The driver of the car was killed, but my cousin survived. He ended up with aphasia and a language impairment similar to Gabby Gifford's. He's paralyzed on the right-hand side of his body. But nonetheless, he went back to work part-time and learned to live independently. He even ended up getting married. He got back on his feet.

**Physiologically, what happens during a TBI?**

The neurons in the brain get damaged—pulled, stretched, and sheared. The injury damages the white matter, so impulses that travel between neurons either can't make the leap or they get there more slowly. In some cases, the brain may be bruised by striking the walls of the skull, leading to swelling and creating pressure that needs to be alleviated. If the injury impacts the parts of the brain that regulate the heart, the lungs, and other vital functions, the TBI can be life-threatening.

**What's the potential impact on behavior?**

An injury can affect memory, reading, writing, listening, and word recall. It may affect speech and other high-level complex activities like planning, organizing, scheduling. It also can affect metacognition and executive function—how we think about ourselves, how we think about our actions. For most of us, decisions made in the frontal lobe are split-second choice. We do them without thinking: Do I need to take notes? Do I need to schedule time to get a task done? But after a brain injury, you have to make a special effort to consider such things.

**Initially, your research focused on "post-TBI metacognition." Would you explain?**

Metacognition is the ability of someone to self-monitor or self-assess before making a decision. The hypothesis was that people with TBI have poor metacognition because they can't assess how they've performed in the past and use those assessments to make decisions and plan ahead. But what we found was that there were certain conditions under which people with TBI are actually good at assessing their own memory and making decisions.



Mary Kennedy directs CLA's College Program for Students with Brain Injury.

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## MANAGING TBI DAY BY DAY

Returning to CLA after TBI, David Reimann met with Kennedy and her team of graduate researchers up to three times a week, figuring out strategies that would help get him through classes. To counterbalance his problems with short-term memory, they recommended he



David Reimann

record lectures on his iPhone or use a smart pen as he took notes. (Retracing a section of one's notes triggers the pen to replay the matching audio recording.) They helped him estimate the time it would take to write a paper or take a test.

The same tools helped Kacie Carlsted, a senior at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, successfully complete the coursework she needed to earn a B.A. in mathematics and psychology. Carlsted, a native of Holland Lake, Minn., who sustained a TBI during a car accident after

her senior year in high school, can't remember much about her life prior to the tragedy. She often gets dizzy and has recurring problems with short-term memory. But Kennedy's coaching has helped her become more plan-full, self-sufficient, and confident. "I've learned to organize my time better," Carlsted says. "I needed to learn how to set aside time for being with friends, doing homework, and making sure I eat."

Carlsted doesn't always reveal her TBI to people she knows because she doesn't want anyone to treat her differently. But she does find social interactions more challenging now than prior to the accident. "I find it hard to come up with something to talk about. If the other person starts, I'm fine. But beginning the conversation is difficult for me."

The impact of TBI is complex and broad. Initially, both Reimann and Carlsted had good reason to believe their lives would never be the same. But working with Kennedy has restored some of the normalcy of being a student, being a person, says Reimann. "My brain injury was bad. I feel blessed for the recovery I've had," he explains. "But TBI doesn't define you as a person. It doesn't change you at your core."

### So your research shifted....

Yes. The general hypothesis of my current research is that students with brain injury can self-regulate their own learning if they get some sort of coaching and support.

### Why focus on students?

In 2007, I met a student on campus who had a brain injury. Malia and I started having coffee and she shared some of her struggles in classes and in social settings. I realized it was the perfect opportunity to apply some of the research I'd been doing. How could I help her think about her thinking?

But most of the research around TBI and metacognition centers on therapy in medical settings or reentry into the workplace. There's very little literature or research related to individuals who are going to college or going back to school for retraining. How do they learn? What are the conditions that predict success or failure in that environment? I realized there was this huge void in our understanding of what students with TBI needed in terms of skills and support to go to college.

### How large is the student population with TBI?

It's very difficult to come up with those numbers. Consider this: on the Twin Cities campus, about 60 students with brain injuries are registered with Disability Services. But surveys suggest that the actual population of people with brain injuries is roughly twice that figure. Multiply that across other institutions and across the country and you have a significant figure.

### Can individuals with TBI handle academic life?

There are more and more students on campus with TBI—athletes who have gotten concussion, war veterans from Iraq or Afghanistan. Treatment has advanced considerably in the last 25 years. Individuals who would've been in a coma in the 1980s now survive and go on to live productive lives. They want to work; they want to go to school.

# People with frontal lobe disabilities don't necessarily look disabled. They can remember a lot of information, but they don't use it very well.

We've identified three areas that predict the ability of individuals to succeed in any setting—work or school: thinking and learning, time management and organizational skills, social skills and self-advocacy. We're researching how to support students in these arenas. How can we coach them to navigate those situations?

## **How do you measure progress in those areas?**

Good question. We measure it in a variety of ways. You can look at changes in graded assignments and overall grades. You can look at students' self-reporting about anxiety levels. Longitudinally, you can look at the amount of time it takes to graduate, the amount of support individuals needed from Disability Services. Progress also can be measured in participation, socially speaking: is the person employed? Is the person living independently? Does the person have a group of friends they can depend on?

## **How do individuals with TBI, like Malia, differ from other students?**

People with frontal lobe disabilities don't necessarily look disabled. And they can remember a lot of information. But they don't use it very well. They appear disorganized. Their humor may be off. They can be kind of flaky. Now, you could say that about a lot of people, right? But most people are getting by. After a brain injury, you can't get by. For example, everybody procrastinates. But if a student with a brain injury procrastinates, they can't get pulled together at the last minute. They won't be able to write the paper. They will fail the exam.

## **What are some of the specific problems that students with TBI encounter on campus?**

There are two common speech and language challenges: word-finding and slow-processing.

For word-finding—an inability to come up with the right word while you're talking—we try to improve mental flexibility. Each brain is unique. The way we make connections varies. So when it comes to word-finding, we don't always know what brain pathways will help a student retrieve the right words. It's like the words are in a vault and you don't have the key. We ask them to think of associated words. We try visualization. We encourage them to use a thesaurus.

Slow-processing involves always being just a nanosecond behind other people when it comes to understanding what others are saying. The students aren't "slow"—it's just a matter of the connections between neurons being less efficient. The pathways may be less direct. We recommend that students find ways to compensate. When you haven't understood something, what are you going to say? Can you ask the speaker to repeat what was said? Or, in a classroom setting, can you record the lecture? We recommend using a Livescribe, a smart pen that records audio while you write and will play it back later.

## **Do such exercises help the brain heal?**

From a neurological perspective, the brain may not change that much after a year of recovery. But neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to function and the increased connection of neurons, can and often does continue well beyond that if the person with the TBI makes an effort to learn new skills and manage their condition.

We know that after therapy, certain parts of the brain will become more active. They light up on an fMRI, which suggests that some areas of the brain can take over the function of damaged areas of the brain.... But we don't really know what happens at the cellular level.



## FOR A GRADUATE STUDENT, A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Katy O'Brien had already worked with young TBI victims — war veterans who had served in Iraq or Afghanistan — when she met Professor Mary Kennedy at a national conference. It was 2007, and Kennedy was just beginning to develop a program for students with TBI returning to college.

The concept fascinated O'Brien, then a master's student in speech pathology at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. "I latched onto this idea that



Katy O'Brien

many people with brain injuries are young and they have a lot of life left," she says. "There are many things they want to do."

So she followed Kennedy to CLA, and now works with her on research that could someday help vets with TBI as they reenter the university. "It's a population that often has complicating issues — like post-traumatic

stress disorder — but also has a great need for assistance with executive function," she says.

O'Brien says she was drawn to Kennedy, who started out as a hospital speech pathologist, in part for her clinical experience. "She knows what students are going through. She thinks about their life outside of being a patient."

A Leslie E. Glaze Fellowship has allowed O'Brien to conduct a three-year summer research project involving students with TBI, and undergrads from CLA have volunteered untold hours assisting her. "I'm really impressed with undergrad involvement here," she says.

Now two years away from finishing her Ph.D., O'Brien says she's delighted with her decision to choose Minnesota for her doctoral work. "There's so much research to be done, so many ways to help these communities."

### Do TBIs impact students' social lives?

In some cases, yes. TBIs often make people hypersensitive to light. So a student who's going to a concert may need to tell their friends that they need to arrive at the venue in advance. They need a sense of the lighting, of the noise. They need to settle in and make sure they're okay with the environment so they're not distracted during the concert. Sometimes they want to be up against a wall or at the back of the room where they can see what's going on around them. Their friends will need to be okay with that too.

### You run a program for college students through the NeuroCognitive Communication Lab at the U. What do you provide that's different from what a tutor or Disability Services might offer?

Our main goal is to get students to be experts on themselves. We work with them to develop strategies that will get them through their courses but we want them to think more broadly too. We don't want to keep track of them. We want them to keep track of themselves. Do they need help from a teaching assistant? Do they need to approach Disability Services about accommodations? Are they using technology to its fullest, with a planner and checklist and apps? We want them to advocate for themselves.

### Ultimately, what's the goal of your research and work specifically with students?

Students want to get these services on a college campus. They're done with medical rehabilitation and hospital environments. Ideally, I would love to see schools employ coaches who would deliver support through Disability Services to students who have trouble with executive function. I think if you measure the cost of students spinning their wheels and dropping out and not achieving their potential after college, you'll see it's worth the investment.

### Is your work applicable to individuals beyond TBI?

Yes. Executive function is a factor in ADD [attention deficit disorder] and Asperger's. Many of the techniques we're researching could be used to help individuals with those conditions cope. ∞

Joel Hoekstra is a Minneapolis-based writer and editor.

*To learn more about Dr. Kennedy's work coaching students with TBI, visit [z.umn.edu/nccl](http://z.umn.edu/nccl).*

# VIVA POETRY!

In today's overwrought way of speaking, a new pair of sneakers is as likely as the starry sky to warrant words like *awesome, incredible, amazing, great, fabulous, wonderful*.

*Time* magazine essayist Lance Morrow wrote that exaggeration is "an intoxication of words." He said it's what happens when "Language temporarily loses its self-control; it veers around the room making drunken passes at reality ...." Indeed, emptied of their rich meanings, words formerly substantive and distinguished become floppy and interchangeable clichés. In the process, our language is impoverished.

Meanwhile, there's poetry. It is precise. No empty words allowed. Ironic that the language of image and metaphor — poetry's decidedly unscientific stock-in-trade — after being turned and refined for hours or days or more in the poet's mind — can strike us so powerfully as to make us catch our breath, and with such resonance that it sometimes lodges, even unbidden, in memory.

- MARY PATTOCK



Assistant Professor Peter Campion directs the English Department's Creative Writing M.F.A. program, one of the most highly regarded in the nation. He has published two books of poetry, *Other People* in 2002 (U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky called it "thrilling"), and *The*

*Lions* in 2009. "Letter from Ohio" is from *El Dorado*, due out in October. Campion edits *Literary Imagination*, the journal of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics.

Campion has won some of poetry's most distinguished awards: a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Wallace Stegner Fellowship, the Pushcart Prize, and the Joseph Brodsky Prix de Rome, awarded by the America Academy of Arts and Letters.

## Letter from Ohio

The green so green it must be chemical.

Faint drift of charcoal smoke. Rock radio.

The pink azaleas thrusting at the blue.

And all the same desires come crashing back:

incredible x-ed out scenes and afterward

the whoosh of traffic surf, our bodies bathed

in the whole sweep of towers and freeways and

meadows of blanket flowers. I want it all:

heat puddle in the chest, moments like handfuls

of honeycomb, split, dribbling.... Enough.

We've lived apart for weeks now and your voice

cracks from the cell reception, hums and dips

and breaks for seconds, as evening peaks to orange

in the sycamores, and the need to see you stretches

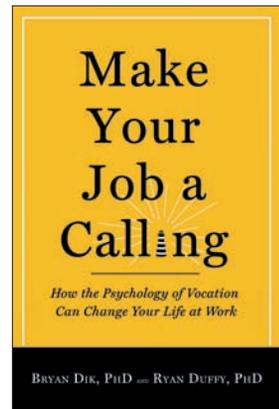
into the days that follow: stray lifetime spent

in office rooms and parks and station halls

as they fall to the curve of earth, the ocean.

- PETER CAMPION

# BOUND TO PLEASE



If you like to read and explore what's new in books, you may already be on Goodreads.com, the social networking site about books. *Reach* is on Goodreads, and we'd love to have you join us. Find our *Reach Magazine* group to check out the latest books by CLA authors.

[z.umn.edu/goodreads](http://z.umn.edu/goodreads)

## » NONFICTION

### **MAKE YOUR JOB A CALLING** BRIAN DIK AND RYAN DUFFY

TEMPLETON PRESS, 2012 / What are the distinguishing characteristics of people who feel passionate, engaged, and alive at their jobs? More important, how can we find work that allows us to be one of those people? In *Make Your Job a Calling*, Bryan Dik and Ryan Duffy explore the concept of “calling,” which is a sense that one’s work provides purpose and is motivated by other-centered values. In some cases, people seek out a greater calling in their work by changing jobs, and Dik and Duffy provide several examples and practical suggestions for career changers. But making a dramatic career change isn’t the only way to pursue our calling; the authors suggest how to refocus current work or pursue one’s calling through activities outside of work. They also point to a companion website, [www.makeyourjobacalling.com](http://www.makeyourjobacalling.com), which provides a “calling survey,” tips for job-hunters, and other activities to support career exploration. Dik and Duffy’s work will interest anyone who would like to find a deeper connection to their work.

*Brian Dik, Ph.D. '05, psychology, is an associate professor of psychology at Colorado State University specializing in career development. Reviewer Paul Timmins is CLA's career services director.*

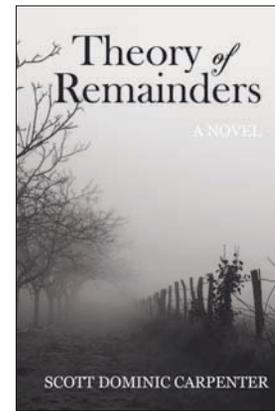
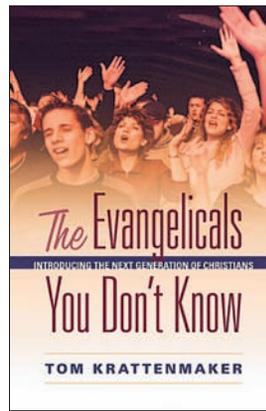
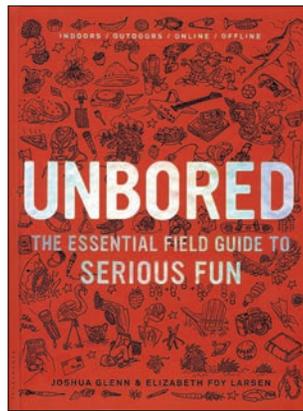
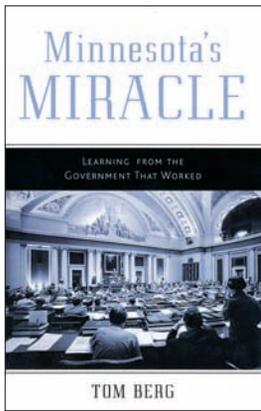
### **MINNESOTA MIRACLE: LEARNING FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT WORKED** TOM BERG

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, 2012 / Unless you're old enough to have lived it, Tom Berg's *Minnesota Miracle: Learning from the Government That Worked*, must sound like a pipe dream. The book details the incredible (by today's standards) policy and political process changes wrought in the state during the 1970s. After the longest special session in state history, Governor Wendell Anderson installed what, at that time, was the most fairly balanced funding for education in America—the Minnesota Miracle. But the book is about much more. Berg follows his own and seven other legislative and staff careers of people intimately involved in the many changes of the time: open meeting laws, partial public financing of campaigns, smoking bans, building sports facilities. Berg and his colleagues, most of whom helped with the book, found Minnesota a special interest-dominated place where secrecy was the norm. They left it a model of openness under the public's control. If you care at all about Minnesota public policy, this is a “have-to-read” book. It carefully backgrounds each issue and tracks it to today. Well written, well researched, highly readable.

*Tom Berg, B.A. '62, J.D. '65, former Minnesota state legislator and former U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, is now in private practice. Reviewer Wy Spano, B.A. '60, political science, former lobbyist and political commentator, is the founder and director of the Master of Advocacy and Political Leadership program at the University of Minnesota Duluth.*

### **UNBORED: THE ESSENTIAL FIELD GUIDE TO SERIOUS FUN** JOSHUA GLENN AND ELIZABETH FOY LARSEN

BLOOMSBURY USA, 2012 / In order to write this review, I first had to pry this book from the hands of my tween-age kids. Not just for run-of-the-mill arts and crafts kind of fun, *Unbored* is thick with ideas for encouraging kids to entertain themselves. In the spirit of repurposing, making do, and being independently responsible for your own fun, the authors have collected projects, crafts, lists of books and films, games, and more in four categories: self, home, society, and adventure. It's almost like camp in a book, but with even more variety. It covers knots, building a



## BOOKS AND OTHER CREATIONS BY CLA FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI

shelter, kitchen science experiments, book excerpts, unusual history, and even writing to your elected officials. It also has some schoolyard games that parents may have forgotten, along with 21st-century ideas of fun. Geared more toward tweens and teens, there are lots of ideas to keep a whole family busy for the summer and beyond.

*Elizabeth Foy Larson, M.F.A. '02, creative writing, has written for the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Mother Jones, Parents, and other publications about children and families, and helped launch Sassy, a magazine for teen girls. Reviewer Colleen Ware, B.A. '91, English, is CLA's web editor.*

### **THE EVANGELICALS YOU DON'T KNOW: INTRODUCING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHRISTIANS TOM KRATTENMAKER**

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, 2013 / Evangelicals? Surely you mean followers of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Minnesota's Michele Bachmann and John Piper—exemplars of that 1741 Jonathan Edwards sermon you read in high school English, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God?” Tom Krattenmaker's evangelicals seem as if from a different planet, or bible. They offer Portland, Oregon, \$100,000 for programs reducing the high school dropout rate. They admit they squandered Christian credibility in hostile reactions to the AIDS crisis. Their pro-life agenda includes broad public healthcare programs and a less confrontational approach on abortion. They see the rote embrace of conservative Republican politicians as an ankle shackle. They reject what Krattenmaker calls “religious totalitarianism,” including the snide anti-Islamicism of Robertson and Bachmann. Perhaps most importantly, Krattenmaker's “next generation” embraces a nuanced world filled with complex imperfections that Christians should heal rather than merely crush like agents of an approaching apocalypse. Are they the evangelical future? We'll at least see better with Krattenmaker's fascinating portraits in hand.

*Tom Krattenmaker, B.A. '83, journalism, M.A. religion in public life (University of Pennsylvania), is a Portland-based writer whose work appears in USA Today, Slate, Los Angeles Times, Oregonian, Huffington Post, and elsewhere. Reviewer Jon Butler, B.A. '64, Ph.D. '72, is Howard R. Lamar Professor Emeritus of American Studies, History, and Religious Studies at Yale University now living in Minneapolis.*

### » FICTION

#### **THEORY OF REMAINDERS SCOTT DOMINIC CARPENTER**

WINTER GOOSE PUBLISHING, 2013 / Thinking back to fourth-grade division problems, you may recall that sometimes nothing produced more anxiety than a remainder. Had you missed something, made a mistake? Psychiatrist Phillip Adler has been haunted by a remainder—the missing body of his teenage daughter, Sophie. Her murderer has been locked in a French psychiatric ward for the last 15 years, unable or unwilling to reveal where her body is. With his life slowly falling apart, Phillip returns to France for a family funeral. In the small town where he once lived, life has moved on—his ex-wife has remarried and even has another daughter. Now that Phillip has returned he has a chance—perhaps his only chance—to solve this problem of Sophie's missing body once and for all, but he has only a few days. The townspeople are hostile to Phillip's dredging up the past, and his daughter's murderer only speaks in riddles. How far is he willing to go to heal his life? *Theory of Remainders* is a tautly written page-turner with rich imagery and an absorbing plot.

*Scott Dominic Carpenter, B.A. '80, English, French, Latin; M.A. '83, French, teaches French literature and critical theory at Carleton College. He was a Pushcart Prize nominee. Reviewer Colleen Ware, B.A. '91, is CLA's web editor.*

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# ON A PERSONAL NOTE

## 1950s

**Kate Millett, B.A. '56, English**, Ph.D. (Columbia University), feminist icon, writer, artist, and human rights advocate, has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Millett, who wrote *Sexual Politics*, a seminal work of second-wave feminism, directs the Millett Center for the Arts in New York. Read the recent *Reach* story on Millett at [z.umn.edu/millett](http://z.umn.edu/millett).

## 1960s–70s

**Joseph Westermeyer, B.A. '61 and Ph.D. '70, psychology, M.A. '69 anthropology**, M.D. '61, M.S. '70 public health, received the R. Brinkley Smithers Distinguished Scientist Award from the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Westermeyer is chief of psychiatry services at Minneapolis Veterans Administration Health Care System and professor of psychiatry at the University of Minnesota.

**Catherine Anderson, B.F.A. '69, J.D. '73**, received the Visionary Award from the Foundation Fighting Blindness. The award recognizes her accomplishments as a distinguished Hennepin County district court judge for 15 years as she overcame the difficulties of Stargardt disease, and her continuing volunteer commitment to the University's Department of Ophthalmology.

**Terrance Burns, B.A. '74, political science**, was awarded fellow status by the American Society for Quality Board of Directors. Burns is founder and principal consultant for Burns & Associates, Richmond, Va.

**Keith Anderson, B.A. '76, philosophy**, M.A. '83, architecture (Montana State University), published *The Reluctant Architect: Language, Art & Architecture*. Anderson, who lives in Montana, has received several awards from the American Institute of Architects.

**Rebecca Blank, B.S. '76, economics**, Ph.D. '83, economics (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), is the new chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She previously served as deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, member of President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, and professor at Northwestern and Princeton universities.

**Annie Griffiths, B.A. '76, journalism**, one of the first female photographers to work for *National Geographic*, is executive director for the nonprofit Ripple Effect Images, a collective of journalists who document the programs that empower women and girls throughout the developing world as they deal with climate change (see video at [z.umn.edu/griffiths](http://z.umn.edu/griffiths)). Her work has appeared in *LIFE*, *Smithsonian*, *Fortune*, and *Stern*, and she has written several books. Griffiths recently received the Award for Excellence from CLA's School of Journalism and Mass Communication Alumni Society Board and served as keynote speaker at its Spring Showcase.

**Cynthia Lueck Sowden, B.A. '76, journalism**, published her third book, *Ride Minnesota: 23 Great Motorcycle Rides in the North Star State*. Now a freelance journalist, she previously worked in corporate communications, public relations, and advertising.

**Kristie Bretzke, B.F.A. '79**, has solo exhibitions at Groveland Gallery and Traffic Zone Gallery this summer, featuring her portraits and "poolsapes." She serves on the boards of Public Functionary and Traffic Zone Center for Visual Art in Minneapolis.

**John Chubb, Ph.D. '79, political science**, was named president of the National Association of Independent Schools. He is the interim CEO of Education Sector, a nonprofit education-policy think tank, founder of Leeds Global Partners and EdisonLearning, and distinguished visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He was previously a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution.

## 1980s

**Ellen Abeln, B.A. '80, French**, B.A. '80, physiology, M.D. '84, was inducted as a fellow in the American College of Radiology. Abeln is medical director of the Breast Center of Suburban Imaging in Coon Rapids, Minn., and staff radiologist at Unity Hospital and Mercy Hospital.

**Maria Schneider, B.M. '83, music**, M.M. '85 (University of Rochester), composer and conductor, released her seventh album, *Winter Morning Walks*, this spring. In April the *New York Times* said she was possibly "the most prominent woman in jazz": [z.umn.edu/schneidernyt](http://z.umn.edu/schneidernyt).



**NOTABLE!** The 2013 class of Alumni of Notable Achievement was honored at a March dinner. Dean Jim Parente read a short tribute to each honoree, and cited them all for modeling and inspiring greatness, and bringing distinction to the college. Read about them: [z.umn.edu/notable](http://z.umn.edu/notable).

**Mike Ponto, B.A. '83, American studies**, J.D. '89, a *Minnesota Lawyer's* Attorney of the Year, was also awarded the Minnesota Justice Foundation's Private Practice Lawyer Award. A partner at Faegre Baker Daniels, he led the firm's collaboration with the Southern Poverty Law Center and National Center for Lesbian Rights on litigation resulting in measures to prevent harassment of LGBT students in the Anoka-Hennepin School District.



**David Gross, B.A. '85, psychology**, J.D. '89 (Harvard), a partner at Faegre Baker Daniels, is now a member of the firm's management board. Gross was recently named one of the top 50 litigators in the U.S. under the age of 45 by *American Lawyer*. He was previously recognized by the *National Law Journal* as having won one of the top 10 U.S. trial victories. He is a former president of the CLA Alumni Society.

**Jon Rosales, B.A. '87, international relations**, M.A. '98, public affairs, Ph.D. '04, conservation biology, associate professor at St. Lawrence University, spoke to the United Nations General Assembly as part of its Harmony with Nature initiative.

**Paul M. Hoffman, B.A. '88, sociology**, works at Xcel Energy in investment recovery, supporting the company's Midwestern operating region. Previously, Hoffman worked at El Paso Corporation (now Kinder Morgan) and West Publishing Company.

**Mary Stanik, B.A. '80, journalism**, has published a novel, *Life Interrupted*. A communications consultant and regular contributor to *MinnPost*, she previously worked in academic communications and as a speechwriter for former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley during the Clinton administration.

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# ON A PERSONAL NOTE

BY TARYN IBACH

## 1990s

**Sheryl Lightfoot, M.A. '94, public affairs, M.A. '07 and Ph.D. '09, political science**, a professor at the University of British Columbia, was awarded a Canada Research Chair, one of Canada's most prestigious research professorships. Her research focuses on indigenous people's politics, rights, and social movements.

**Friederike Nelson, M.F.A. '95, art**, marked her 70th birthday with a benefit fundraiser, "70 for 70," at which she sold her original paintings to sponsor the education of girls in India, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.

**Flavia L. Zappa, M.M. '96, music**, swam in the 24-mile Tampa Bay Marathon Swim, finishing in 15 hours and 10 minutes. The race is the longest sanctioned by U.S. Masters Swimming. Zappa is a violinist for the Sarasota Orchestra.

**Tanetha Grosland, B.A. '97, political science, M.Ed. '04, Ph.D. '11, education**, is an assistant professor at Morgan State University, Baltimore, Md. Her research interest is education for antiracism and intercultural competence.

**Jeff Rathermel, B.F.A. '97, art, M.A. '89, public affairs, M.F.A. '00**, is executive director of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. Last winter he mounted a show, "Articulating the Infinite," at the Traffic Zone Gallery in Minneapolis.

**Cheryl Strayed, B.A. '97, English, B.A. '97, gender, women and sexuality studies**, won the Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award—first prize for non-fiction—for her coming-of-age memoir, *Wild*.



**Emily Johnson, B.F.A. '98**, will premiere *SHORE*, the final piece in a dance trilogy commissioned by Northrop at the University of Minnesota, in June 2014. Her work is supported by a national MAP Fund grant, a Doris Duke Residency to Build Demand for the Arts grant, and a McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowship for Choreographers.

**ANDREA MOKROS, B.A. '99, political science**, is special assistant to President Barack Obama and director of strategic planning at the White House. She previously worked as director of scheduling and advance for Michelle Obama, and deputy chief of staff for Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and Minnesota U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar.



**Lindsay Brice, B.A. '99, gender, women and sexuality studies, J.D. '07**, an assistant city attorney for the City of Rochester's criminal division, mentors young women through Bolder Options, a nonprofit focusing on at-risk youth, and serves on the Ann Bancroft Foundation granting committee.

## 2000s

**Yvette Pye, M.A. '00, Ph.D. '06, geography**, associate professor at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, published a memoir, *Going from the Projects to Ph.D.: Transcending My Geography*. Pye serves as president of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education-Minnesota Chapter.

**Tamara Ober, B.A. '01, sociology, B.F.A. '01, dance**, received a McKnight Artist Fellowship for Dancers and Choreographers.

**Ryan Truesdell, B.M. '02, music**, won a GRAMMY award for Best Musical Arrangement for "How About You," a track on his jazz album, *CENTENNIAL: Newly Discovered Works of Gil Evans* which received two GRAMMY nominations. Listen at [z.umn.edu/truesdell](http://z.umn.edu/truesdell).

**Phyllis Alsdurf, Ph.D. '04, mass communication**, writing professor at Bethel University, Saint Paul, published *It's Milking Time*, a children's book.

**Luke Behrends, B.A. '04, journalism**, a copywriter for Saatchi & Saatchi, cowrote Tide's "miracle stain" Super Bowl commercial, ranked

second by USA Today's Ad Meter and winner of the Kellogg School Super Bowl Advertising Review.

**Kari Mosel, B.F.A. '04, dance**, received a McKnight Artist Fellowship for Artists.

**Amanda Coplin, M.F.A. '06, creative writing**, won the Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award—first prize for fiction—for her debut novel, *The Orchardist*.



**Amy Shearn, M.F.A. '05, creative writing**, published her second novel, *The Mermaid of Brooklyn*, an Oprah Book of the Week.

**Abbey Kleinert, B.A. '08, art**, cofounded Recess Press, a Saint Paul printmaking collective, and recently exhibited at the Minnesota Museum of American Art. She also teaches the creative process to adults.

**Ethan Rutherford, M.F.A. '09, creative writing**, was named a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writer for his debut book, *The Peripatetic Coffin and Other Stories*.

**Allison Schardin, M.M. '09, vocal performance**, was cast in the Minnesota Opera's performance of *Turandot*.

**Kaylee Skaar, B.A. '09, journalism**, is communications director for the Hawaii State House of Representatives' Republican Caucus.

**Drew Horwood, B.A. '12, history, B.S.B. '12**, a process designer at Cargill, won eight straight games on "Jeopardy!" this spring.



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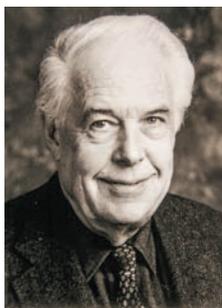
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# THE LIVES THEY LED

**Don Gillmor, M.A. '50, Ph.D. '61, journalism,** professor emeritus, died February 14 at Rose of Sharon Manor, Roseville, of complications of Alzheimer's disease and other illnesses. He was 86. Arriving at the University's journalism school in 1965, Gillmor



became the nation's foremost expert on ethics and media law, advised the *Minnesota Daily* (for 30 years), and prepared generations of journalism students—a number of whom became professors at prestigious universities. He founded the Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law, with funds provided by Otto Silha, former president and publisher of the *Star Tribune*. "Don appreciated the significance of the difference between law and ethics—between what we have a right to do and what's right to do," said Theodore Glasser, former assistant director of the Silha Center, now professor at Stanford University's Department of Communication. "But he also understood why questions of ethics precede questions of law, why what's ethical is a more foundational question than what's legal."

*The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has established an endowment to fund the Donald M. Gillmor Memorial Fellowship in Media Ethics and Law, and will match donor contributions dollar-for-dollar.*

- *Contribute to memorial fund:* [z.umn.edu/fundgillmor](http://z.umn.edu/fundgillmor)
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- *Share memories:* [z.umn.edu/gillmorshare](http://z.umn.edu/gillmorshare)



**Chun-Jo "CJ" Liu,** longtime professor of Chinese languages and literature, died September 24 in a Minneapolis care facility of congestive heart failure. She was 90. Born in Beijing, she arrived at the U of M in 1963, and helped the

University become one of the first in the nation to reach out to China in 1979, the year communication opened between the two countries. She figured prominently in the creation of the

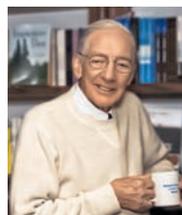
University's East Asian Languages and Literature Library, and the China Center. Liu had previously taught at Vassar College, Stanford University, and the University of British Columbia-Vancouver.

**Jochen Schulte-Sasse,** professor emeritus in the Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, and the Department of German, Scandinavian & Dutch, died December 12 of progressive supranuclear palsy, a rare degenerative disease, in Piedmont, Calif., surrounded by members of his family. He was 72. Recognized as one of the world's most influential scholars of German and comparative literature, he helped found the cultural studies and comparative literature department at the University, where he had taught since 1978. The landmark book series, *The Theory and History of Literature*, which he cofounded and edited, is said to have transformed the intellectual landscape of the late 20th century. Schulte-Sasse also edited the journal *Cultural Critique*, which he was instrumental in moving from the Oxford University Press to the University of Minnesota Press, helping to establish the latter as a premier publisher of literary and cultural theory and intellectual thought. His scholarship engaged him broadly: from considerations of Kant and Hegel, to contemporary politics, to Harlequin romances. He objected to the practice of identifying too closely with any political party, issue, or person, believing it jeopardizes critical, independent thinking, which can be achieved through the study of the humanities, especially language and literature.



*Read an interview with Schulte-Sasse:* [z.umn.edu/jocheninterview](http://z.umn.edu/jocheninterview)

*Contribute to the Jochen Schulte-Sasse Fellowship in German Studies:* [z.umn.edu/schultesassefund](http://z.umn.edu/schultesassefund)



**Milt "Beaver" Adams, B.A. '50, economics,** of Edina, died November 18 of complications of multiple strokes, at 84. He served in the Korean War as a lieutenant, and worked for some years in the

corporate sector. In 1970 he founded Adams & Others, an advertising agency that eventually also produced mini-books and corporate reports. Then, at the age of 70, believing that many good, new authors were "snubbed" by established publishers, he founded Beaver's Pond Press on a mentoring model, providing authors with editing, printing, sales, and marketing support. Among its 700-plus titles are *Kramarczuk's Family Classics* by Orest and Katie Kramarczuk, *The Twins at the Met* by Bob Showers, and *The Old Log Theater & Me* by Don Stolz. In 2007 Adams told the *Star Tribune*, "I know that Beaver's Pond is my purpose in life. It is what I was meant to do."

**Robert Cherry Foy II, Ph.D. '73, English,** died May 1, at 78, of complications from lung disease. He served in the Air Force, taught at the U of M English Department, and then spent the balance of his career teaching at the University of St. Thomas. A Shakespeare scholar, he chaired the English Department from 1973 to 1976, and became the school's first director of faculty development. After his wife, Nancy, died in 2002, he began to get tattoos, explaining that "it's a way for [people] to mark on the outside that something has changed inside."



**Peter James McKenna, Jr., M.A. '54, psychology,** died April 3 in a Bloomington nursing home, at 88. For years, people at Minneapolis City Hall knew him as the "singing blind man" who ran the convenience store in the basement; McKenna had lost his eyes and two fingers to a tank explosion in World War II. He served in Germany in Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army, fighting at Normandy and in the Battle of the Bulge, and in his final battle in Germany. McKenna subsequently completed his bachelor's degree at Catholic University in Washington and master's at the U of M—with help from reading aides. In addition to running the convenience store, McKenna worked as a benefits counselor at the Fort Snelling VA, and traveled as a member of Friendship Force International, a nonprofit cultural exchange program.



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## » FOR THE LOVE OF LEARNING

A few days ago I attended an educational workshop where ROPI was the buzz. What is it? *Return on Philanthropic Investment*, that's what. The names listed on the pages preceding this column highlight individuals, families, foundations, and corporations who stepped forward to provide a dynamic education for our students. All gifts to CLA are appreciated, most of all because they signal your faith in our college and especially our students. We are fortunate to have a sizeable group of givers this year, so please check our website — [z.umn.edu/clagiving](http://z.umn.edu/clagiving) — to find a more comprehensive list of donors.

Let's take a look at the collective impact of your gifts during the 2012-13 school year. CLA students and faculty received more than \$8.5 million dollars to support their academic endeavors:

- » 900+ students received CLA scholarships, providing \$2.8 million to offset their cost of attendance and ensure that they have access to important learning opportunities, including study-abroad experiences and the chance to conduct research alongside leading CLA faculty members as early as their freshman year.
- » 500+ graduate students received CLA fellowships this year, providing \$3.3 million to immerse them-

selves in their fields of inquiry, attend professional conferences, and purchase data and equipment to advance their own research.

- » \$2.4 million in teaching awards and research funds were received by our outstanding faculty to reward excellence in the classroom and to support frontier research.
- » More than 50 students received \$75,000 in internship awards, allowing them to hold unpaid internships at local businesses, nonprofits, and government offices throughout Minnesota and beyond.

Wow! What a testament to the power to change others' lives! Thank you so much.

To learn more about how to make gifts of stock, include CLA in your estate plan, or explore other ways to give, please call me at 612-625-5031.

**MARY HICKS**  
Director, Development & Alumni Relations  
[hicks002@umn.edu](mailto:hicks002@umn.edu)



EVERETT AYUBZADEH

**KEN TALLE, B.A. '66, history,** recently created the Talle Family Scholarship Program. It awards ten full-tuition senior-year scholarships annually to exceptional undergraduates, who are selected by honored faculty scholars. The goal is to inspire, reward, and support academic excellence. Talle and the scholarship's first recipients celebrated at a May 2 reception.

*Read about the students at [z.umn.edu/talle](http://z.umn.edu/talle)*



(Left to right) Reuben Verdoljak, Zachary Montgomery, Johnathon Walker, Soumitra Shukla, Colin Wendt, Talle, Christopher Hammerly, Elisa Horning, Emma Childs, Rebecca Whitmore. Not pictured is Isaac Wicker.

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# CLA PRESENTS FOR YOUR SUMMER PLEASURE

MARK VAN CLEAVE

**JUN 13 - AUG 24**

**THEATER**  
**Sweet Revenge**  
U of M Showboat  
Harriet Island, Saint Paul

A vaudeville-style melodrama about a reformed criminal, a farmer's daughter – and bad guys! Musical olios by Vern Sutton.

PHIRA REHM

**JUNE 25 - JULY 20**

**ART**  
**Instructions for Peace**  
Nash Gallery  
Regis Center for Art

A touring, interactive exhibition: people's instructions for peace in the 21st century.

**MAY 23 - SEP 8**

**GOLF**  
**Walker on the Green**  
Minneapolis Sculpture Garden  
Minneapolis

A mini-golf course like no other! Students of CLA art professor Chris Larson helped design it.

COURTESY OF WALKER ART CENTER

**TO MARK ON  
YOUR CALENDAR**

**SEP 22-28**

**Homecoming  
Ski-U-Madness**  
Game (v. Iowa), parade,  
competitions, and much more!

**FEB 22 2014**

**A Brighter U**  
Coffee and stimulating  
conversation about big ideas  
with CLA faculty!