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January 25, 1999

UniverCity News

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FOR FACULTY AND STAFF AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY & ITS MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA HOSPITALS

University Breaks Ground for Life Sciences Building

Facility to Define Campus at Cary, Harrison Streets

by **Kyra Scarton Newman**
University News Services

A \$28.1 million facility with state-of-the-art laboratory and classroom space will open up new research and teaching opportunities at Virginia Commonwealth University in the life sciences. VCU officials and students broke ground for the new Life Sciences Building on Jan. 19 at the northwest corner of Harrison and Cary streets.

The nearly 132,500-square-foot building — a two-wing structure to open in summer 2001 — represents a critical stage in the university's commitment to

enhance its undergraduate and graduate programs in the life sciences. The new building will replace the aging Life Sciences Building, which was never designed for science education.

"This new research and teaching complex will allow our faculty to broaden their areas of research, with new equipment and appropriate space for experimentation and collaboration."

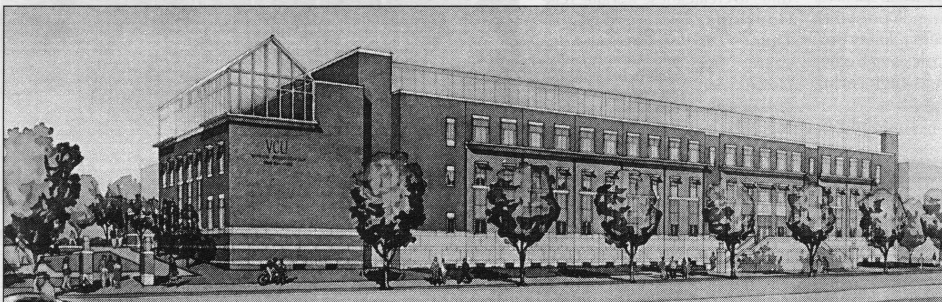
The new Life Sciences Building will promote the cross-fertilization of both research and teaching in areas such as environmental studies, molecular biology and physiology. The university's expanding focus on life sciences blends science,

mathematics, medicine, technology and engineering, linking departments and schools across the two campuses.

"The intersections of traditional disciplines are where we are discovering answers and clues to contemporary problems," VCU President Eugene P. Trani said. "By creating an environment where that cross-discipline study is nurtured and

encouraged, we can engage in research that draws in a variety of perspectives and expertise. Within that setting, we also can best train the next generation to explore the next frontiers."

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Virginia Commonwealth University's new Life Sciences Building will open for instruction and research in summer 2001.

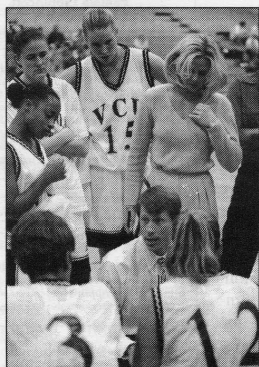


President Named 'Richmonder of the Year'

In its Jan. 5 issue, *Style Weekly* named VCU President Eugene P. Trani as the "1998 Richmonder of the Year." The award recognizes the president for what the newsweeklies calls "Trani-Vision."

"Whether it's planning an impromptu trans-Atlantic trip for a friend, an explosion of growth on Broad Street or a new engineering school, the formula is the same for Dr. Eugene P. Trani: Dream it, then do it," the cover story reads.

A panel, comprised of area business and community leaders, assists in the selection of the "Richmonder of the Year," initiated in 1985. Reprints of the Jan. 5 article are available by calling University News Services at 828-1231.



Virginia Commonwealth University's women's basketball team will host Old Dominion

Home Team

David Glass, kneeling left, discusses game strategies with some of the women's basketball players during a recent game break.

University in a Jan. 29 match-up at the Franklin Street Gym. The Colonial Athletic Association game is scheduled to be broadcast at 7 p.m. on the cable network Home Team Sports. Coach

\$2 Million Gift to Create Autism Center of Virginia

Family Presents Donation to VCU as Expression of Love for Granddaughter

by **Christine Shtogren**
University News Services

As an expression of love for their granddaughter, who suffers from autism, Alan Kirshner and Flo Guzman have given a \$2 million gift to establish the Autism Center of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Guzman and Kirshner, chief executive officer of Markel Corp., recognized a need in Central Vir-

ginia for a comprehensive program to better serve children with autism. The first phase of the center's development will be to open a day school for autistic children ages 3 to 10 by summer. The school will be a unique training site for VCU undergraduate and graduate students to learn about autism and its treatments and to participate in researching the disorder.

"The center's mission will have the academic mission of the university — service, teaching and research," said Dr. Dean X. Parmelee, chairman of child and

See **AUTISM** page 4

Defining Life Sciences

ON JAN. 19, members of VCU's Board of Visitors; members of the Richmond community and its local governments; the chairs, faculty and student representatives of the science departments in the College of Humanities and Sciences; Dr. Stephen D. Gottfredson, dean of the college; and our provost, Dr. Grace E. Harris, joined me to celebrate a signature event in VCU's strategic plan: the groundbreaking for the Life Sciences Building on the Academic Campus.

This \$28.1-million, 132,500-square-foot facility is scheduled to open in summer 2001. It will house faculty who, even now, are defining what "life sciences" will mean in the 21st century — a definition that will depend upon interdisciplinary investigation.

Last year, during a three-month sabbatical at St. John's College in Cambridge, England, I had the opportunity to study the "Cambridge Phenomenon." It is a remarkable process that has Cambridge leading all other European regions in high-tech development. Probably the

most significant factor in the success of this phenomenon is a crossover of sciences, technologies and community sectors engaged in high-tech research and development.

Not only our economy but also the problems of contemporary life and the investigation of nature now demand such a crossover. The Life Sciences Building will permit our faculty to engage in exactly that process.

Last fiscal year, VCU invested approximately \$700,000 in start-up funds for new life-sciences faculty; this year, we have obligated approximately \$500,000. It is an investment with a tremendous return. During 1997-98, these faculty submitted about 20 proposals to federal and other agencies worth more than \$2.8 million in external research support. This year, an additional \$1.2 million in proposals has been generated by this group.

Studying with the life-sciences faculty in this new building — as well as conducting their own research — will be

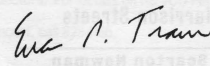
nearly 800 undergraduate biology majors (VCU's second largest bachelor's degree program); 46 graduate biology students; approximately 450 undergraduate and graduate students in biomedical engineering, chemistry, mathematical sciences and physics; and another 30 students who are studying in the Center for Environmental Studies. The building also will be home to the general-education science courses required of all VCU undergraduates. This is a tremendous body of students engaged in the sciences on the Academic Campus.

The possibilities for integrating our campuses and collaborating with the scientists at the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park also are theoretically limitless. More undergraduate science students can be encouraged to work toward admission to MCV Campus programs. Faculty in life sciences, health sciences and engineering can collaborate in team-teaching and research. And the combined impact of this interdisciplinary activity across departments, disciplines and cam-

puses can significantly enhance VCU's influence in economic, particularly biotechnology, development.

The Life Sciences Building will be a visible reminder of the tremendous resource that VCU science, engineering and health science can contribute to the quality of the next generation of students, the new workforce and the quality of life of our community. It also will serve as a testament to the capacity of this university community to come together to think strategically about where VCU should be in the next decade.

My congratulations to all the faculty, students and administrators who have made this vision become a reality on behalf of the future of our entire university.



DR. EUGENE P. TRANI
President

LIFE SCIENCES

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The building will house instruction and research space for the Department of Biology and the interdisciplinary Center for Environmental Studies. Classrooms will be used by the Chemistry, Mathematical Sciences and Physics departments, and the Department of Biomedical Engineering will have access to both laboratories and classrooms.

"This new Life Sciences Building represents a strategic

investment in how we prepare future scientists, physicians and other professionals, particularly in the health sciences," said Provost Grace E. Harris. "In planning for the future, we seized this opportunity to enhance an undergraduate life sciences program that augments our graduate research and clinical strengths in health sciences. We also are uniquely poised to expand our interdisciplinary profile by creating alliances with other disciplines, such as engineering and the physical sciences."

Vice Mayor Rudolph C.

McCollum Jr. called the building another symbol of partnerships between the VCU and Richmond communities.

"We in the City of Richmond recognize this is what it's going to take to continue to move the city and the university forward," McCollum said. "We must continue to create these working relationships.

Doing so draws us closer to our goal of making Richmond the 'Gem on the James' — and the envy of other cities across the country."

Running east along Cary Street from Harrison Street, the larger wing will house ground-floor administrative offices for the Biology Department, chaired by Leonard Smock, and the Center for Environmental Studies, directed by Gregory C. Garman.

The building also will offer 18 instructional laboratories, most accommodating 24 students. First-floor labs will focus on general biological sciences, while second-floor labs will be tailored to discipline components, including anatomy, physiology, ecology, botany and molecular biology. Space also will be dedicated for undergraduate research.

Other facility highlights are 25 laboratories outfitted for faculty research; an Aquatics Facility with up to 20 freshwater and marine research tanks; and a 22,000-specimen Vertebrate Collection, one of the largest in Virginia. The new building also will feature two computer classrooms, a study lounge



Students joined city and university officials in breaking ground earlier this month on the Life Sciences Building. The facility will feature instructional and research space.

and career resource center.

"This new research and teaching complex will allow our faculty to broaden their areas of research, with new equipment and appropriate space for experimentation and collaboration," said Stephen D. Gottfredson, dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences. "That will translate into new learning opportunities for students in all levels of life sciences. We also will have a top-notch facility that will aid in recruiting the highest-caliber new faculty and students to VCU."

The second wing, to parallel Linden Street, will feature two first-floor auditorium classrooms. The second floor will offer four classrooms, seating between 30 and 60 students in horseshoe settings that encourage discussion. Three smaller classrooms for seminar-style courses complete the first floor.

Joe Kuttenuker of University News Services contributed to this report.

LIFE SCIENCES BUILDING

- The four-floor facility will create an academic quadrangle on the southwest corner of the Academic Campus. Science and math faculty — as well as education professors who prepare future science teachers — will be within just steps of each other's classrooms and laboratories.

- Faculty research in biology is focused primarily in three areas: plant sciences; ecology and environmental sciences; and cellular and molecular biology and physiology. The department's faculty totals 27.

- A top-floor greenhouse will offer a research-grade facility that can be controlled by humidity, temperature and light. The 3,000-square-foot greenhouse will support three environments simultaneously: desert, mild climates much like Central Virginia, and tropic.

- An Aquatics Facility, located in the basement, will have up to 20 research tanks for controlled experiments on both marine and freshwater fish, amphibians and other aquatic organisms.

- Nearly 800 undergraduates currently major in biology, the second-most popular bachelor's degree program at VCU. The department also enrolls 46 graduate students.

- Undergraduate and graduate students in biomedical engineering, chemistry, mathematical sciences and physics total about 450. Another 30 are studying in the Center for Environmental Studies.

- The project architect is Sverdrup Facilities Inc., of Arlington, Va., in association with Ayers-Saint-Gross of Washington, D.C. The construction contractor is CCI Construction Co. Inc. of Mechanicsburg, Pa.

- Construction will begin in February. VCU will open the building in summer 2001.

UniverCity News

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Submissions to UniverCity News can be mailed to P.O. Box 842036; faxed to 828-2018; or e-mailed to plippin@saturn.vcu.edu. Photographs and letters are also welcome.

VCU
Virginia Commonwealth University

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University

Provost to Receive Presidential Award for Multiculturalism

Dr. Grace E. Harris will be honored this month with Virginia Commonwealth University's highest honor for promoting multiculturalism on campus.

On Jan. 27, Harris, who is provost and vice president for academic affairs, will receive the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment. The award is presented annually by President Eugene P. Trani.



Grace E. Harris

"Over her 32 years of service at VCU, Dr. Harris has made VCU an institution that welcomes multiculturalism and considers it a priority for our students and faculty," Dr. Trani said. "She truly embodies the essence of this prestigious award."

As part of Community Learning Week honoring the life and teachings of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the university honors employees who are helping to create a campus environment that encourages and builds multiculturalism. Their contributions include promoting civility, building community, establishing effective cross-cultural initiatives, advocating equity and nurturing tolerance within the university community.

The university community is invited to the PACME ceremony, which will begin at noon in the University Student Commons Ballroom B. A reception will follow.

VCU Volunteers Tax Return Services to Community

Audit and Management Joins IRS' VITA Program

by Pamela Cho Lippincott
University News Services

Free tax return preparation services will be offered to the community by the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Audit and Management Services staff.

Services will be provided to low-and-limited income individuals, individuals with disabilities and non-English speaking taxpayers.

Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service, VCU staff members and other community volunteers will offer tax services, using electronically equipped stations set up in the East End Center, 701 N. 25th St. The program will be open Feb. 13, 20 and 27 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

"This program will help people who can't afford to hire an

accountant on their own. We want them to take advantage of programs that they may be eligible for but may not know exist," said Richard Bunce, executive director of VCU's audit and management services. "We're hoping that our services will help people find ways to maximize their tax refunds."

The 17 volunteers have been trained by the IRS to assist tax-

VITA volunteers also will use software normally exclusive to accountants or other professional tax preparers.

"All VITA services are provided free of charge, so there is no fee for the electronic filing," Bunce said.

Individuals interested in having VITA assist with the preparation of their tax return should bring the following information and docu-

ments: Documentation of income, such as W-2 and 1099s; support for any expenses or deductions; and a social security number for the taxpayer as well as for any dependents. A copy of last year's tax

return also would be helpful, if available.

For more information, call Vanessa Allen in VCU's Audit and Management Services at 828-2352.

"This program will help people who can't afford to hire an accountant on their own. We want them to take advantage of programs that they may be eligible for but may not know exist."

payers in filing for the Earned Income Credit. Eligible taxpayers can receive a refund of this credit, even if the taxpayer owes no taxes or had no income tax withheld.

Poll: Virginians Concerned about 'Sprawl'

Majority Favors Better Management of Growth

Virginians are concerned about the consequences of uncontrolled development known as "sprawl," and a majority favors solutions that call for better management of growth to reduce traffic congestion, crowded schools and the loss of open space, according to a new poll conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Public Policy for the Virginia Environmental Endowment. The poll found that Democrats and Republicans do not differ in their opinions about the consequences of sprawl and the management of growth.

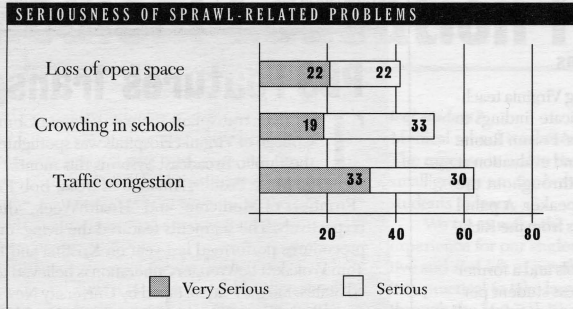
The poll is part of a yearlong study of Virginia public opinion about environmental issues conducted by Scott Keeter of George Mason University and VCU's Robert D. Holsworth, funded by an endowment grant to the VCU Center for Public Policy.

The survey examined public beliefs about consequences of sprawl:

- **TRAFFIC CONGESTION:** Sixty-three percent of respondents said traffic congestion where they live and/or work is "very serious" or "serious."

Congestion was rated as "very serious" by 54 percent of Northern Virginia respondents, with another 32 percent rating it "serious." Sixty-nine percent of respondents in Tidewater rated traffic congestion as a very serious or serious problem.

Opinions about the seriousness of



traffic congestion did not differ by partisan affiliation.

- **CROWDED SCHOOLS:** A majority of respondents (52 percent) said that crowding in the schools is serious or very serious, with Northern Virginia (57 percent), Tidewater (56 percent) and South Central (55 percent) more likely than Northwest or West to feel this way. Opinion about school overcrowding also did not exhibit any significant partisan difference.

- **OPEN SPACE:** Overall, 44 percent of Virginians rated the loss of open space near where they live as very serious or serious. Concern was highest in Northern Virginia, where 56 percent of respondents rated it as serious or very serious, and lowest in the western part of the state, where 31 percent of respondents rated it as serious or very serious. Again, there was no significant partisan difference.

Holsworth noted that "concern about the consequences of sprawl transcends traditional party divisions and could emerge as a major issue in Vir-

ginia politics."

Large majorities felt sprawl was a cause of the loss of open space, farmland and wildlife habitat. Forty percent said sprawl is the "main cause" and 34 percent said it was an "important cause." And nearly half of the respondents felt that sprawl contributes to the decline of inner cities: 19 percent said it was the main cause and 28 percent said it was a minor cause.

When asked about responses to problems associated with sprawl, majorities expressed support for solutions that called for better management of growth. Overall, 70 percent believe that traffic problems caused by rapid development should be met by "managing new growth so that existing roads and mass transit could meet the transportation needs" while 24 percent favored "building more roads" as the appropriate response.

The telephone survey interviewed a random sample of 805 adult Virginians from Dec. 11-16. The margin of error is 4 percentage points.

Virginians Favor Limits on Out-of-State Garbage

By a margin of nearly 10-to-one, Virginians favor limiting the amount of out-of-state garbage coming into the state, according to a new poll conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University for the Virginia Environmental Endowment.

Overall, 87 percent agreed with a statement that Virginia "should limit the amount of out-of-state garbage coming to Virginia because the delivery and storage of waste from other states pose environmental hazards that could threaten our quality of life."

Only 9 percent agreed with the alternative that the state "should ensure that landfills are adequately regulated but should not limit the amount of out of state garbage coming to Virginia because of the additional revenues they bring to communities to improve their quality of life." Four percent had no opinion.

Sentiment for limiting out-of-state garbage was strong across all demographic and political groups in the population, with 84 percent of Democrats and 85 percent of Republicans agreeing. There was little regional variation in opinion, with over 80 percent of residents in all parts of the state supporting limits.

The issue of out-of-state garbage being transported into Virginia has been the focus of numerous news reports in recent months. According to estimates, Virginia ranks second among all states in the volume of imported trash.

Public awareness of Virginia's status as a major garbage importer is relatively high, especially by comparison with other issues. The survey found that 42 percent of respondents knew that Virginia takes more out-of-state garbage than other states. Nineteen percent believed that Virginia takes the same amount as other states, and only 5 percent thought the state takes less. The remainder (33 percent) said they did not know Virginia's status.

In Brief

Princeton University Professor to Speak for Community Learning Week

Jennifer L. Hochschild, professor of public and international affairs at Princeton University, will speak at the Performing Arts Center on Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. as part of Community Learning Week.

Hochschild, a scholar on school and housing desegregation, will discuss "Race Relations in a Diversifying Nation." The event will open with a performance by the Richmond Boys Choir.

Sponsored by the Office of Community Programs, the event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 828-1831.

VCU to Host Career Fair

The VCU Career Center will host PROSPECTS '99 at the Cary Street Gym on Feb. 11.

Nearly 70 U.S. companies will participate, providing VCU students and recent alumni an opportunity to collect career and company information. Students are encouraged to dress professionally and bring resumes to distribute.

The fair is free and open to students and alumni. For details, call 827-0409.

VCU's Health Promotion Office Receives Awards

The Office of Health Promotion was recognized for raising awareness and sponsoring community activities in collaboration with the YWCA of Richmond and Jewish Women International during Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. These awards were presented:

- Certificate of Recognition from Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore.
- Commendation from the Virginia House of Delegates (presented by Delegate Viola O. Baskerville, 71st District).
- Recognition by Richmond Mayor Tim Kaine.

In addition, Gay Cutchin, coordinator of sexual assault services and head of the campaign, was nominated for the Ally Award from Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault. A certificate was presented by Attorney General Mark Earley at VAASA's annual awards. Cutchin, an advisory board member of Safe Harbor, a haven for domestic violence victims and their families, received the certificate for VCU awareness activities and commitment to prevention efforts.

School of Education to Address Improvement Needs of K-12 Classrooms

The VCU School of Education will sponsor a talk concerning Virginia teachers' assessment of student learning and how to communicate findings to parents on Jan. 29 at 9 a.m. in the University Student Commons' Forum Room.

Thomas Guskey, professor of educational policy studies and evaluation at the University of Kentucky and a consultant to educators throughout the United States and around the world, will be the featured speaker. A panel consisting of VCU faculty, as well as teachers and administrators from the Richmond area, will respond to his lecture.

Guskey is a former administrator of Chicago Public Schools and a former director of a national education research center. He will address student performance assessments, making grading and reporting more meaningful and more parental involvement through better communication.

For details, call Ed Hootstein at 128-1305.

Hurston/Wright Writers Week Offers Bi-Coastal Workshops

Programs to be Hosted by VCU, Saint Mary's College of California

by Kyra Scarton Newman
University News Services

Building on the success of its inaugural bi-coastal workshops last year, Hurston/Wright Writers Week will feature many of the hottest ethnic voices in writers' workshops on either coast this summer. Developed by the Hurston/Wright Foundation housed at Virginia Commonwealth University, the program is the only summer writers program to offer bi-coastal workshops.

Each workshop will offer a series of writing tracks led by accomplished contemporary writers, including new sessions this year on television writing and building the novel. On the East Coast, VCU will host the Hurston/Wright Writers Week for the fourth consecutive summer from July 18-24. The West Coast program will be hosted from June 27-July 3 by Saint Mary's College of California in Moraga, 20 miles east of San Francisco.

"These workshops build a needed dialogue between writers who are forging a new concept of American literature with young writers who are beginning to emerge with their own unique voices," said Marita Golden, senior fiction writer with VCU's graduate Creative Writing Program faculty and executive director of the Hurston/Wright Foundation.

"By linking these pioneers with the future, we're broadening the exposure to powerful writing that grows from our nation's varied cultural experiences."

The combined workshop faculty includes accomplished teacher-writers, whose works draw from African-American, Arab, Hispanic, Indian and other roots. The diversity of participants also strengthens the Hurston/Wright workshop, Golden stresses.

Among the faculty expected for the 1999 workshop at VCU are poet Cornelius Eady and novelist A.J. Verdelle. The Saint Mary's faculty will include performance poet Quincy Troupe and television writer David Mills, who penned scripts for "ER," "NYPD Blue" and "Homicide: Life on the Street."

Each workshop also will host special seminars on topics related to writing and the writer's life. Public readings by the faculty will be presented as part of each workshop.

The Hurston/Wright Foundation, established in 1990, sponsors the nation's only contest designed to foster future work by emerging African-American writers. The foundation created the summer workshops to support the ongoing development of minority writers.

Participants will be selected on the quality of their portfolios. Limited full and partial scholarships are available.

For details on the Hurston/Wright Foundation and Hurston/Wright Writers Week at VCU, call 225-4729. For details on Hurston/Wright Writers Week at Saint Mary's College, call (510) 631-4088.

PBS Features Transplant Team

The liver transplant team at Virginia Commonwealth University's Medical College of Virginia Hospitals was spotlighted on two different health shows on the Public Broadcast Systems this month.

Drs. Marc Posner, Amadeo Marcos, Bob Fisher and John Ham appeared on "Frontiers of Medicine" and "HealthWeek," during the weeks of Jan. 17 and 24 respectively. The segments featured the living, unrelated right-lobe liver transplant procedures performed last year on Kristina and Bruce Wenger, and Katherine and Tom Wojcik. The Wengers' operation is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States. Surgery video, taped by University News Services, was used by both shows.

Both "Frontiers of Medicine" and "HealthWeek" can be seen each Sunday on Richmond's WCVE-TV, channel 23, at 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. respectively.

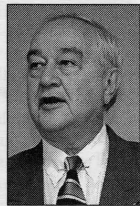
AUTISM

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adolescent psychiatry at VCU's School of Medicine and medical director of VCU's Virginia Treatment Center for Children.

"Drawing on the strengths of our university, we will use the latest research-based knowledge to enhance the functioning of autistic children, develop new interventions through research and provide a very needed service to many children and families in the Richmond area."

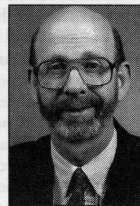
Parmelee and Robert Cohen, professor of psychiatry, vice-chairman of the department of psychiatry and executive director of the VTCC, will spearhead the center's development by bringing together a range of VCU disciplines — pediatrics, child psychiatry, education, psychology, social work, nursing, occupational therapy, speech and language — to build the center into a nationally recognized entity.



Alan Kirshner



Dean X. Parmelee



Robert Cohen

"Also critical to the center's growth will be collaborations with surrounding school systems, mental health and social service agencies," Cohen said.

"Much of the vitality of the VTCC has come from these agencies, and we will involve them closely with the center while its school, training programs and community-based research evolves."

The teaching and training components of the center will include not only interdisciplinary course work and practicum exper-

iences at the school, but also workshops and conferences presented locally and throughout the state. This year, VTCC's 36th annual Child Psychiatry Spring Forum on June 4 will focus on autism.

The center will serve as an autism training site for the School of Medicine

with teaching and training for residents in pediatrics and family medicine.

Primary-care physicians are usually the first professionals to evaluate autistic children, and research indicates early intervention at ages 2 to 3 years makes a positive difference in functioning for many autistic children.

"This gift marks the beginning of the Autism Center of Virginia. We plan to expand its endowment so that even more can be accomplished," Cohen said. "There is a

match between what the university can do and what needs to be done for autism."

Cohen noted there is tremendous need for both applied and basic science investigation in autism research. For example, the use of medications in the treatment of the disorder has produced mixed results and suspect claims. Collaborating with VCU's laboratories for drug research and molecular genetics, the center hopes to make headway in this important area.

Cohen and Parmelee are now recruiting a principal for the school and also a center director, a position endowed by the gift.

Anticipating the need for VCU graduates to staff the school this summer, job opportunities will be posted soon at the VCU Career Center. Seniors in majoring in social sciences, who are considering an advanced degree after a couple years of supervised work with autistic children, are encouraged to apply.

Q & A

EDITOR'S NOTE: During the current General Assembly session, Virginia Commonwealth University has requested \$5.3 million in state support for 1999-2000 for undergraduate medical education — the four years of post-baccalaureate education and clinical experience that culminate in a medical degree. The \$5.3 million would be in addition to the \$29 million that the state already provides toward undergraduate medical education's \$282 million annual budget.

Dr. Hermes A. Kontos, vice president for health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine, and Dr. H.H. Newsome Jr., senior associate dean of the school, recently discussed this priority with UniverCity News.

Why does VCU need additional money for undergraduate medical education?
The additional money is needed to support undergraduate medical education by providing payments for the care delivered to indigent patients by the physicians in the School of Medicine.

Traditionally, the clinical income of the physicians has subsidized undergraduate medical education. However, the hospital and physicians are now facing the market pressures that every other medical center is facing: declining reimbursement for services rendered.

This combined with the fact that our medical center serves over 30 percent of the state's indigent patients — and is reimbursed by the state for only about 74 percent of the actual costs for indigent service — means that the hospital and physicians can no longer afford to support the medical school at the level they had previously. We must receive additional funds from the state to pay for the cost of providing medical care to indigent patients if we are to maintain the quality education for which our school is known.

When you compare Virginia's support of VCU's medical school to other publicly funded institutions, VCU ranks near the bottom — 67th out of the 74 public medical schools in the country.

Can the needed monies be drawn from tuition?

Public universities are interested in finding ways to decrease tuition rather than raise it. Already students at our medical school pay some of the highest tuitions in the country. The rate for in-state students ranks 28th highest among U.S. public medical schools and the rate for out-of-state students ranks 13th highest. With our out-of-state rates, we are at the level of some prestigious private schools. Additional increases in tuition would increase the risk of driving some of the best students away from our medical school.



Dr. Hermes A. Kontos



Dr. H.H. Newsome Jr.

Why should undergraduate medical education be funded through public monies?

Public monies are a logical source of funding because the medical school is serving a public health need. VCU is a public university and, as such, all its academic programs receive state support.

The School of Medicine aims to educate and train high-caliber physicians who will serve the people of Virginia. More than 75 percent of our students are from Virginia, and the majority of

out dramatic impact on the school's finances.

To lower salaries further could result in faculty leaving the school for higher-paying positions at other institutions. Quality health care for Virginians is tied to quality education in the medical schools. Without sufficient funds, a medical school cannot recruit and retain the best faculty and students. We need to find a solution this year.

Why is it so expensive to educate a med-

ical student?

Medical school is inherently expensive. The expense is tied to the reality that small groups are the best places for our students to learn.

We try to make the educational experience for our students as interactive and real-life as possible. Not only is it impractical to take large groups through the hospital, it's almost impossi-

ble in a large, sterile lecture setting to relate basic science concepts to clinical practice.

How do other medical schools fund undergraduate medical education? Is the University of Virginia in a similar situation?

Many medical schools handle funding for undergraduate medical education in the same way we do, but receive a much higher level of support from their sources. State funding of undergraduate medical education at VCU is among the lowest of any publicly funded medical school in the country. Consequently other state funded medical schools are less dependent on clinical income and tuition revenue than we are.

UVa. is faced with a situation similar to our own, but does not have to contend with an indigent care load the size of ours. They also are reimbursed at a higher rate for the care they give.

SCHEV recommended that VCU's medical school faculty be reimbursed \$13 million for the indigent care that they

provide. Is this a good solution?

The funding policy recommended by SCHEV recognizes that unreimbursed care for indigent patients limits the ability of

physicians to support undergraduate medical education.

In response to that, SCHEV has recommended that the medical schools receive state funding for indigent care at the same proportion provided to their affiliated teaching hospitals. For the VCU medical school that would be an additional \$13 million. That would go a long way toward solving the problem.

VCU Focuses on Undergraduate Medical Education Priority

our graduates go on to practice medicine in the state. The school has always had a strong track record of turning out graduates in the primary-care fields — many of whom serve in previously underserved areas of the state.

Is the need for the funds urgent?

Clinical income earned by the school's physicians provides approximately 18 percent of the funding support for undergraduate medical education. For more than three years, we have made the appeal for additional state funds, but our requests have never been fully funded.

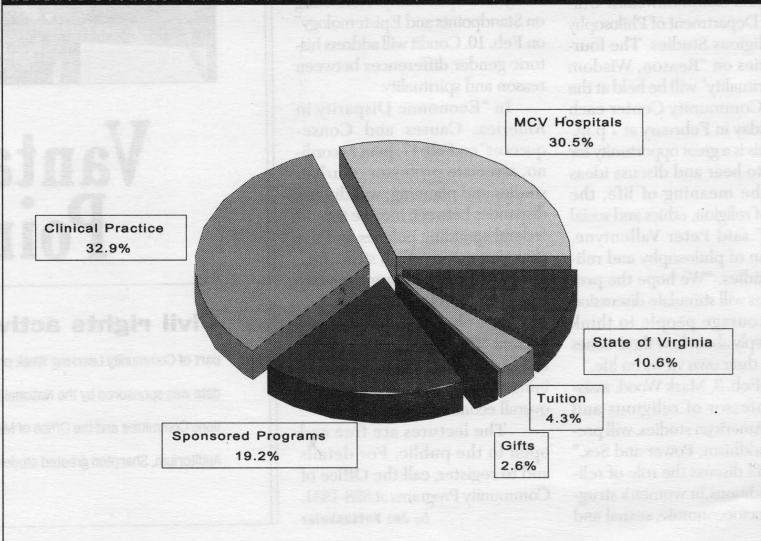
The average faculty salary in the School of Medicine is below the 50th percentile compared with other academic medical centers and many of our specialists earn far below what their peers make. Because of our indigent care level, our physicians spend about a third of their time in work for which they don't get paid — that's more than nearly any other medical school in the

ical student?

Medical school is inherently expensive. The expense is tied to the reality that small groups are the best places for our students to learn.

We try to make the educational experience for our students as interactive and real-life as possible. Not only is it impractical to take large groups through the hospital, it's almost impossi-

REVENUE SOURCES FOR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (FY 1997)



VCU Students Named to Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges

Forty-one Virginia Commonwealth University students have been included among *Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges* for 1998-1999. These students were selected by VCU's Leadership and Services Award Committee for their academic success, leadership experience and service to the community:

SCOTT ALLEN, senior, chemistry
MALDA ALLISON PURYEAR, graduate student, health administration
KRISTEN ANDERSON, senior, English
MICHELLE ARNEY, graduate student, pharmacy
KIMBERLEY BELL, graduate student, health administration
ELIZABETH CHAMPAGNE, senior, nursing
ALISON CLEVELAND, senior, political science
CAROLINE CONNEEN, graduate student, family health
CORTNEY CUTCHALL, senior, health education (kinesiotherapy)
CHARLENE DIMALANTA, senior, piano performance
BRIAN DONOVAN, graduate student, dentistry
THERESA EDDINS, graduate student, sociology
MARC FERRERA, senior, biology
JUSTIN GUNTHER, junior, biology
ANN HARDY, senior, nursing
AMANDA HOWIE, junior, electronic media
FERAS KHAN, junior, biology
DEAN DONG LIN, graduate student, M.D./Ph.D.
DEBORAH LOREY, senior, recreation
JANICE MANALO, junior, nursing
HEATH MATYSEK-SNYDER, junior, furniture design
VALORIE MCBEE, junior, non-traditional studies
SONIA MITTAL, graduate student, pharmacy
CYNTHIA NESTER, graduate student, pharmacy
DARREN PHIPPS, graduate student, dentistry
JULIANA RAICHE, senior, music performance
CHRISTOPHER SALADINO, senior, political science
SHERI SHIELDS, graduate student, pharmacy
ROMINA SPENCE, graduate student, physical therapy
KEVIN SPILLANE, graduate student, dentistry
MICHAEL STIEFEL, graduate student, medicine
THELMA STOCKTON, senior, humanities and sciences
ELIZABETH THOMPSON, senior, health/physical education
MICHAEL TIMM, senior, criminal justice
REBECCA TIRS, senior, criminal justice
WINNIE TRAN, senior, accounting/finance
JENNIFER TROUBLEFIELD, graduate student, health administration
HELEN WARD, graduate student, medicine
MARCELLA WEBB, senior, music
ALICE WESTERBERG, senior, general studies
CARRIE WILLIAMS, senior, English

Lectures to Explore Philosophy, Religion and Public Policy

Spiritual differences between men and women, matters of equality and economic issues are among topics to be discussed during a lecture series sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. The four-part series on "Reason, Wisdom and Spirituality" will be held at the Jewish Community Center each Wednesday in February at 7 p.m.

"This is a great opportunity for people to hear and discuss ideas about the meaning of life, the nature of religion, ethics and social justice," said Peter Vallentyne, chairman of philosophy and religious studies. "We hope the presentations will stimulate discussion and encourage people to think more deeply about how these issues relate to their own views on life."

On Feb. 3, Mark Wood, assistant professor of religious and African American studies, will present "Buddhism, Power and Sex." Wood will discuss the role of religious traditions in women's struggle for socioeconomic, sexual and

spiritual equality with men.

Deirdre Condit, assistant professor of political science, public administration and women's studies, will explore "Feminism, Rationality and Spirituality: Reflecting on Standpoints and Epistemology" on Feb. 10. Condit will address historic gender differences between reason and spirituality.

In "Economic Disparity in America: Causes and Consequences" on Feb. 17, John Accordino, associate professor of urban studies and planning, will discuss disparities between income tax and federal spending policies and the changing nature of job structures. He will address increasing poverty concentrations in inner cities.

On Feb. 24, Vallentyne will present "Economic Justice: Liberty, Equality and Efficiency," examining the relevance of each in the overall economic picture.

The lectures are free and open to the public. For details and to register, call the Office of Community Programs at 828-1831.

by Joe Kuttanukuler

People in the News

• **TERRY AUSTIN**, associate professor of music, was named to the board of directors for the International John Philip Sousa Foundation and the International Jury for the Louis and Virginia Sudler International Wind Band Composition competition. Austin also is president-elect of the Virginia Music Educators Association.

• **DIANE COOKE-TENCH**, director of the VCU Adcenter, was recognized in *Richmond Magazine's* December issue as an innovator in the advertising community. The magazine noted she is changing the way advertising is perceived and taught.

• English professor **MARCEL CORNIS-POPE** has been awarded a Fellowship-in-Residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities for the 1999-2000 academic year.

Cornis-Pope will work with an international group of scholars to complete a major collective work on *A Comparative History of the Literatures of East Central Europe* to be published by Oxford University Press. Cornis-Pope will serve as a co-editor of the volume.

• **TERRY HUMMER**, professor of English, will receive the 1999 Hanes Poetry Prize from the Fellowship of Southern Writers. The award will be presented at a convocation in April.

The Fellowship of Southern Writers gives seven biennial awards in recognition of distin-

guished achievement in Southern writing. Hummer is author of six books of poetry, including most recently *Walt Whitman in Hell*.

• A study of women writers and the literary marketplace, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit*, was recently published by **CATHERINE INGRASSIA**, associate professor of English, with Cambridge University Press.

• Third-year graduate student **NATHAN LONG** has received a full fellowship from the M.F.A. in Creative Writing Program in the Department of English.

The fellowship is supported through a \$22,000 grant from the Truman Capote Literary Trust, which has renewed the grant for the 1999-2000 academic year.

• **RICHARD PRIEBE**, professor of English, will assume the presidency of the African Literature Association at its annual meeting to be held in Morocco in March. Priebe has served as the association's vice president for the past year.

The ALA, now in its 25th year, is an international professional organization with nearly 600 members.

• "Hypertension Primer," a section of *Clinical Management*, was edited by **DR. DOMENIC SICA**, professor of medicine and chair of clinical pharmacology. He also authored several chapters in the text.



Vantage Point



Civil rights activist Al Sharpton addressed "Social Activism and Progressive Politics" as part of Community Learning Week programs. The address by the ordained minister and former political candidate was sponsored by the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Student Government Association's Human Relations Committee and the Office of Minority Student Affairs. After his formal talk in the Business School Auditorium, Sharpton greeted students.

Pilot Project to Aid Faculty on Tenure Track

Project to Assist Scholars when Family Responsibilities Interrupt

Virginia Commonwealth University is part of a national pilot project to help researchers whose tenure paths are disrupted by family responsibilities continue their professional progress. The New York-based Alfred P. Sloan Foundation invited participation by VCU, recognized nationally for family-friendly work policies.

The Sloan Pre-Tenure Leave Fellowship Program is designed to assist untenured faculty in the sciences, mathematics and engineering whose tenure track is interrupted by family duties, including the birth of children and dependent care. Applications currently are being accepted.

"Both female and male faculty are sometimes caught in the tension between the demands of their careers — including teaching and research — and having to provide temporary and perhaps unexpected intensive care for family members," said Ted Greenwood, program director at the Sloan Foundation.

The project builds on the foundation's efforts to understand the pressures on contemporary middle-class, two-worker families and its longstanding efforts to reduce the barriers to success for women in mathematics, science and engineering education and professions.

The Sloan program complements VCU's Promotion and Tenure Policy, which allows faculty to request extension of their probationary period. The request allows for "extenuating non-professional circumstances," such as childbirth, adoption, care of terminally ill immediate family members or personal trauma.

Eligible VCU faculty must submit a completed application to their department or division chair. The application and chair's recommendation then are forwarded to the dean and vice president. The Sloan Foundation will make a final decision, judging applications solely on how much a fellowship will contribute to the faculty member's retention and career success.

Accepted faculty can receive up to \$20,000 from the Sloan Foundation and VCU will match that amount. The fellowship will support both a university leave and a faculty member's return to teaching and research duties.

Departments of faculty who earn Sloan fellowships will receive \$5,000 to address work-family issues for other faculty, post-doctoral fellows or graduate students.

A 1996 study co-sponsored by the College and University Personnel Association Foundation and the Families and Work Institute cited VCU among the top 29 higher-education institutions for "family friendly policies."

Other pilot participants are Ithaca College, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the University of Pittsburgh.

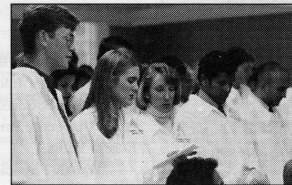
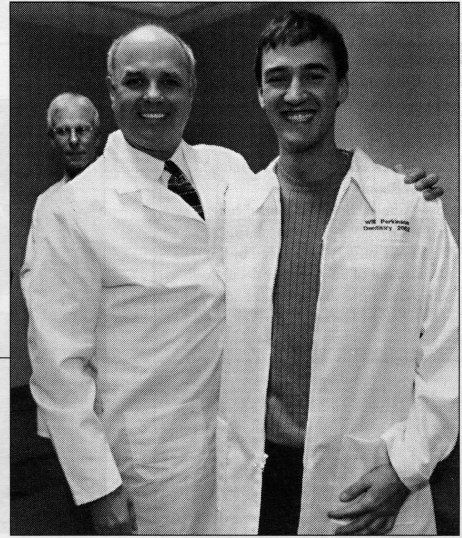
For details on the program, call Susan Kennedy, acting vice provost for academic affairs, at 828-6162.

In its first "White Coat" Ceremony on Jan. 8, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry welcomed freshman dental students and junior dental hygiene students into the world of clinical dentistry and patient care. At the ceremony was Dr. W. Baxter Perkinson

Jr., a dental school graduate and Richmond-area dentist who serves on the

VCU board of visitors and VCU's Medical College of Virginia Hospitals Authority Board. Dr. Perkinson not only delivered the keynote address, he also helped his son and first-year dental student William ("Will") Perkinson (top right) into his first white coat. In addition to receiving their white clinical jackets, students recited the dental and dental hygiene oaths (bottom right). The oaths, which were developed by faculty and students at VCU's School of Dentistry, now serve as the official oaths nationwide.

With Honor



VCU Researcher Links Genes to Milder Forms of Alcoholism

by Christine Shtogren
University News Services

Findings from a Virginia Commonwealth University twin study show genes play a critical role in the development of milder forms of alcoholism, such as abuse, as well as severe alcohol addiction in men.

VCU researchers were surprised to find environmental factors shared by both twins — such as parental drinking behavior — have little or no influence on the development of alcohol abuse disorders that run in families.

"Our data oppose commonly held beliefs that people become alcoholic because they were raised by alcoholics. That doesn't seem to be the case," said Carol Prescott, the study's lead author and psychologist at VCU's Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics. "While parents may influence whether their offspring start drinking, parental drinking habits do not determine who becomes alcoholic."

Researchers found individual experiences of family members, such as job loss or divorce, play a significant role in who becomes a problem drinker.

The findings from the first U.S. population-based male twin study on the role of genetic factors in male alcoholism were reported this month in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

Prescott emphasized a genetic predisposition does not doom people to alcoholism and absolve them of responsibility for their drinking. "Drinking is voluntary. The genetic predisposition may work by making drinking more pleasurable for some people. Once they are addicted to

drinking despite negative consequences on work, family or social functioning.

Alcohol dependence involves physical addiction and withdrawal, lack of control over drinking, preoccupation with drinking to the exclusion of other important activities and continued drinking despite serious medical problems.

Prescott and colleagues interviewed over 1,500 male twin pairs, ages 18 to 56, from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry.

"Twin studies allow us to separate nature from nurture," she said. "While identical twins have the same genetic makeup, fraternal twins share only about half of their genes. When a disorder has a higher prevalence in identical twin pairs than fraternal twin pairs, this indicates it has a genetic component."

Study data show genes account for about 50 percent of the risk for alcoholism. Experiences unique to a family member comprise the remaining risk. "A combination of genes and unique environmental experiences determine who will progress to alcoholism. These factors appear to be unrelated to the family environment."

The study was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

"Drinking is voluntary. The genetic predisposition may work by making drinking more pleasurable for some people. Once they are addicted to alcohol, it can be very difficult to quit. But no one is born destined to be an alcoholic."

alcohol, it can be very difficult to quit. But no one is born destined to be an alcoholic."

With increased awareness that alcoholism runs in families, people with alcoholic relatives are increasingly cautious with their own drinking. Prescott says study findings lend support to this trend, but go one step further. "The data suggest that family members whose relatives abuse, but are not addicted to alcohol, might also benefit from monitoring their drinking habits."

Current definitions divide alcoholism into abuse and dependence. Alcohol abuse entails drinking repeatedly in hazardous situations, such as driving or operating machinery. It also may include continued

Campus Calendar

SEMINARS

- Jan. 25**— "Discovering Your Teaching Self: Turning Theory into Practice" sponsored by the Office of Faculty Affairs. For details, call 828-6162. 9 a.m./University Student Commons' Forum Room
- Jan. 25**— "Clinical Science Course" to feature Amadeo Marcos, clinical instructor in vascular surgery. Sponsored by the Department of Surgery. For details, call 828-7879. 5 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 8-036
- Jan. 27**— "Time Management for Your Job and Your Life" sponsored by Work/Life Resources. For details, call 828-1688. Noon/University Student Commons' Alumni Board Room
- Jan. 27**— "Where in the World (Wide Web) Is the Library" sponsored by the Instructional Development Center. For details, call 828-4383. Noon/Sanger Hall, Room 1-044
- Jan. 27**— "Linking Histone Modifications to Gene Activation" by C. David Allis, Byrd Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at the University of Virginia. Sponsored by the Massey Cancer Center. For details, call 828-0450. Noon/Massey Cancer Center G-120
- Jan. 28**— "From Monolayers to Crystals: Self-Assembly in Two and Three Dimensions" by Atul Parikh of the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Sponsored by Chemical Engineering. For details, call 828-7789. 3 p.m./Engineering Building Room 401
- Jan. 28**— "Weekly Physiology Seminar" on signaling pathways, stretch-activated channels and congestive heart failure. Sponsored by the Department of Physiology. For details, call 828-9756. 4 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 3-016
- Jan. 29**— "Development Regulation of the Human Gamma- and Beta-Globin Genes" sponsored by the Department of Anatomy. For details, call 828-2262. 3 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 8-036
- Feb. 1**— "Clinical Science Course" to feature Dr. John Ham, assistant professor of surgery. Sponsored by the Department of Surgery. For more information, call 828-7879. 5 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 8-036



The Mary Anne Rennolds Chamber Concerts will feature Irish pianist John O'Connor at 8 p.m. Feb. 6. O'Connor will perform the music of Haydn, Beethoven, Czerny, Liszt and Busoni. In recent seasons, he has earned acclaim as

Keyboard Concert

a leading young classical. Winner of both the Beethoven and

Bösendorfer international piano competitions, O'Connor has been heard in every major music capital with the world's leading orchestras and conductors. For details on his VCU Performing Arts Center concert, call 828-1166.

- Feb. 2**— "Publishing on the Web" sponsored by the Office for Information Technology. For details, call 828-6650. Noon/University Student Commons' Forum Room
- Feb. 4**— "Weekly Physiology Seminar" to feature Anthoíny Guisepppe-Elie of Chemical Engineering. Sponsored by the Department of Physiology. For details, call 828-9756. 4 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 3-016
- Feb. 4**— "My Library Web Service" sponsored by the Office for Information Technology. For details, call 828-6650. Noon/University Student Commons' Forum Room
- Feb. 5**— "Human Vascular Endothelial Cells in Culture as a Model for Vascular Injury" sponsored by the Department of Anatomy. For details, call 828-2262. 3 p.m./Sanger Hall, Room 8-036

- Jan. 27**— "International Student Coffee Hour" hosted by International Programs. For details, call 828-9502. 12:30 p.m./University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom A
- Feb. 6**— Spring Open House for prospective students and families. Sponsored by Admissions. For details, call 828-1222. 8 a.m./University Student Commons

CONCERTS

- Jan. 30**— "Guitar Series" to feature classical guitarist Aldo Lagrutta. Sponsored by the Department of Music. For details, call 828-1166. 8 p.m./Performing Arts Center
- Jan. 31**— "Faculty Studio Showcase" to feature Ross Walter, trombone and euphonium. Sponsored by the Department of Music. For details, call 828-1166. 4 p.m./Performing Arts Center

VCU MEETINGS

- Feb. 4**— University Council 3 p.m./University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom B
- Feb. 11**— VCU board of visitors 1:30 p.m./University Meeting Center

EVENTS

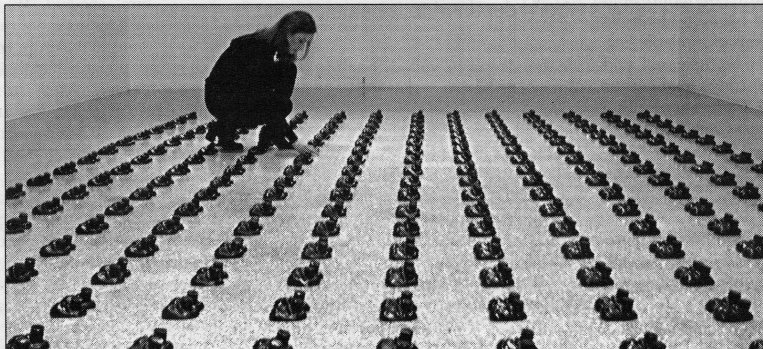
- Jan. 26**— "Commuter Coffe Brake" sponsored by Campus Activities. For details, call 828-9502. 9 a.m./University Student Commons' Lobby

SPORTS

- Men's Basketball**
- Jan. 25**— VCU vs. William & Mary 7:30 p.m./Richmond Coliseum
- Jan. 27**— VCU vs. University of North Carolina-Wilmington 2 p.m./Richmond Coliseum
- Women's Basketball**
- Jan. 26**— VCU vs. George Mason University 7 p.m./Franklin Street Gym
- Jan. 29**— VCU vs. Old Dominion University 7 p.m./Franklin Street Gym
- Jan. 31**— VCU vs. James Madison University 2 p.m./Franklin Street Gym

FILMS

- Jan. 29**— "Dance With Me" 7 p.m./University Student Commons' Theater
- Jan. 29**— "What Dreams May Come" 9:30 p.m./University Student Commons' Theater
- Jan. 30**— "What Dreams May Come" 7 p.m./University Student Commons' Theater
- Jan. 30**— "Dance With Me" 9:30 p.m./University Student Commons' Theater



Alumni sculptors are featured in "Shared Roots" at Virginia Commonwealth University's Anderson Gallery until Feb. 28. Current graduate and

Work in Progress

undergraduate students recently joined the sculptors in installing their works at the gallery. At left, Gina Fer-

rari puts the finishing touches on "Gagged." The Jan. 15 exhibition opening drew more than 500 guests, one of the largest premieres in gallery history. For details on current gallery shows, call 828-1522.