

September 21, 2001

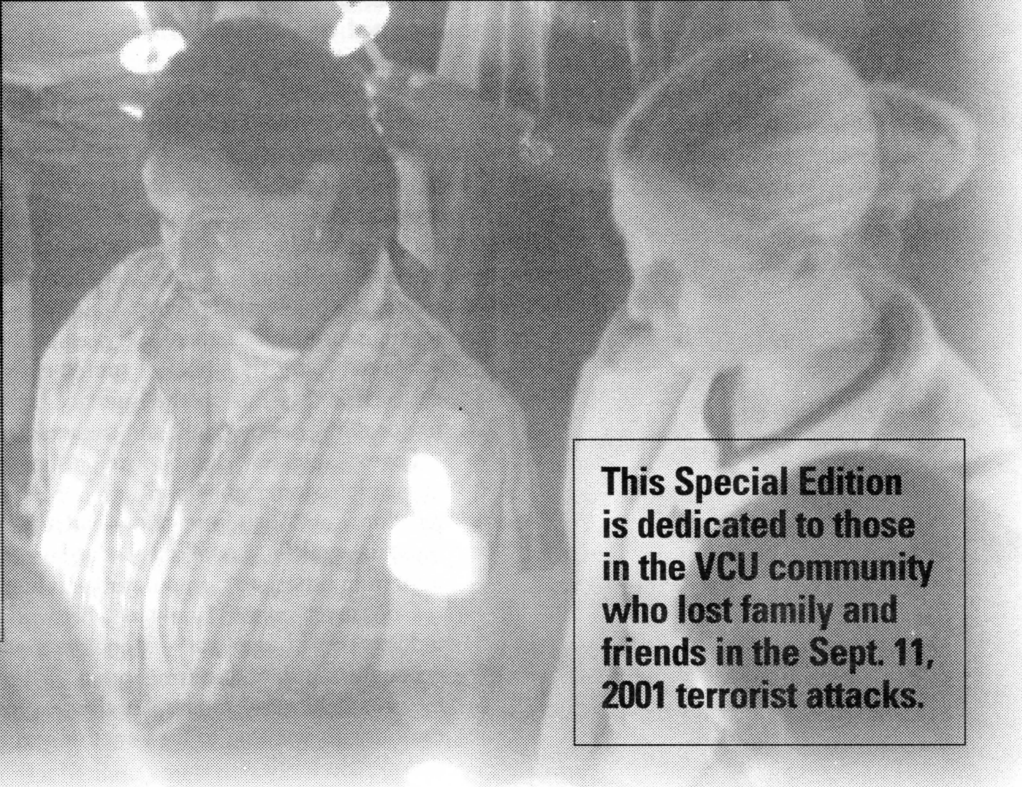
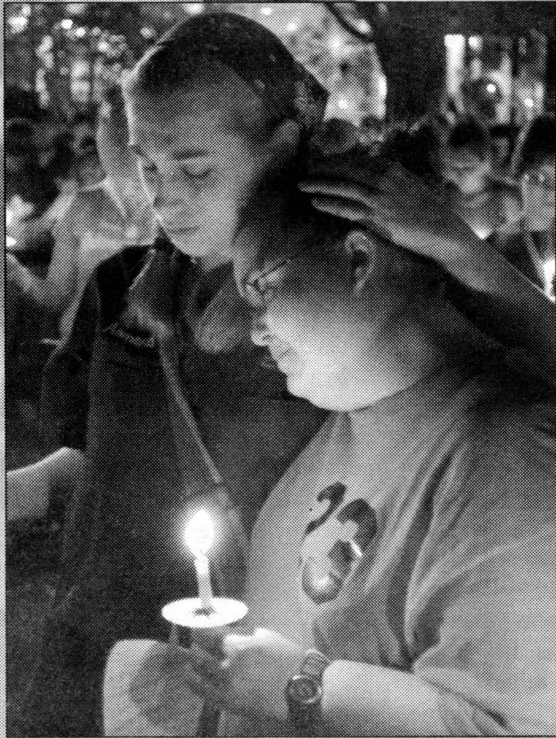
Special edition

Lyons, Curtis A.

VCU News

Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Health System

We respond and remember



**This Special Edition
is dedicated to those
in the VCU community
who lost family and
friends in the Sept. 11,
2001 terrorist attacks.**

Trying times demand tolerance and hope

by Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.
President, Virginia Commonwealth University

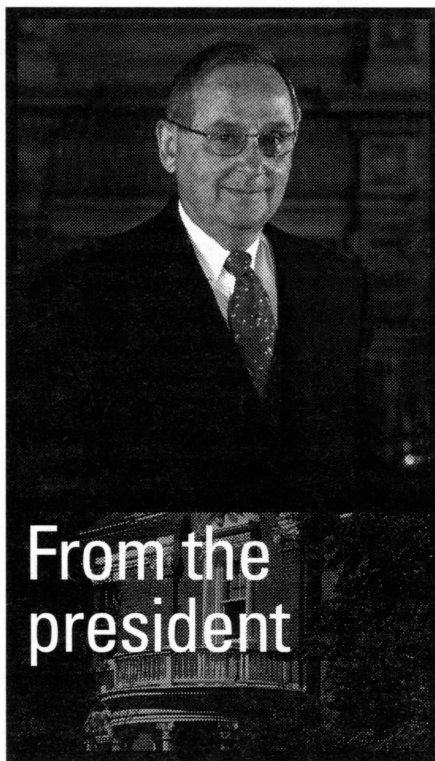
We in the academic community watched in horror and helplessness, along with every other American, as tragedy unfolded on Tuesday, Sept. 11.

And, still, each day brings us the heart-breaking news that more and more members of the VCU community are directly affected by this tragedy. Our deepest sympathies are with these students, faculty and staff who are so personally touched by the events of that day.

I am a historian, and the scholars I know would be hard pressed to identify an equivalent event in America's past. The events of the 11th were the Oklahoma City bombing magnified a hundredfold — though we grieve every life lost to such horror, no matter the scale.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor, precipitating the United States' entry into World War II, comes readily to mind as well. Many Americans, however, believe that the terrorist attacks on our nation on Sept. 11 exceed the impact of Pearl Harbor. On Dec. 7, 1941, the targets of that devious and malevolent attack were military installations, and the victims were soldiers, sailors and Marines. This time the targets were two of our most visible national symbols, and the victims were unsuspecting civilians.

Needless to say, the ages are replete with unimaginable atrocities committed in the name of God or hate and fear or right-



eousness. The cost in human lives for these reasons is the great, sad tale of world history.

But Sept. 11 already has become the 21st century's pivotal event, at the very least for Americans, and perhaps for the rest of the world. Though we must leave its full comprehension to historians of the 22nd century, we must hope that it will be remembered as a time when our heritage of tolerance for people of other nationalities and religious and ethnic backgrounds was tested — and we passed.

VCU responds to crisis with speed and caring

I want to let the University and Health System communities know how proud I am of the VCU responses to this national tragedy.

Within minutes of learning of the first plane crashes, the VCU Health System rapidly and efficiently proceeded to a state of readiness; MCV Hospitals remained on red-alert status for 24 hours.

Our university news organization immediately put forth VCU faculty to local, regional and national media and created a "breaking news" area on our Web pages for VCU commentary and expertise. Faculty from both campuses offered important

insights, of which the print and broadcast media made extensive use.

Many of our faculty set aside their normal classroom lectures to encourage thoughtful discussion with students.

Our students also have been resolute in their expressions of concern, as they so powerfully led the university community with a candlelight vigil and as they and our faculty and staff joined in VCU's day of remembrance at the University Student Commons and at the Medical Sciences Building.

It is with that spirit that VCU News publishes this special edition to capture the words and photos of our community at a time of crisis.

President Eugene P. Trani

America attacked

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four U.S. airliners. They crashed two of the planes into the World Trade Center towers in New York, one into the Pentagon across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., and one into a rural area of southwestern Pennsylvania.

Almost 6,000 people were killed or have been reported missing in the terrorist attacks.



VCU faculty speak ... to students, to parents

Kristin Swenson-Mendez, Ph.D.
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

At this time, more than at any other, the need for sustained attention to the quality of education in our nation is clear. Consequently, I have begun my recent classes by saying:

"Along with feelings of profound sadness and keen anger, these enormously tragic events make us as Americans think about who we are and how we can best defend ourselves. We have operated on the assumption that we are indomitable, definitely secure. The violent attacks on Sept. 11 have deeply shaken us as a people and forced us to rethink those assumptions.

"Who are we? And how can we best defend ourselves?"

Discussion forums planned

by Malorie Janis
University News Services

To stimulate community reflection and critically important discussion, the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are planning weekly forums related to the terrorist attacks.

Among the anticipated topics:

- Muslims in the United States: Myths, Misperceptions, Realities
- Understanding Terrorism: Its Causes and Possible Cures
- Parenting Strategies in an Uncertain World

Forums are planned for the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. beginning Sept. 25 in the School of Business Auditorium. Details are available at www.vcu.edu.

"In education we'll find our best defense. Under the circumstances, I understand if folks need to be absent or find it difficult to concentrate. Under the circumstances, however, it is important that you do all that you can to attend your classes and apply yourself to them. By educating ourselves, we define our nation and contribute to its defense. It is possible to be ignorant and have muscles; only with education can we be strong."

Kia J. Bentley, Ph.D.
School of Social Work

Ironically, the night before the attack, my graduate students in "Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders" had paired off and role-played how to share a diagnosis with a client.

One student played the part of a client who was experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, characterized by such symptoms as excessive vigilance, marked distress, intrusive thoughts and poor concentration. We had no idea of the heightened potential relevance of that exercise for their future professional and personal lives.

Six days after the attack, I started class by asking students their thoughts on the interface between their professional and personal selves in the midst of the tragedy.

For example, how did the social justice aims and values of the profession match up with their personal feelings and reflections and their interactions with others in this crisis? As social workers, did folks feel added pressure, from within or from others, to turn outward and help others?

One student whose family member works in the airline industry noted she was disappointed with herself for becoming selfish and shifting into a "Where is MY family member right now" mode. Another expressed total frustration with wanting to do something in terms of social action right away.

Did anyone feel guilty about wanting strong military

action in response? Mirroring the public opinion polls, many called for such action. But some were quiet.

The transition back to the evening's original content agenda was smooth. We all noted how, after a week of intense mourning and utter disbelief, the act of living "normally," of living the everyday, has been appropriately reframed as a radical act of defiance against terrorism.

Margaret A. Dolan, M.D.
VCU Health System's Medical College of Virginia Hospitals

Children sense the anxiety and tension in adults around them. And, like adults, children experience the same feelings of helplessness and lack of control that disasters can bring about. Unlike adults, however, children have little experience to help them place their current problems into perspective. Each child responds differently to disaster, depending on his or her understanding and maturity.

In a tragic event, it is easy to understand how the events can create a great deal of anxiety in children of all ages because they will interpret the disaster as a personal danger to themselves and those they care about.

Whatever the child's age or relationship to the damage caused by disaster, it's important that you be open about the consequences for your family and that you encourage him or her to talk about it.

Children need comforting and frequent reassurance that they're safe; make sure they get it.

Be honest and open about the disaster, but keep information age-appropriate.

Encourage children to express their feelings through talking, drawing or playing.

Try to maintain your daily routines as much as possible.

Compiled by Mary Beth Alford, University News Services

Experts in the news

As the tragic events unfolded in New York City and at the Pentagon, VCU experts were in demand from local, regional and national media. Below are excerpts from the nearly 40 interviews set up by University News Services.

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George Hoffer, Ph.D., Economics

"The country will virtually shut down for a week or more. How can anybody go out and buy a car, or anything nonessential, for that matter?"

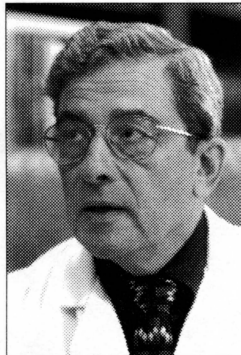
Winston-Salem Journal, Sept. 13

...

Joel Silverman, M.D., Psychiatry

"Most people handle stress well and will be OK. [A tragedy] can help people come together, put aside jealousies and minor disagreements and help people focus on things that are much more significant, such as loving one another."

Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sept. 14



Silverman

...

Wendy Kliewer, Ph.D., Psychology

"I think it is very important that we listen to our children to understand what they are worried about — not assume they are worried about the same things we are. Spending time with children and listening to them — being aware of and available when they want to talk — is important."

Cox Radio (B103, K95, 96.5 and Y101), Sept. 23

...

Edward Millner, Ph.D., Economics

"A likely increase in defense spending could help offset declines in other sectors of the state's economy. Military budgets will go up. Budgets for counterterrorism and intelligence will go up."

The Associated Press, Sept. 13

...

Neil Murphy, Ph.D., Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

"Selling your stocks now is an immediate response, sort of a 'knee-jerk,' very quick response. People should look at what has fundamentally changed in the stock market and what should be done about it. If there have been no fundamental changes, people should stay where they are."

WWBT Channel 12, Sept. 17

...

Judyth Twigg, Ph.D., Political Science and Public Administration

"The federal government's actions have been extraordinarily skilled and prudent. I think that we should all take some kind of heart at the degree to which there have clearly been policies and procedures to deal with this sort of thing."

WRIC Channel 8, Sept. 11

Compiled by Mary Beth Alford, University News Services

Activities postponed or cancelled on campus

- All evening classes cancelled Sept. 11
- Sept. 20 dedication ceremonies for new Life Sciences building and launch of Life Sciences curriculum postponed
- Sept. 26 dedication ceremonies for new Sports Medicine Center and West Broad Street Apartments postponed.

Health System ready for disaster victims

by Joe Kuttenkuler
University News Services

Soon after the terrorist attacks, preparations were underway at the VCU Health System to accept patients.

"The Pentagon is right up the road, and since no one knew initially how many people might be injured, we started gearing up," said Sheldon Retchin, M.D., senior executive vice president and chief operating officer of the VCU Health System.

By early afternoon, a command center had been set up in VCUHS's MCV Hospitals, one of five Level I Trauma Centers in the state. Elective surgeries were cancelled to free up operating rooms. "Everyone was on alert — from environmental services to the emergency department, from the physicians and nurses to volunteers," Retchin said.

Meetings were taking place to identify space for any incoming patients that could not be accommodated by Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia hospitals. Soon after the Pentagon was hit, Washington Hospital Center and INOVA Fairfax Hospital called to ask for support if the volume of patients became overwhelming. Because there were likely to be many burn victims, the Evans-Haynes Burn Center staff marshaled its resources and set up a second fully equipped burn treatment area by converting the Post Anesthesia Care Unit outside the operating rooms.

"We were ready quickly, and we stayed ready," said Ron Merrell, M.D., chairman of surgery at VCU. "By establishing a secondary burn unit, we were able to continue

caring for our existing patients and not disturb them by trying to consolidate space."

Even though VCU is hundreds of miles from New York and 90 miles from the Pentagon, the National Defense Medical System Plan calls for Richmond to be a receiving site for patients during a major disaster. Similarly, Old Dominion Emergency Medical Services — the regional coordinator for emergency care — also kept VCU apprised of what was happening. If the call had come requesting that patients be sent to VCU, the Health System would have had 8-12 hours to prepare, at which time the Central Virginia Mass Casualty Incident Plan would have been activated. From there, MCV Hospitals would have taken the lead in coordinating where patients were taken among hospitals in Central Virginia.

"A representative from NDMS suggested we remain on alert for 72 hours as recovery operations progressed," said Retchin. "If there had been a significant number of patients, I feel certain some would have come to us."

Retchin said the collective response of the hospital staff was wonderful during the hours and days following the tragedy. Many people offered to work overtime, come in on their days off, donate blood and support families of any victims. Patient Relations set up a toll-free information number for families of victims. A number of staff offered to travel to the disaster sites to help out.

"I am extremely grateful to the physicians, nurses, therapists and staff who responded so swiftly," said Retchin. "The coordination among our team, the command center and everyone involved was smooth and exemplary in the face of enormous uncertainty."

Couple lives tale of hell and heroism

VCU physicians aid wounded at World Trade Center disaster

by Michael Ford
University News Services

Within a half hour after the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, VCU physicians, Joseph P. Ornato and Mary Ann Peberdy, were aboard a commandeered New York City bus, riding past Ground Zero of the disaster to open a makeshift emergency treatment center a mere six blocks from the destruction.

"Everything started out gray. Once we were within 10 or 12 blocks of the disaster, it seemed as if we were driving through a black and white photograph," said Peberdy, a cardiologist and assistant professor of internal medicine in VCU's School of Medicine. "It was eerily quiet, and there were thousands of sheets of white paper everywhere."

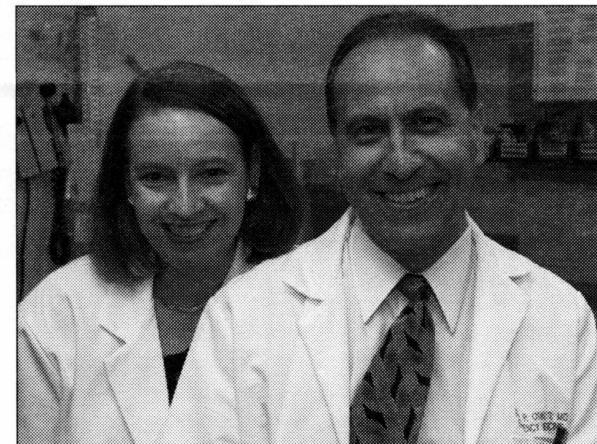
"It looked like the surface of the moon," said Ornato, chairman of emergency medicine in the School of Medicine and chair of the emergency department of the VCU Health System.

Married for seven years, the couple was in New York attending a national conference on defibrillators chaired by Ornato. Soon after the meeting began at the Brooklyn Marriott Hotel, alarms evacuated the 150 conferees. They walked outside and looked across the Brooklyn Bridge to see the Twin Towers on fire. "At this point, all of us realized this was an act of terrorism," Ornato said.

Ornato used his pocket PC to access CNN and received early reports from lower Manhattan. As they took in the scene, Ornato and Peberdy encountered a woman running from a subway tunnel. She had been in the World Trade Center but had escaped in time. As they gave her assistance, a rumbling sound prompted them to look across the river as the South Tower collapsed. They returned to the hotel and sprang into action.

"I asked the group to take a moment for silent prayer for the poor souls in that building," Ornato said. "Then we began discussing how we could help."

Part of the group set up a first aid station at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge to help injured people escaping on foot from lower Manhattan. Others responded to a request from a fire department official to set up a triage unit at the



Peberdy and Ornato recount tail of horror.

WTC. "I told them we had five minutes to gather supplies and cell phones and deploy," Ornato said. "The fire department commandeered a city bus, and there we were, heading towards the fire, smoke and debris."

By 11:15 a.m., Ornato's team of 32 doctors, nurses and paramedics had set up a 40-bed field hospital, critical care area and morgue. Later in the day, when the already evacuated Building 7 fell and threatened the out-of-town volunteers at the WTC, Peberdy and Ornato were separated.

"We saw the windows from Building 7 waver back and forth, and it collapsed," said Peberdy. "Then this wave of debris came towards us. We were told to run. Once inside a nearby office building, Joe and I found each other, but it was tense for a few moments."

As the afternoon gave way to night, they treated 19 people and gave assistance and comfort to others, including an 8-year-old boy wandering through lower Manhattan asking for a quarter to call his mother. He said she worked in the World Trade Center and was missing.

At 10 p.m., Ornato and Peberdy returned to their hotel after an urban search and rescue unit took over.

"It was frustrating not to have more people to treat," Peberdy said. "We did treat firefighters and emergency people, including one particularly tenacious firefighter who went back after being pulled from the rubble twice."

"We just prayed to God we could do some good," Ornato said. "The real tragedy is that the towers came down. There should have been more survivors."

VCU joins nation in day of remembrance

by Mike Frontiero
University News Services

More than 1,000 people attended programs at VCU's two campuses on Sept. 14 as part of a national day of remembrance for the victims of the terrorist attacks.

Students, faculty and staff joined in song at a morning VCU Remembrance program in the University Student Commons Plaza as the VCU Black Awakening Choir sang the national anthem. A similar program was held later in the day at the Medical College of Virginia Campus.

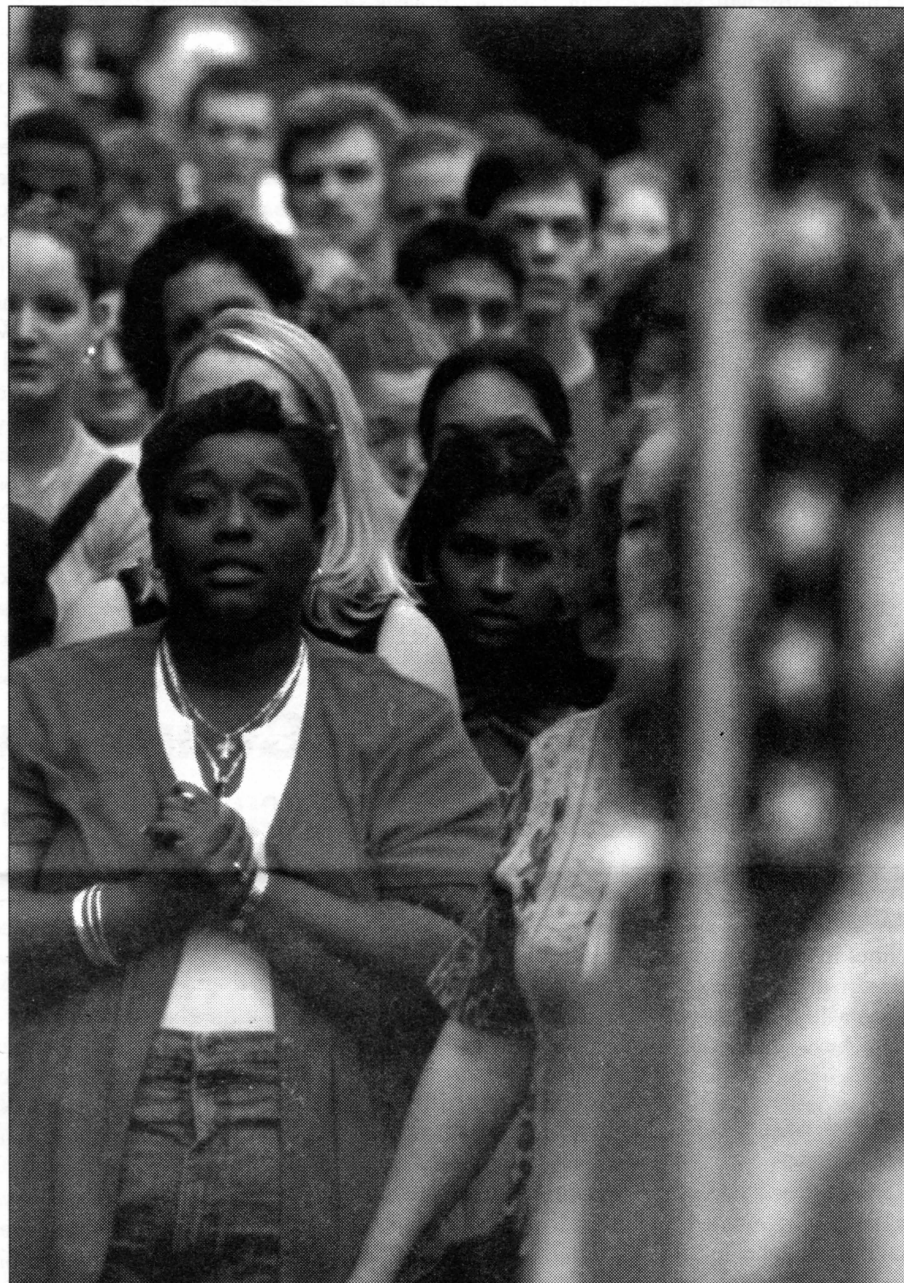
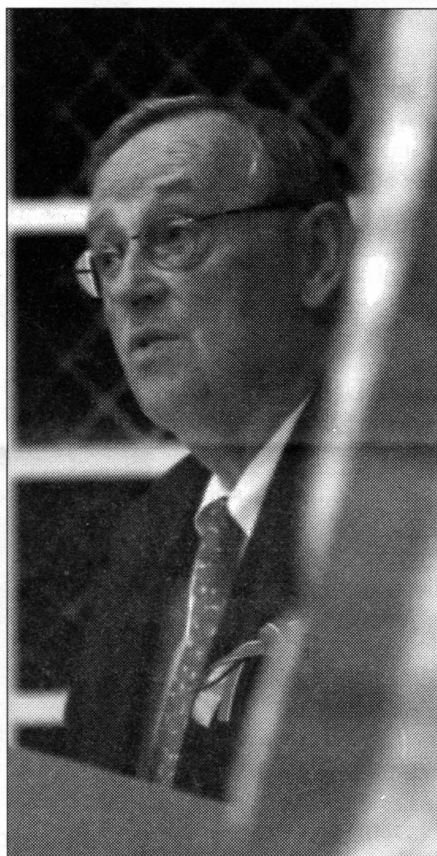
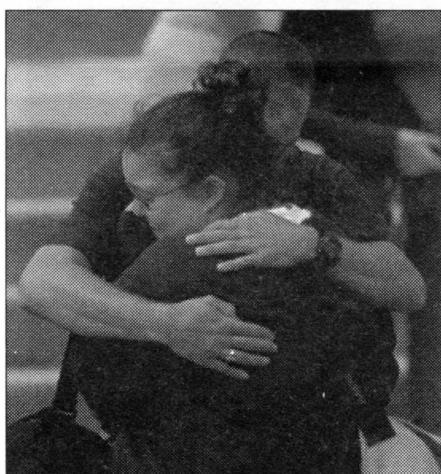
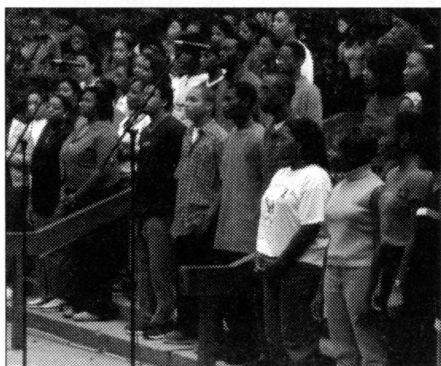
VCU President Eugene Trani said the

tragedy struck VCU directly when a student lost her father in the attack on the World Trade Center. President Trani urged the diverse VCU community not to point fingers at anyone except the terrorists and the nations that harbor them.

Sister Pat McCabe of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart asked VCU to pray for

the nation's leaders as they decide how to respond to the attacks.

VCU Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Roderick McDavis said it was a day to rise above the tragedy and think about tomorrow. He said the victims will be remembered in our hearts and prayers.



Spiro urges love and caring as a way to heal

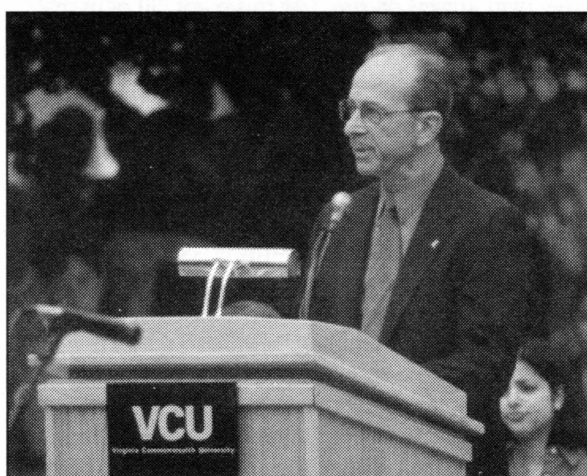
Jack D. Spiro, Ph.D., Harry Lyons Professor of Judaic Culture and director of the Center for Judaic Studies, delivered a version of these remarks at the convocation of remembrance:

The unimaginable events of Sept. 11 were still unfolding when my students and I assembled at 11 a.m. that awful Tuesday for a semi-weekly session of an honors course on Walt Whitman. We suddenly were taken aback by prophetic words that we were to contemplate that day, beginning with Stanza 33 of Walt's long poem, "Song of Myself."

*"Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself
become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.
I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris,
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my
comrades,
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels....
I take part, I see and hear the whole,
The cries, curses, roar....
The ambulanza slowly passing, trailing its red drip,
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable
repairs...."*

*The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air....
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream,
and long dull, tapering groan,
These so, these irretrievable...."*

As we listened to these words, I think we were all numb, perhaps holding back our tears, certainly in a state of perplexity.



Spiro addresses convocation of remembrance.

The unimaginable had happened. It could well be the most gut-wrenching experience in American history. We are a nation of 250 million broken hearts. We are a nation whose age of innocence has definitely, finally, come to an end. After this day of infamy and darkness, we will never be the same again. We are still in shock; we have collided with the surreal, our lives are punctuated with moments of anger and confusion.

How are we going to heal? I really don't know, but I do believe that the most tried-and-true way for many centuries still holds true and should be tried: to give and receive love, to care for each other, to reach out with open arms and open hearts.

There is such a thin line between order and chaos, between life and death, between having and losing, between security and danger. And so we need to value all the more what we are only loaned, for how long we do not know. But from our own vulnerability, we can become more compassionate towards others who experience the pain and suffering of our fragile world.

Of course we all know that human suffering, especially in the magnitude that we have now experienced it, can choke the flame of faith. The evil humans do to each other assaults our moral sensibilities.

If there is a God, He/She is suffering with us.

FDA approves new cochlear implant device

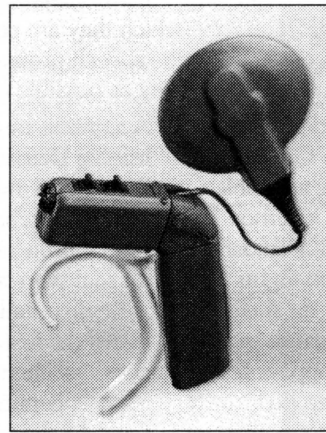
by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

The VCU School of Medicine's Department of Audiology has served as one of the largest clinical trial sites in the United States for an advanced cochlear implant device, which was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration. VCU researchers have already successfully implanted the hearing device in more than 40 adults and children in the Richmond area.

Developed by the international research company MED-EL, cochlear implants aid individuals with mild to severe hearing loss by taking over the job of the cochlea or inner ear. Hearing loss is often caused when the cochlear nerve cannot send

sound information to the brain. The cochlear implant uses a microphone that picks up sound and turns it into electrical signals. These signals pass through the implant and are transmitted to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound.

Cochlear implants first became available in 1977, however, they required the use of large battery packs and were not practical for children or active adults. The new implant device — which is flexible and weighs only 11 grams — is the first system that sits entirely behind the user's ear, and



Speech processor

also uses the thinnest implant available, approximately 4mm thick.

"With FDA approval, we now have an open gateway to bring innovative solutions to the severe to profoundly hearing impaired," said Chris Bertrand, chief executive officer of MED-EL Corporation, North America. "With the unique design of the behind-the-ear processor, we can easily meet the needs of infants, children and adults alike."

Two of Terry Cooper's children received the device through an outpatient procedure at the

VCU Audiology Department.

"I have two children who lost their hearing gradually. I was very nervous about taking my children to the hospital, but the doctors and staff have been so caring and helpful," said Cooper, of Chesterfield. "Seeing how much my children's lives have been improved, I am very grateful. I feel I have seen more miracles happen in their lives than most parents are given the opportunity to."

Suzanne Hasenstab, M.D., director of audiology, has led the cochlear implant program at VCU for more than 15 years.

"About two thirds of the patients we have implanted have been children," Hasenstab said. "These are kids whose lives are going to be completely different and better because of the cochlear implant."

Center to enroll men in prostate cancer prevention trial

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Healthy men aged 55 and older are needed for the largest-ever prostate cancer prevention study, launched in July by the National Cancer Institute. VCU's Massey Cancer Center is one of more than 400 sites in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada to participate in the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial, known as SELECT.

The trial, which will include a total of 32,400 men, will evaluate whether the two dietary supplements can protect against prostate cancer, the most common form of cancer in men after skin cancer.

"SELECT is the first study designed to look directly at the effects of vitamin E and selenium, both separately and together, in preventing prostate cancer," said Unyime Nseyo, M.D., chairman of urology in VCU's School of Medicine and principal investigator of the Massey Cancer Center arm of the SELECT trial. "Previous research involving the two supplements suggested that these nutrients might prevent prostate cancer, but we don't know for sure. When SELECT is finished we will have our answer."

This year alone in Virginia, prostate cancer will be diagnosed in about 4,900 men, and 800 will die of the disease. In the United States, 198,100 men will get prostate cancer, and more than 31,500 men are expected to die from it. Risk factors for the disease include being over age 55, being African-American or having a

father or brother with prostate cancer. Because the disease strikes African-American men at a younger age, they will be eligible to enroll in the study at age 50, versus age 55 for other racial and ethnic groups.

"It is crucial that men of all races and ethnic backgrounds participate in

SELECT," said Nseyo. "And, since African-American men have the highest incidence of prostate cancer in the world, we especially encourage them to consider joining this trial."

Selenium and vitamin E, both naturally occurring nutrients, are antioxidants. They are capable of neutralizing toxins, known as "free radicals" that might otherwise damage the genetic material of cells and possibly lead to cancer. These nutrients were chosen for study because of the promise they showed in cancer prevention trials for nonmelanoma skin cancer and lung cancer.

Study participants from the Central Virginia area will visit VCU's Massey Cancer Center once every six months.

When they enroll in the trial, they will be assigned randomly to one of four groups. One group will take 200 micrograms of selenium daily plus a placebo that looks like vitamin E. Another group will take 400 milligrams of vitamin E daily along with a placebo that looks like selenium. A third group will take both selenium and vitamin E. And a final group will be given two placebos.

Men who join SELECT will not need to change their diet in any way, but they must stop taking any supplements they buy themselves that contain selenium or vitamin E. If participants wish to take a multivitamin, the Massey Cancer Center will provide, without charge, a specially formulated one that does not contain selenium or vitamin E.

The trial will take up to 12 years to complete. Study investigators hope to recruit all the study participants during the first five years of the trial, so that each man can be followed for at least seven years. Men may be able to participate in SELECT if they:

- are age 55 or older; age 50 or older for African-American men;
- have never had prostate cancer and have not had any other cancer, except nonmelanoma skin cancer, in the last five years; and
- are generally in good health.

Men interested in joining the study can call the Massey Cancer Center at 1-800-925-8821. On the Web, visit the SELECT trial at <http://cancer.gov/select>.

VCU doc serves as lead pediatrician

by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

A \$10,000 grant from an American Academy of Pediatrics program "Reaching Children: Building Systems of Care," is designed to help medical students from VCU, the University of Virginia and Eastern Virginia Medical School raise community awareness and increase enrollment in children's health-insurance programs. Lindsey Grossman, M.D., chair of the School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics, will lead the grant for the Medical Society of Virginia Foundation.

The grant will support the medical

students in establishing outreach systems, increasing awareness among doctors and families about the availability of low-cost health coverage. The students also will identify children eligible for the insurance and create a follow-up process to ensure continuous enrollment in the programs.

"Anything we can do to harness the energy of our medical students to improve the health of our children is a positive effort," Grossman said. "This program will be beneficial on so many levels — to the children and their families and to the training of the medical students in the nuances of community health-care delivery."

Study shows weight contributes to early puberty in young girls

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Being overweight is an important contributing factor to early puberty in girls, according to a new study published in the August issue of *Pediatrics*. Paul Kaplowitz, M.D., Ph.D., a pediatric endocrinologist in VCU's School of Medicine, authored the study with researchers who wrote a landmark 1997 paper on puberty in young girls.

Using data originally collected by the Pediatric Research in Office Settings network of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the latest study looks at the body-mass index of girls who have entered puberty at an early age. It was found that 6- to 9-year old girls who had started hav-

ing breast or pubic-hair development were significantly more overweight than their peers who had not yet entered puberty.

The researchers also found that the association between body-mass index and early puberty was stronger for white girls than for African-American girls. While previous research had shown that African-American girls enter puberty a year earlier on average than white girls, the research results indicate that this was not due to greater obesity in African-American girls.

"Physicians should take into account whether or not the girl is overweight when deciding how to manage 6- to 9-year olds with signs of early puberty," Kaplowitz said. "This includes the decision as to whether to try to arrest puberty with expensive monthly injections."

In a 1999 article published in *Pediatrics*, Kaplowitz and his colleagues proposed that guidelines on when puberty should be considered "precocious" should reflect the finding that U.S. girls — particularly African-American girls — are starting puberty earlier than in the past. When the 1999 review was published, the reasons for the apparent trend for earlier puberty were not clear.

The authors were spurred to investigate whether obesity could be behind the trend because of the increasing obesity in American children, and the proven relationship between nutritional status and the timing of puberty.

Pediatrics is the peer-reviewed, scientific journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

2001 gubernatorial election: a first look

by Robert Holsworth
Director, VCU Center for Public Policy

Virginia Republicans have been on a decade-long roll. Since 1990, only one Democrat has received more than 50% of the vote in any election with a statewide constituency. Today, the GOP holds all three statewide offices, both U.S. Senate seats and has an effective 8-3 advantage in the state's congressional delegation. This spring, the General Assembly passed a Republican-drawn redistricting plan so artfully crafted that the party could maintain a legislative majority for a generation.

But the 2001 gubernatorial race between Mark Earley and Mark Warner is likely to be very competitive. In fact, if the early polls are any indication, the Democratic candidate, Mark Warner, is actually the favorite in the race.

Warner, a Northern Virginia businessman, has premised his campaign on the assumption that Democrats can only win in Virginia when they attract voters who normally lean Republican. Unlike the recent Senate campaign of Chuck Robb, which relied heavily upon Democratic-leaning interest groups (labor organiza-

tions, pro-choice groups, environmental organizations and gay-lesbian rights groups) to try to paint George Allen as a candidate outside the mainstream, Warner has portrayed himself as a candidate who transcends partisan categories.

Warner has made governmental accountability a central campaign issue, pointing to this year's budget impasse between the Senate and the Governor as evidence for why it would be advisable to have a business person as Governor. He has de-emphasized standard Democratic social issues such as abortion rights and gun control. Indeed, he is the first Democratic gubernatorial candidate in years to have sought the support of the NRA. And instead of relying exclusively on traditional Democratic groups, he has created his own groups "Sportsmen for Warner" and "Virginians for Warner" that emphasize his crossover appeals.

The GOP candidate, former Attorney General Mark Earley, maintains that his 14 years experience in state government make him better qualified than Warner to handle the challenges that will inevitably confront the next Governor. Earley says he can be depended upon to continue the progress that the GOP has made on issues

such as tax reduction, welfare reform and criminal justice matters.

The Earley campaign maintains that Warner's effort to position himself above party is simply an elaborate masquerade and part of Warner's effort to utilize his wealth to disguise his political biography and essentially purchase the election. According to the GOP, Warner is a left-leaning Democrat who opposed the major Republican initiatives of the 1990's and whose contributions to Ted Kennedy and Bill Clinton reveal more about his political soul than does his rhetoric.

By almost all accounts, Warner has dominated the first part of the race. He has garnered visible support from business leaders who support normally Republican candidates. He has made good use of this year's budget fiasco and the economic downturn to gain an advantage on fiscal issues. And the Earley campaign, at least to date, has not articulated a mobilizing populist theme such as the abolition of parole and the elimination of the car tax that fueled the Allen and Gilmore victories.

But despite his summer success and the bankroll he has for the fall campaign, it is much too soon to declare Warner the likely winner. Warner will still have to find a



From the faculty

way to obtain a heavy turnout from the Democratic base even though his campaign has been almost entirely directed at swing voters. The Earley campaign should become much more competitive when all the potential Republican firepower — Bush, Allen, Cheney, Powell and Gilmore — is mustered on its behalf. Warner clearly has the best shot of any Democrat since Doug Wilder, but no one should forget that for the past decade the trendline in Virginia politics has moved almost entirely in the opposite direction.

Dr. Robert Holsworth is a regular commentator on Virginia politics in media outlets around the country.

Medical student draws praise for undergraduate sign system work

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Who could guess where enrolling in a child psychology course would take her?

For first-year medical student Nicole Kissane, it led to developing a simplified sign system that has helped autistic children communicate with their families. And that, in turn, has led to national news coverage — including NBC's "Today" show, The Washington Post and CNN.

Now a first-year student in VCU's School of Medicine, Kissane did her sign system work as an undergraduate in the distinguished majors program at the University of Virginia. She was a freshman in a child psychology class when she first heard about a research project that could help children and adults who could hear but not speak, such as children with autism or adults who had suffered strokes.

"My grandfather had suffered a series of strokes when I was growing up, so I knew right away that I'd like to be involved in this effort," she said.

After four years and 600 hours of poring through more than 20 sign-language dictionaries, Kissane and the other members of the research team developed a 500-word lexicon of simplified signs that could be easily mastered and remembered. In May, they put the system on the Web, and that's when the real excitement began.

Her advisers had told her how worthwhile the project would be, and she understood how true that was when — within days — the Web page received thousands of hits, and her e-mail box started filling up with messages. Most were



Kissane demonstrates signing system.

thanks from parents who had begun teaching their children the signs and were rewarded with two-way communication — sometimes for the first time in the child's life.

"My thesis is not just going to gather dust on a shelf. It could radically change lives — it's so exciting!"

Kissane and her faculty advisers now are preparing for a pilot study that will evaluate the usefulness of their sign system manual. Based on feedback by users, they may need to modify some of the signs, and then they're looking to publish the system. That prospect appeals to Kissane, who recognizes how unusual it is to have publishable research at such an early stage in a career.

Now her eyes are firmly focused on her dream of becoming a surgeon, and she's throwing herself into her first weeks in medical school.

"VCU was my first choice for medical school," Kissane

said. "I'd heard from surgeons that this was the place to be if I really wanted to pursue the surgery field, so now my focus has shifted to my priorities here."

Still, between classes, clinical experiences and studying for exams, she finds time to maintain the Web page — which has now logged 50,000 hits, offer modifications on the manual's draft and answer e-mails from grateful parents.

And even in the midst of new student orientation activities, she somehow managed to squeeze in a New York photo shoot. So keep an eye out on December newsstands when you'll find her among the eight "Girls of the Year" featured in CosmoGirl! Magazine. And meanwhile, check out her Web site at www.simplifiedsigns.org.

Engineering programs earn first-time accreditations

by Mike Frontiero
University News Services

VCU's School of Engineering has achieved a major milestone, earning first-time accreditations for its chemical, electrical and mechanical engineering programs from the nation's premier accrediting body for engineering education.

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), a federation of 31 professional engineering and technical societies, cited numerous strengths in its report on the School of Engineering programs. It recognized VCU's commitment to the philosophy and processes of quality improvement as well as the active participation of students, faculty, employers and alumni in the development of the school's undergraduate programs.

The board specifically cited the school's career counseling services, which have helped place engineering graduates in prestigious positions, and a high ranking from industry for the quality and achievement of engineering students.

"This is truly a momentous occasion in the very successful process of developing a unique engineering school that meets the educational and research needs of the 21st century," said VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D.

ABET's accreditation comes just two years after the engineering school graduated its first class, which is the earliest programs can be accredited. The undergraduate biomedical engineering program, which began two years later than the others, will be eligible for accreditation in 2003.

"Accreditation helps build a school's reputation," said Robert J. Mattauch, Ph.D., engineering school dean. "In this field, a graduate's starting salary can depend on whether he or she attends an accredited institution."

Since 1932, ABET has accredited more than 2,400 engineering, engineering technology, computing and applied science programs at more than 500 colleges and universities nationwide. To be considered for ABET's accreditation, engineering programs must be designed to prepare students at a professional level.

VCU's School of Engineering, established in 1995, is recognized by local and national industry for its world-class teaching and research facility. Just last May, Infineon Technologies Richmond hired more students from VCU than any other school in the nation, and 13 of the 16 students hired were from the School of Engineering.

In addition, the school is one of only a handful of university facilities in the country that has a microelectronics "clean room" dedicated to undergraduate education. In addition to its four undergraduate programs, the school offers master's and Ph.D. degrees in life sciences engineering, manufacturing and design, micro-nano technology and biomedical engineering.

This year the School of Engineering has 1,031 undergraduate students — which includes the largest freshman class ever, with the highest SATs — and 83 graduate students. The school, with a 46-member faculty, has received about \$3.5 million in research funding and has more than \$22 million worth of research proposals under review by federal agencies and independent foundations.

VCU People

In July, **John Everett**, Ph.D., professor of accounting, along with co-author Cherie J. O'Neil, Ph.D., from Colorado State University, won the Best Article Award from the Tax Adviser, a national journal distributed to tax practitioners. Their article "AMT Planning Strategies" appeared in the November 2000 issue.

...
Paul J. Gerber, Ph.D., professor, division of educational studies, School of Education, has been appointed to a six-person panel by the British government to select a distinguished scholar to be awarded the University Chair in Learning Disabilities, being established by the PPP Health Care Medical Trust. The University Chair will be appointed for fifteen years and will lead a center supported with a generous sum of money.

...
Allen Lee, Ph.D., professor of information systems, has accepted the position of associate dean for research and graduate studies in the School of Business. Lee is the editor-in-chief of MIS Quarterly, a visiting professor in the Department of Information Systems at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a visiting professor with the Department of Management and Information systems at Queen's University of Belfast.

...
Geralyn Trujillo, a junior in the School of business, was among 49 college students who participated in the 2001 ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program in Houston. Trujillo served as an intern with Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, an organization that provides housing and related services to needy families. She also assisted in development and administration and conducted a customer satisfaction survey.

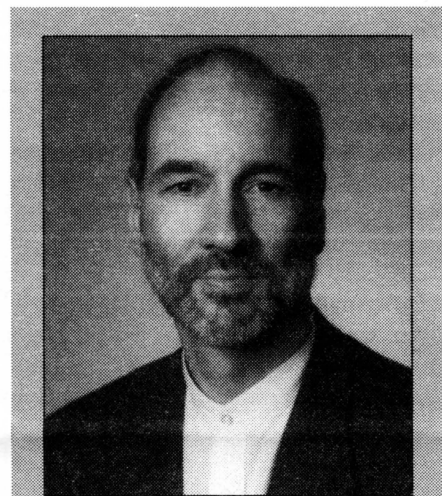
...
Janet H. Watts, Ph.D., O.T.R., and **Jodi L. Teitelman**, Ph.D., occupational therapy, were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Award Fund. They will conduct a study based on research that shows caregivers of Alzheimer's patients need more than physical distance from care recipients to truly experience respite. The findings will guide development of an intervention to help caregivers identify respite opportunities and integrate these into their lives.

...
Paul Wehman, Ph.D., professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation and rehabilitation counseling, was recently recognized in a national survey coordinated by the Remedial and Special Education Journal as one of the "Fifty Most Influential Special Educators of the Millennium." This honor was conferred by many of his peers across the nation for his pioneering efforts in supported employment.

...
VCU finance professor, **Kenneth Daniels**, Ph.D., and VCU accounting professor, **Jayarama Vijayakumar**, Ph.D., were honored by the American Accounting Association for their research on a timely banking issue in the government and nonprofit category. In drafting their collaborative paper, "The Impact of Commercial Bank Underwriting on the

Borrowing Costs of Municipal Revenue Bonds," Daniels and Vijayakumar used research from a large sample of municipal revenue bonds issued during 1986-1999. Their research shows that issues underwritten by commercial banks have lower true interest costs relative to issues underwritten by non-bank investment firms.

...
LaTonya C. Lane, a sophomore in chemical engineering, was the 2001 recipient of the first-ever Astoria Beneficial Club scholarship award for the VCU School of Engineering. The organization, which was founded in Richmond in 1901 by 22 African-American men, is widely engaged in civic activities. Lane, who was nominated by the faculty, received the \$1,000 scholarship for maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or better and being active in community service.



Hobbs to curate exhibition for 2002 São Paulo Bienal

Robert Hobbs, Thalheimer professor of art history, will curate an exhibition for artist Kara Walker at the 2002 São Paulo Bienal in Brazil. Walker received a grant from the Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions to support her exhibition, which opens in March. Walker's works include life-sized silhouettes that are influenced by the popular imagery of the ante-bellum South.

Hobbs will work with a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization, International Arts and Artists, to develop Walker's exhibition. He was curator of the recent retrospective of Lee Krasner's paintings at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and also organized two exhibitions that were on view during the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta.

VCU Health System acquires PET scanner

Imaging tool will enhance patient care and cancer research

by Erin Lucero
 University News Services

The VCU Health System has added a new imaging technique that is attracting attention for its ability to help physicians detect and visualize diseases.

Known as a PET scan — short for Positron Emission Tomography — the technique provides images of the body that show changes in metabolic activity and chemistry at the cellular level. The scanner, already on campus, is the first element of the advanced imaging center that will open early next year in the Gateway Building.

"With the mapping of the human genome, scientists have made significant advances in our understanding of the molecular basis of disease," said James Tatum, M.D., chairman of radiology in the School of Medicine. "Translating this knowledge into effective therapy will depend heavily on advanced imaging technology that allows us to detect diseases early, develop new therapies and closely monitor the success of those therapies."

Tatum, who also serves in the Biomedical Imaging Program at the National Institutes of Health's Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis, is often among the first to review promising new imaging techniques.

"Even early studies comparing PET to widely accepted diagnostic techniques such as CT scans showed significantly improved accuracy with PET. More impressively, the change in course of treatment due to more effectively diagnosing a disease's progression was higher than 50 percent in some studies."

The usefulness of PET extends into a variety of medical specialties, including heart and neurological disorders as well as many types of cancers.

Patients who undergo a PET scan receive a radioactive tracer containing ingredients that act like water, sugar, proteins and oxygen, which are normally used in the body. Diseased tissues use these

materials at different rates than surrounding normal tissues, so that a whole-body scan can produce images that point to the location, size and activity of abnormal tissues or tumors.

For example, cancer cells consume glucose at a higher rate than normal cells. When a physician uses a PET tracer that mimics the way glucose is consumed in the body, cancer cells show up on a PET scan as a "hot spot" and the cancer can be detected at a very early stage. Other imaging techniques, such as CT scans, MRIs and X-rays, look only at structures in the body and may miss a cancer diagnosis if no physical change has taken place in these cells.

Because PET scans also can accurately reveal the extent of a cancer and measure how most tumors respond to therapy, it helps doctors choose the best treatment for each patient. For example, information from PET scans can help doctors decide whether surgery is appropriate and, if so, help them plan the operation. PET scans also can be used to monitor a patient's response to treatment and provide early feedback on whether a therapy is working.

Advanced, research-grade PET scanners such as the one at the VCU Health System have the potential to provide quick diagnoses with less discomfort for patients. PET scans also can lower treatment costs as they help avoid inappropriate or unnecessary surgeries and eliminate the need for multiple diagnostic tests and invasive biopsy procedures.

Through a partnership with General Electric, the new imaging center in the Gateway Building will feature a number of state-of-the-art tools in addition to the research-grade PET scanner. A high-resolution MRI scanner will assist in evaluating neurological disorders; a MicroPET scanner will be devoted to research; and a cyclotron will produce the radioisotopes needed for both PET scanners' clinical and research applications.

"The research-grade PET scanner is only the first element of an imaging center that will be unequalled in our region," Tatum said. "These imaging tools support two of the fundamental roles of an academic medical center: to provide the best possible patient care and to advance the science of medicine through innovative research."

Nurse anesthesia earns maximum accreditation

by Michael Ford
 University News Services

Following an extensive review, VCU's Department of Nurse Anesthesia has been awarded re-accreditation for 10 years, the maximum period available.

The designation comes from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, the only body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit graduate nurse-anesthesia programs.

"This award acknowledges the quality of education offered in

our department. While many departments strive to attain the maximum 10-year accreditation, few educational programs actually achieve this status," said Michael Fallacaro, D.N.S., C.R.N.A., professor and chair of nurse anesthesia. "We in nurse anesthesia are grateful to the School of Allied Health Professions, the School of Medicine and the VCU Health System, all contributing partners who benefit from the program."

The department, established in 1969 in the School of Allied Health Professions, was the nation's first nurse anesthesia program to offer a master's of science degree. In 1998, the department was ranked 10th by U.S. News & World Report among the nation's best nurse-anesthesia programs.

VCU cardiology doctors treat children from Guyana

by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

As director of pediatric cardiac surgery at the VCU Health System, Inder Mehta, M.D., has very little spare time. Along with a highly specialized cardiac team, Mehta treats children from all over the state for complex congenital heart diseases. However, seven months ago, when approached by the International Hospital for Children (IHC), he jumped at the chance to take on a few more patients.

In January, representatives from IHC, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care in developing countries, were searching for a cardiac surgeon to treat several children from Guyana.

"I was very excited they asked me to get involved," Mehta said. "One of the reasons I wanted to be a pediatric cardiac surgeon, was that I wanted to help children living in underserved countries. Their problems are very different from what we

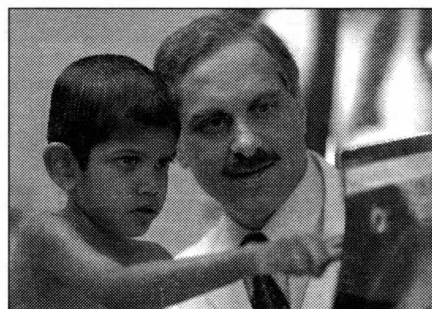
see here in the U.S."

IHC doctors visited several clinics in Guyana last year and completed preliminary tests on hundreds of sick children. They then determined which ones could be treated successfully in the U.S. and which conditions were most critical.

The IHC obtained visas for the children and their families and bought their plane tickets. In April, the first three cardiac patients were brought to MCV Hospitals. All three of the children were diagnosed with tetralogy of fallot, a congenital disorder caused by a hole in the heart. Children with this condition have a low level of oxygen in their blood and the smallest amount of activity can cause them to turn blue.

"We call these 'tet spells,'" Mehta said. "The children learn very early that as soon as they start to turn blue they need to get into a crouching position. This increases the flow of oxygen to the blood and restores their color."

The procedure to repair the heart chamber wall requires the use of a heart-lung



Mehta reviews x-ray with young patient.

machine, which takes over the job of the patient's organs while surgeons can open the heart and put a patch on the hole. Doctors then remove a part of the heart muscle to increase blood flow to the lungs, which will ensure that the child's lungs will get enough blood to develop normally.

"Here in the U.S., we would perform the operation within one year of age," Mehta said. "But in developing countries there is a severe lack of equipment and trained physicians. The procedure requires a number of specialized people, including a pedi-

atric cardiac anesthesiologist, and pediatric cardiologist and an experienced person to manage the heart-lung machine."

Without the operation, survival rate for children with this disorder is very low; sudden death can occur at any time during a tet spell. Gradually the heart gets tired, causing blood flow to the brain to slow down and increasing the risk of brain damage.

Two of the children treated in April returned home within four weeks. The third, an older boy whose condition was more advanced, stayed an additional few weeks.

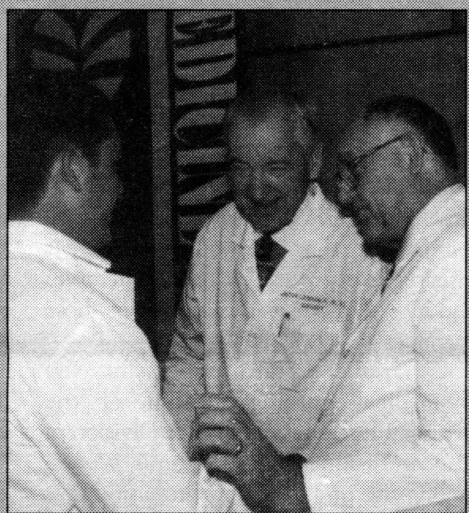
Mehta's team plans to continue working with IHC to bring children to Richmond for treatment. The VCU Pediatric Neurosurgery Department, led by William Moskowitz, M.D., also has become involved with IHC and treated several children from Guyana for neurological disorders.

"It is a very rewarding experience," Mehta said. "These families are so appreciative, I think we all feel like we have made a difference."

Dreaming doctors

With family, friends and faculty looking on, the 180 students who make up the first-year class of VCU's School of Medicine took an important step toward their dreams of becoming physicians.

Begun in 1996 and held annually in early August, the School of Medicine's White Coat Ceremony welcomes students to their chosen profession. At the celebration, Walter Lawrence, M.D., and Hugo Seibel, M.D., presented Rusty Bowman with his first white coat. The students — representing 19 states and 62 undergraduate schools — also recited the "Oath of Hippocrates," publicly acknowledging their willingness to assume their new responsibilities.



VCU at telemedicine conference

VCU was well represented at the largest telemedicine conference in the world, held this summer in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

The Sixth Annual Meeting & Exposition of the American Telemedicine Association attracted scientists from all over the globe, including a contingent from the Medical Informatics and Technology Applications Consortium based at VCU. A display highlighting MITAC's activities, technologies and accomplishments was integrated into the NASA exhibit, one of the three largest exhibits at the conference.

At the conference, Charles R. Doarn, M.B.A., assistant professor and executive

director of MITAC, led an international panel discussion, "International Telemedicine: Application in Space, Disaster Response and Trauma," and presented information on using international test beds to validate telemedicine technologies and techniques. In addition, Rifat Latifi, M.D., a VCU trauma surgeon who serves as director of MITAC's Education and Distance Learning, led a presentation on Kosova's international e-hospital.

The MITAC contingent also included Brett Harnett, director of experimental information technology, multimedia specialist Kim Evans and technology specialist Norman Stewart.

Four honorees receive faculty convocation awards

by Holly M. Rodriguez
University News Services

Four faculty members were honored for professional contributions to the University and outstanding achievement at the annual Convocation ceremony on Sept. 6.

The recipients were:

- Leila Christenbury, Ed.D., the University Award of Excellence. She is professor of English education in the School of Education,
- Paul H. Wehman, Ph.D., the Distinguished Service Award. He is professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation in the School of Medicine, director of VCU's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports in the School of Education with joint appointments in the departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Rehabilitation Counseling in the School of Education,
- Michael Joyce Sheridan, Ph.D., the Distinguished Teaching Award. He is associate professor in the School of Social Work,
- Lindon J. Eaves, M.D., the Distinguished Scholar Award. He is a professor of genetics in the School of Medicine,

Christenbury said the award was an acknowledgment of her accomplishments. "My career has been balanced between all three criteria for the award: service, teaching and scholarship," she said. "VCU has been good for me."

A former high school English teacher, Christenbury has received numerous awards,

including the 1997 Rewey Belle Inglis Award for Outstanding Woman in English Teaching and the VCU School of Education's Meritorious Achievement Award in 2000. She is president-elect of the National Council of Teachers of English and treasurer and board member of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English. The former co-editor of the ALAN Review and the former editor of English Journal for five years, she is editor of "Books for You" and author of "Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of Language Arts."

Wehman, a VCU faculty member for 25 years, attributes much of his success to a rehabilitation solution he developed to help individuals with severe disabilities get jobs. The job placement and support program, called the Support Employment Concept, earned Wehman a spot among the 50 most influential special educators of the millennium in a national survey coordinated by the Remedial and Special Education Journal. The list includes such notables as former president John F. Kennedy

"This university award is a major achievement," Wehman said. "I am very fortunate to be a professor at VCU."

He has published 150 articles, 24 book chapters, and authored or edited 33 books. In 1992, Wehman received the Distinguished Service Award from the President's Committee on Employment for Persons with

Disabilities.

Sheridan has more than 16 years of experience as a social-work practitioner, teacher and faculty member. Her work focuses on families battling substance and child abuse, incarceration and the effect on families, and spirituality in social work. "As a professor, I approach all students as individual learners and help them draw from their own knowledge."

She has contributed to 162 journals, books, research reports, curriculum materials and presentations. A member of several organizations including the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, Sheridan plans to continue her work on spirituality as it relates to human development and social work. "This award affirms that I might be on the right path," she said.

Eaves, a native of England and a priest ordained by the Church of England in Birmingham, said the award represents "one of those rare instances when you get to see what your peers, colleagues and former students think of you." He currently is researching the influence of parents on children by studying twins, molecular genetic technology and the integration of

neurological science and genetics.

Eaves has taught at the University of Birmingham in England, Oxford University, and currently teaches several genetics courses at VCU. He is a member of the John M. Templeton Foundation advisory board and member and co-director for the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics.



Christenbury



Wehman



Sheridan



Eaves

VCU Libraries acquires Tom Robbins' literary manuscripts

by Curtis Lyons and Kimberly Separ
VCU Libraries

VCU Libraries is delighted to announce the addition of the literary papers of alumnus Tom Robbins to its manuscript collections. Robbins is the celebrated author of seven novels including "Skinny Legs and All," "Jitterbug Perfume" and "Half-Asleep in Frog Pajamas." The Robbins collection consists of the handwritten literary manuscripts and page proofs for his seven novels and some of his other published works.

Robbins majored in journalism at Richmond Professional Institute. While at RPI, he wrote a column called "A Walk on the Wild Side" for the student newspaper, The Proscript. Following his graduation in 1961, he worked for the Richmond Times-Dispatch as a copy editor. Robbins challenged the status quo at the Times-Dispatch by choosing to print a photo of

Sammy Davis, Jr. and his wife Mai Britt. It was the policy of the Richmond Times-Dispatch at the time not to print photos of African-Americans, and Robbins was fired. He left Richmond for Seattle to get as far away from Virginia as possible, while still living in the continental United States. He has remained in the Seattle area for the last 40 years.

The critical success of "Another Roadside Attraction," released in 1971, was a precursor to his fame from his best-selling second book, "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues." Published in 1976, "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" began in Southside Richmond with wonderful descriptions of the pervasive smell of tobacco and was made into a

movie starring Uma Thurman. His original and irreverent sense of humor has given him a reputation as one of the most important figures in counter-culture literature.

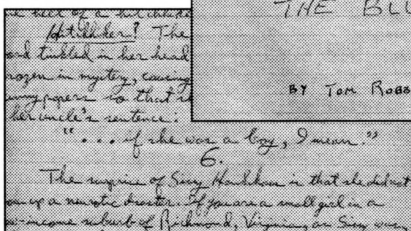
Robbins described his writing style in an interview in the Seattle Weekly (May 4, 2000) as "intuitive, not analytical, which is one of the things that makes it hard to talk about.

Because I am not a formula writer, every time I start a book it's beginning all over again. I don't know how to write a novel, I couldn't tell you how to write a novel, it's a new adventure every time I begin one, and I like it that way."

The Robbins collection also includes the draft manuscript of his most recent

book, "Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates" (2000). This novel was Robbins' first without a female lead character and, like its predecessors, has the first draft written entirely in longhand. This method of writing allows researchers to see how he wrote and, most importantly, to see the corrections that were made in each stage of the writing process. With most writing done on computers these days, changes and earlier drafts are rarely saved. Therefore, it is very difficult for literary researchers to view anything but the final product.

The eight-box collection is open to the public in the Special Collections and Archives Department on the fourth floor of the James Branch Cabell Library. Special Collections and Archives is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. For additional information, please visit the Libraries Web site at www.library.vcu.edu or call 828-1108.



Social work student wins award for legislative skills

by Mary Beth Alford
University News Services

Aimee Perron, a rising second year graduate student in VCU's School of Social Work, was awarded a national honor this summer by Influencing State Policy, an organization that aims to increase social work efficacy by influencing state level-policy and legislation. The annual contest promotes the active participation of social work students in state policy-making and has been won by a VCU student for the past three years.

Perron, who was one of eight winners across the country chosen from thousands of social work students, faculty and field instructors, accepted the monetary award at a conference at the University of South Carolina's College of Social Work in Charleston for her advocacy of General Assembly Bill 2782. The bill was designed to increase publicity and wider access to emergency contraception, giving physicians, their assistants and nurse practitioners the right to dispense various drugs and allowing pharmacists to write prescriptions under certain protocols. Its main goal is to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and, subsequently, the number of abortions.

"I was interested in the bill and consequently entered the contest to show social work students and faculty how important it is to become effective in the state policy arena," Perron said. "There are currently no social workers in Virginia's General Assembly, and I believe that it is imperative to have someone at that level represent social issues."

Perron, who is originally from Boston, has always been interested in women's issues and policy. She is currently interning for Republican Senator John Watkins and has worked in Lexington at Project Horizon, a sexual assault and domestic violence agency that offers emergency shelter, counseling and education to people of all ages.

Although the bill did not pass, Perron plans to continue her work on behalf of the bill during the 2002 session.

"I hope to one day personally represent social workers in the General Assembly and help improve current policy in women's issues," she said.

Influencing State Policy, founded in 1997, has representatives implementing its mission in two-thirds of all social work programs in the United States. Perron, along with VCU graduate student Heather Carkuff, has been asked to sit on the board of advisors for the 2001-2002 academic year.

Employment services receives new accreditation

by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

Last month, three services at VCU's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports were recognized for providing superior service to patients with significant disabilities. The Commission on Accreditation on Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) awarded a three-year national accreditation for Employment Services, Employment Planning Services and Community Employment Services.

The accreditation was awarded based on an intensive three-day review of VCU's facility, services and staff. Paul Wehman, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Division of Rehabilitation Research, said the recent accreditation reflects the quality of support and services the department provides to patients with disabilities.

"This is one more indication of our state and national ranking in the area of rehabilitation services," Wehman said. "We have met a rigorous list of standards for excellence and have proven to be one of the best programs in the state."

Toy microscope magnifies enthusiasm for science, technology

by Mike Frontiero
University News Services

A digital microscope first marketed as a high-tech toy for children has found its way into many VCU classrooms as educators on limited budgets seek ways to prepare future teachers and get students more excited about science and technology.

Measuring just over 1 foot tall and made of sleek blue plastic, the Intel Play QX3 Computer Microscope resembles a toy, and it's easy enough for a sixth-grader to use. But college professors and student teachers have discovered it's a powerful tool for teaching biology and computer science in the classroom.

The microscope costs less than \$100 and easily attaches to a personal computer with a USB cable. Unlike an optical microscope, images can be recorded digitally and in real time or time lapsed as a movie. Other features allow users to edit their images and produce digital pre-

sentations with music.

"It's so inexpensive for all the things it can do," said Richard L. Rezba, Ph.D., interim dean of VCU's School of Education. Rezba introduced the microscope to the university last year after discovering it in a Wal-Mart ad. "I knew right away that it had great potential for biology and computer science classrooms."

The school now has nearly a dozen of the microscopes. Knowing how to use them is part of the curriculum for student teachers.

The microscope is also portable, allowing Gordon Meyers, a student working on her master's degree in severe disabilities, to help Chesterfield County elementary students with severe disabilities fulfill the science and technology requirement of the Standards of Learning.

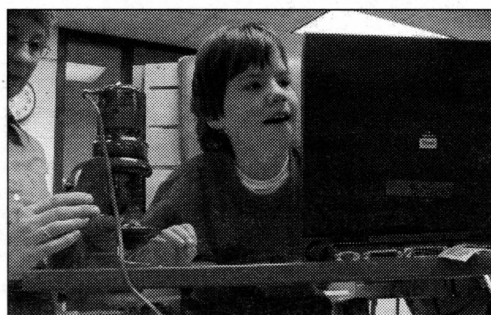
"Because images can be displayed

on a computer screen, the microscope acts as an engaging stimulus that allows the students to respond to what they're seeing," Meyers said. "It's a wonderful tool that gives them a level of science education that was missing from their curriculum."

Associate biology professor Robert W. Fisher, Ph.D. has three of the microscopes and plans to purchase at least eight more for his upper-level "Plant Development" and

"Science and Technology" classes. With the time-lapse feature, his students can watch a seed germinate under the lens.

"A more conventional microscope would cost \$2,000," Fisher said. "At \$100, you can order 25 of these microscopes for a classroom and put one in the hand of every kid."



"High-tech" toy helps disabled students learn.

Architectural History Symposium will explore 'classics'

by J. Suzanne Horsley
University News Services

VCU graduate students from the School of the Arts will present fresh interpretations of conventional subjects during "Classics and Classicism," VCU's ninth annual Symposium on Architectural History. The presentations will focus on new approaches to researching classical motifs and the architects who implemented them.

Symposium topics include: research on the origin of the so-called Palladian window, one of the most basic classical architectural motifs; a review of rare architectural books in the Library of Virginia, a

treasure trove for architectural history students; the untold story of Richmond's Cole Digges House, currently the home of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities; the international phenomenon of interior decoration influenced by John Flaxman, the sculptor who illustrated Homer's poetry; and research on Virginia architects John Clarke, George Winston and D. Wiley Anderson, as well as the previously unknown ancestral connection among John Ariss, the Callis family and Albert L. West, who designed several of VCU's Victorian mansions.

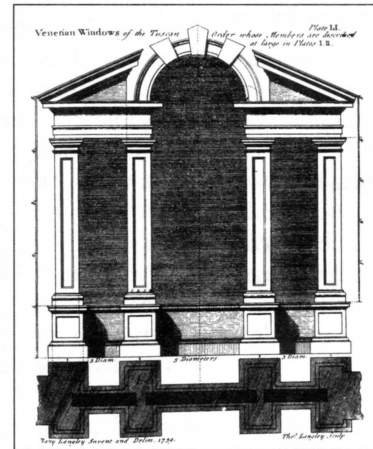
"VCU has the only art history program in the country that hosts an annual architectural history symposium showcasing its own graduate students' work," said Charles

Brownell, Ph.D., VCU professor of art history and conference organizer.

The conference is co-sponsored by the Virginia Historical Society; the Center for Palladian Studies in America, which has underwritten the papers; the Maymont Foundation; the Valentine Museum/Richmond History Center; the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities;

and the Library of Virginia.

The symposium will take place Friday, Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Virginia Historical Society, 428 N. Boulevard. Registration is \$10, \$8.00 for members of sponsoring institutions and free for students. A post-conference reception is an additional \$5.00. Registration by Sept. 21 is recommended. For registration information, call 828-2784.



A palladian window

Clinical lab sciences graduates dominate national certification exam

VCU earns highest score and places six students among the top 20

by Michael Ford
University News Services

Graduates of Virginia Commonwealth University's clinical laboratory sciences undergraduate program have achieved top honors on the national exam used to certify medical technologists.

Six graduates from the Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences in VCU's School of Allied Health Professions earned scores placing them among the top 20 individuals taking the test — including the highest score in the nation.

The American Society of Clinical Pathologists, headquartered in Chicago, administers the national certification exam, which assesses candidates' academic and clinical skills. Individuals with ASCP certification comprise the bulk of the American medical laboratory workforce. The exams were administered at various times throughout the year by computer.

The recent VCU graduates and their rank for this year's ASCP Board of Registry Medical Technology Certification Examination are:

- Anthony Stroud, first place.
- Donald Bowling, fifth place.
- Megan Low, sixth place.
- Justin Dalton, 14th place.
- Jennifer Runion, 18th place.
- Shari Scott, 19th place.

"For 6 of the top 20 students nationally to be from the same program speaks highly of the quality of our students, our program and our instructors," said Barbara Lindsey, associate professor and chair of clinical laboratory sciences. "The ASCP certification examination is highly competitive. Our students performed very well and should be congratulated."

Overall, 87 percent of VCU's 25-member CLS class this year earned passing scores, compared to 78 percent of test-takers nationwide. Additionally, three-quarters of VCU's class scored higher than the national average score of all first-time test-takers.

"I could not be more pleased," said Cecil B. Drain, Ph.D., dean of VCU's School of Allied Health Professions. "These gradu-

ates worked hard, and their scores reflect that. Their achievements are also indicative of the diligence and commitment of the outstanding faculty in our Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences."

Clinical laboratory scientists perform tests on fluids, cells and tissues of the human body, providing data for up to 80 percent of medical decisions. With training for medical technologists dating back to 1928, VCU established its bachelor of science program in 1952 and its master's program in 1967.

VCU graduates from the CLS bachelor's program have done well before on the national ASCP exam. In 1996, former VCU students ranked first and third nationally, and in 1998, four graduates were ranked in the top 10.

VCU Dance celebrates 20th anniversary season

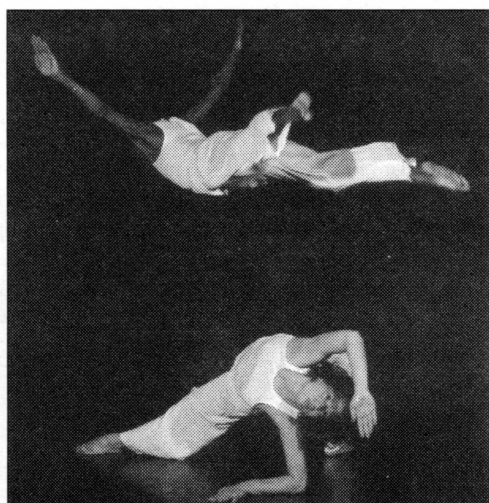
by Valerie Jeremijenko
Department of Dance and Choreography

The 2001-2002 season of VCU's Department of Dance and Choreography honors the past, celebrates the present and nurtures the future. In addition to new works by faculty and students, the department will mark its 20th anniversary with a gala at the Carpenter Center featuring internationally acclaimed alumni and guest artists. The department also will introduce Richmond to the work of award-winning choreographer David Dorfman with performances throughout the year.

"After two decades, VCU dance is becoming a powerful voice in the national dance scene, and we wanted to celebrate that with an extraordinary season," said Martha Curtis, chair of dance and choreography. "Two of our alumni, Richard Move (formerly Windberg) and Paule Turner, were recently named by Dance Magazine as among the top 25 dance phenomena to watch, and they will both be here this year."

The Department of Dance and Choreography's season will include:

The Dance on Camera Festival. This screening of six short dance films from the New York Dance Films Festival plus Curtis' highly acclaimed video dance *On the Trax* features innovative uses of the



Seniors Tim Zellers and Alex Holmes will be among the students performing during the upcoming dance season.

camera and charged movement. Sept. 26, 7 p.m., Grace Street Theater, free.

To Lie Tenderly, David Dorfman Dance. Premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the foremost showcase for contemporary experimental performance in the United States, To Lie Tenderly investigates the half truths we construct to create an illusion of safety in our lives. Oct. 19 and 20, 8 p.m., Grace Street Theater. Tickets are \$15 and free to VCU students with a valid ID.

The VCU Dance Salon. This is an informal showing of student works-in-progress facilitated by Washington, D.C.-based performer and choreographer Laura Schandelmeier. As a moderated showing, the event provides audience members with the opportunity to respond to and discuss the works with choreographers. Nov. 9, 2 p.m., Dance Center Room 203, free.

Bare Bones Showing, Laura Schandelmeier. This evening of movement-based solo performance work by VCU Dance Salon moderator Laura Schandelmeier is co-sponsored by VCU Dance and Artspace. Saturday, Nov. 10, 8 p.m., Art Space, 6 East Broad St. Tickets are \$5.

Fall Senior Project Dance Concerts. These original choreographic works by six graduating seniors, are the capstone experience of four years of dance training. Dec. 6, 7 and 8 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 or

free to VCU students with a valid ID.

Peak Performance Plus! Hosted by Richard Move as Martha@ in his impersonation of modern dance icon Martha Graham, the evening will also feature performances by Paule Turner, Gus Solomons, Jr., Carmen DeLavallade, Dudley Williams, VCU Dance faculty and students, choreography by David Dorfman, and a special appearance by Frances Wessells, the founder of the VCU Dance Program. Feb. 19, Carpenter Center, 600 E. Grace Street. Tickets are \$15 or free to VCU students with a valid ID.

Live Sax Acts, David Dorfman and Dan Froot. This evening of daring physical performance celebrates male bonding and the friendship of two "jocks." March 21, 8 p.m., Grace Street Theater. Tickets are \$15 or free to VCU students with a valid ID.

Student/Faculty Concert. This annual performance features new choreography by students, faculty and guest artists. Apr. 5-6, Grace Street Theater. Tickets are \$15 or free to VCU students with a valid ID.

VCU Dance Informal Concert. This compilation of creative new student work features solos, collaborations and large group pieces. Apr. 13, Grace Street Theater, 7 p.m., free.

Spring Senior Project Dance Concert. Nine graduating seniors fill the stage with fresh approaches to dance. Apr. 25, 26 and 27, 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 or free to VCU students with a current ID.

The 2001-2002 season is made possible by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, and the presentation of To Lie Tenderly is partially supported by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. For ticket information call (804) 828-2020.

UniverCity News

New surgery center at Stony Point to open in summer 2002

Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital and VCUHS mark construction milestone

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

On Aug. 28, Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital and the VCU Health System marked an important milestone in the construction of their joint venture, a new surgical specialty center at Stony Point.

Hospital officials and employees gathered with the project's construction workers for a "topping out" ceremony that celebrated the completion of the main structural frame of the 25,000-square-foot surgical center at 8700 Stony Point Parkway. Virginia Lt. Gov. John Hager and Richmond City Manager Calvin D. Jamison were on hand for the ceremony along with VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., and Raymond L. Spence Jr., president of the board of directors of Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the final steel beam — signed by all the attendees — was raised to the roof of the structure. An evergreen tree, signifying good luck, was attached to and raised along with the steel beam.

"This partnership will offer convenience, valuable service and the area's best physicians," said Dr. Trani. "It's a wonderful addition that will allow community and university physicians to provide health-care services at a suburban location."

Scheduled for completion in early summer 2002, the center will contain six operating rooms, four of which will have a primary emphasis on ophthalmology and otolaryngology procedures. First announced in January 2000, the outpatient surgery center will be known as Richmond Eye & Ear/Surgical Specialty Center.

"This state-of-the-art facility will expand the resources available to Central Virginia and beyond," said Dr. Spence. "We have an excellently designed surgical center in a great location that is easily

accessible to patients."

A 10-member board of directors has been appointed for the new surgery center, made up of six Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital representatives and four representatives from the VCU Health System. Once the new center is completed, Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital will move its entire operation from its present site at East Marshall Street to the Stony Point location, and the VCU Health System will purchase Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital's current downtown facility.

Taylor & Parrish Inc., based in Henrico County, is building the surgical center along with an attached 45,000-square foot medical office building. Charlotte-based Odell Associates Inc. serves as architect on the project. Brinkman MDC, a health-care facilities developer based in Charlottesville, spearheads the project development and the leasing of the medical office building. The project's total cost is about \$10 million. The buildings will be ready for occupancy in the early summer.

The specialty surgical center is located



Once signed by all the attendees, the final steel beam was raised to the roof of the structure.

in an area that is developing as a major health-care delivery site. The VCU Health System's multi-specialty outpatient center and Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point see more than 100,000 patient visits annually.

Founded in 1952, Richmond Eye & Ear Hospital is Central Virginia's only eye specialty hospital. Through the use of pace-setting technology, education, research and clinical expertise, the hospital provides specialty care and surgical excellence to the community.



Project PEDS picnic

On Aug. 18, doctors, students and families involved in Project PEDS (Parents Educating Doctors and Students) gathered at Hugenot Park to celebrate the program's second successful year. Sponsored by the Department of Pediatrics, the program pairs third-year medical students with families caring for children with special health-care needs. Through home visits and family outings, the students gain valuable insight into the daily struggles these families face. The pediatrics department sponsored the picnic to acknowledge each family's time, talents and caring hearts that have contributed to educating medical students.

Carver Promise names new director

Program recruits area college students to serve as positive role models

by J. Suzanne Horsley
University News Services

Lisa Diane Winn, M.Ed., has been hired as executive director of Carver Promise, headquartered in Richmond's George Washington Carver Elementary School. Previously the director of admissions for Virginia State University, Winn succeeds Nannette Bailey, who recently left after five years to pursue a graduate degree at Harvard University's School of Education.

As executive director, Winn will lead the nationally recognized partnership that provides mentoring and tutoring for entire classes of students, beginning in the third

grade and continuing through their senior year of high school. The 10-year-old program encourages students from the Carver and Gilpin Court communities to attend school, work toward graduation and strive toward a college education. Mentors from participating colleges — J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, the University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Union University — work one-on-one with students to assist with reading skills, self-esteem and personal

development, while also serving as positive role models.

"I grew up in two public housing communities, so my heart has always been with these communities," Winn said. "And I have worked in higher education at VSU, so those two elements attracted me to this position. For me, it's the best of both worlds."

Winn plans to focus on helping elementary students identify with positive role models, encourage understanding of the importance of

attending school, emphasize Standards of Learning skills and help students plan for college. She is recruiting more college students as mentors, 120 of which are needed just for elementary students, and adults who can work with high-school students. Winn is also seeking more funding to provide additional services for the Carver Elementary students.

"Lisa's background will help the program get more kids ready for success in college," said Cathy Howard, Ph.D., the vice chair of the Carver Promise board of directors and VCU's director of community programs. "Her experience in higher education has helped Lisa learn what kids need to be better prepared for college."

Last year, the first class of Carver Promise students graduated from high school. Statistically, only 11 percent of the original third grade class was expected to go to college, but 26 percent enrolled. Many are studying at the four participating Richmond schools, which also help in finding tuition assistance.

For more information about Carver Promise, contact Winn at 355-0209.



Lisa Winn now leads Carver Promise.

VCUHS to offer prostate cancer screenings

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

The VCU Health System will offer free prostate cancer screenings for men ages 50 and over from 2-5 p.m., Sept. 28, in Room 320 of the Nelson Clinic, located at 401 N. 11th St., on VCU's MCV Campus.

The free screening includes a digital-rectal exam and a blood test to measure the level of prostate specific antigen (P.S.A.), a protein produced by prostate cells. In combination, these procedures allow doctors to detect many prostate cancers at an early stage when treatment is likely to be most successful.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men in the United States. One out of every 10 American men will develop the disease at some time in his life. Men of all ages, races and ethnic groups can get

prostate cancer. Men at higher risk include those ages 55 and older, African-American men and those with a father or brother with the disease. The American Cancer Society estimates that this year 198,100 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed. In Virginia this year, 4,900 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and 800 will die of it.

In recognition of National Prostate Cancer Awareness Week, which runs from Sept. 20-30, VCU's Division of Urology and the Massey Cancer Center will offer the screenings in collaboration with the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service. For more information about prostate cancer, call the Cancer Information Service toll-free at (800) 4-CANCER.

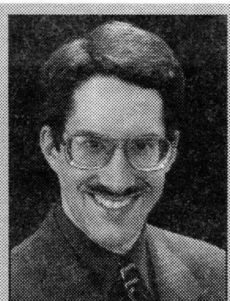
The screenings should take about 45 minutes. Pre-registration is not required. For more information about the screenings, call the Division of Urology at 828-9331.

VCU Calendar

Performances

Sept. 21

Friends of VCU Music Concert: A Season Premiere. 2001-02 season opens with performances by VCU Music scholarship students and faculty. Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall; 8 p.m.; sponsored by the Department of Music. Tickets: \$5.00. For details, call 828-1166.



Garcia featured

The new director of jazz studies, Antonio Garcia, will be among the new faculty featured at the Friends of Music Concert on Sept. 21.

Sept. 22

Mary Anne Rennolds Chamber Concerts: Julliard String Quartet. Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall; 8 p.m.; sponsored by the Department of Music. Tickets: \$25 adult, \$20 senior/VCU, \$10 student. Purchasing advance tickets is strongly recommended. For details, call 828-1166.

Sept. 26

Dance On Camera Festival. Grace Street Theater; 7 p.m.; sponsored by the Department of Dance and Choreography. Free. For details, call 828-1711.

Events

Sept. 12

Tomkins-McCaw Library Tour and Orientation. Tompkins-McCaw Library, First Floor Service Desk; 11 a.m.; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Lynne U. Turman at 828-0638.

Sept. 12

Welcome Reception for GLBT faculty, staff and students. Student Commons Commonwealth Ballroom A; 4 p.m.; sponsored by various VCU offices. For details, call Martha Moon at 828-1336.

Sept. 13

Presentation by Elizabeth A. Zimmer, National Museum of Natural History: New Insights into the Origin of Flowering Plants. Life Sciences Building, Room 253; 4 p.m.; sponsored by the Department of Biology. For details, call Karen Kester at 828-0103.

Sept. 13

Teleconference: Conducting Research Responsibly. George Ben Johnston Auditorium; 12:45 p.m.; sponsored by the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration. For details, call Herbert B. Chermiside at 828-6772.

Sept. 18

VCU Life Sciences Building Open House featuring refreshments and guided tours. President Trani and Dr. Tom Huff, vice provost for life sciences, will greet faculty and staff. Life Sciences Building; 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. For details, call Dr. Huff at 827-5600.

Sept. 20

Fall 2001 Career Fair. Siegel Center ALLTEL Pavilion; 11 a.m.; sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call Alicia Aroche at 828-1645.

Honor council report

On July 12, the Academic Campus Honor Council heard three charges of plagiarism against a student. The Honor Council found the student guilty of all three charges. The student received a grade of "F" in each of the three courses and was immediately expelled from VCU.

Sept. 20

Is Your Child Too Sick for School? Ideas and Options for the Working Parent. Student Commons, Capital Room C; noon; sponsored by Employee Health Services and Work/Life Resources. For details, call 828-1688.

Sept. 20

Tomkins-McCaw Library Tour and Orientation. Tompkins-McCaw Library, First Floor Service Desk; 3 p.m.; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Lynne U. Turman at 828-0638.

Sept. 26

Broad is Back Celebration Event. On Broad Street in front of the Siegel Center; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. rain or shine. New building tours, senior tennis exhibition, live entertainment. For details, call Jeff Cupps at 828-2255.

Sports

Sept. 16

VCU Field Hockey vs. James Madison. Cary St. Field; 1 p.m.; sponsored by Athletics. For details, call Josh Lehman at 828-7000.

Seminars

Sept. 13

Nobel Laureate, Robert Furchgott, Lecture." Medical Sciences Building Auditorium; 3 p.m.; sponsored by Pharmacology and Toxicology. For details, call Dr. William L. Dewey at 827-0375.

Sept. 20

Brownbag Lunch Seminar. Valentine House, Room 201; 12:30 p.m.; sponsored by the Honors Program. For details, call Linnea Self at 828-1803.

Sept. 20

Weekly Physiology Seminar. Sanger Hall, Room 3-016; 4 p.m.; sponsored by Physiology. For details, call Debbie Bohn at 828-9756.

Workshops

Sept. 12

CareerConnections Registration and On-Campus Interviewing Program Orientation. Business Building Lab 2140; 11 a.m.; sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call Monyette Martin at 828-1645.

Sept. 13

CareerConnections Registration and On-Campus Interviewing Program Orientation. Hibbs Building, B-16 Hibbs Basement; 3 p.m.; sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call Monyette Martin at 828-1645.

Sept. 13

Academic Success Program: Listening & Notetaking. Student Commons Forum Room; 3:30 p.m.; sponsored by Counseling Services. For details, call Martha Spruill at 828-6200.

Sept. 13

Career Fair Preparation Workshop. Student Commons Alumni Board Room; 4 p.m.; sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call Monyette Martin at 828-1645.

Sept. 14

Welcome to the Internet workshop. Cabell Library, 3rd floor classroom/lab; noon; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Dan Ream at 828-6545.

Sept. 15

Welcome to the Internet workshop. Cabell Library, 3rd floor classroom/lab; 10:30 a.m.; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Dan Ream at 828-6545.

Sept. 15

Locating Full-text Research Resources on the Web workshop. Cabell Library, 3rd floor classroom/lab; 11:30 a.m., sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Dan Ream at 828-6545.

Sept. 17

Academic Success Program: How to be Successful in a Large Classroom. Student Commons Forum Room; noon; sponsored by Counseling Services. For details, call Martha Spruill at 828-6200.

Sept. 17

Welcome to the Internet workshop. Cabell Library, 3rd floor classroom/lab; 7 p.m.; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Dan Ream at 828-6545.

Sept. 18

CareerConnections Registration and On-Campus Interviewing Program Orientation. Student Commons, Room 130; 11 a.m.; sponsored by the Career Center. For details, call Monyette Martin at 828-1645.

Sept. 18

Locating Full-text Research Resources on the Web workshop. Cabell Library, 3rd floor classroom/lab; 1 p.m.; sponsored by VCU Libraries. For details, call Dan Ream at 828-6545.

Sept. 20

Academic Success Program: Time Management with Ken Fritz. Student Commons, Commons Theater; 3:30 p.m.; sponsored by Counseling Services. For details, call Martha Spruill at 828-6200.

Sept. 24 - Nov. 12

No More Fad Diets! Course A. 9000 Stony Point Parkway; 7 p.m.; sponsored by MCV Women's Healthcare. Cost - \$175 for the regular program and \$200 for the PLUS program. For details, call 560-8955.

Sept. 25 - Nov. 13

No More Fad Diets! Course B. 9000 Stony Point Parkway; 9:45 a.m.; sponsored by MCV Women's Healthcare. Cost - \$175 for the regular program and \$200 for the PLUS program. For details, call 560-8955.

Campaign launched

The university and VCU Health System celebrated the kickoff of the Just Say Hello campaign last week in the Medical Sciences courtyard on the MCV Campus with refreshments, door prizes and t-shirts for the first 200 attendees. The Academic Campus kickoff is scheduled for this week in the Student Commons courtyard.

Each month the campaign, designed to bring about a friendlier atmosphere between faculty, staff, students and visitors to the university, will highlight three friendship ambassadors that have been selected for exhibiting a friendly attitude toward someone they do not know.

