Groundbreaking for Expanded Student Commons Set for Fall

Donna C. Gregory
University News Services

A renovation and expansion of Virginia Commonwealth University's Student Commons will begin this fall. The project will add 41,000 square feet to the Academic Campus student hub, including expanded food-service, lounge and meeting areas.

According to Henry G. Rhone, Ph.D., vice provost of student affairs, the next step toward bringing the project, commonly known as Phase III, to fruition is securing cost estimates from architects who have spent the last six months drafting plans. So VCU has been earmarked for the $9 million project.

See PHASE III page 2

Research @ VCU

VCU to Title Champions Tour

by Melissa Jones
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University has been selected to host the Richmond stop on the 2001 Champions Tennis Tour, the internationally known men’s senior tour with more than 20 events in 11 countries. To be known as VCU Champions, the event will be held from Sept. 37 through Oct. 1 at VCU’s Atlantic Pavilion at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

The U.S. portion of the worldwide Champions Tour is sponsored by SUCCESS Magazine. The tour, sanctioned by the Association of Tennis Professionals, features such tennis greats as John McEnroe, Yannick Noah, Mansour Bahrami, Pat Cash and Guy Forget.

“We are honored to host and co-sponsor this event knowing that it will bring greater national visibility to Virginia Commonwealth University,” said Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., VCU president. “Also, VCU, with its nationally ranked men’s tennis team, has a perfect venue in the Siegel Center, which is central to the entire metropolitan area.”

This is the fifth year that the Champions Tour will stop in the Richmond area but is the first time it will be held in Downtown Richmond. The event comes on the heels of the summer opening of the VCU Health System’s Sports Medicine Center, located adjacent to the Siegel Center. The VCU Health System is a co-sponsor of this year’s VCU Champions event, which will be broadcast live in the U.S. on the Fox Television Network, as well as internationally.

“When we first heard about this event, we saw a wonderful connection between these world-class athletes and our world-class sports medicine facility and physicians,” said Hermes A. Kontos, M.D., Ph.D., CEO of the VCU Health System and vice president for health sciences at VCU.

“The Sports Medicine Center will be the

See TENNIS page 2

VCU Partners With Virginia Holocaust Museum

by Mike Frontiero
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Holocaust Museum have formed a partnership that will open the way for VCU students and faculty to conduct programs using the museum’s resources.

The museum will support class visits, research and independent study projects, development of programs in collaboration with VCU’s School of the Arts, lecture programs and internships for students to volunteer as hosts and docents for visiting groups.

A variety of teaching facilities will be accessible through the museum’s Holocaust Education Resource Center, including an exhibit room of photographs and artifacts from families and survivors, a library of books and education resources, an audiovisual room for videotaping and viewing first-hand accounts related to the Holocaust and an archive of Holocaust materials. The museum also offers outreach programs for students and teachers.

“I am proud of the university for working with the museum to establish this relationship, serving the shared mission of community outreach,” said VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., Jack D. Spiro, Ph.D., Harry Lyons Professor

See HOLOCAUST page 2
VCU SportsCenter Conference to Examine Youth Sports Issues

ABC Sports Correspondent Dick Schaap is Keynote Speaker

by Mike Frontiero
University News Services

The Virginia Commonwealth University SportsCenter will sponsor a conference featuring seven distinguished speakers who will discuss issues affecting youth sports. “Learning Life’s Lessons Through Sport: A Focus on Youth Development” will focus on such issues as: ensuring gender equity, avoiding legal liability, coaching the child, not the sport, and sport as a vehicle for teaching. The conference will be held Feb. 15-16 at the VCU Student Commons, Commonwealth Room AV1. Registration is required.

The keynote address will be delivered by Dick Schaap. This six-time Emmy Award winner is a sports correspondent for ABC News, moderator of ESPN’s “The Sports Reporters” and host of ESPN Radio’s “The Sporting Life with Dick Schaap.” Schaap is the author of three books, including his new autobiography, “Flashing Before My Eyes: 50 Years of Headlines, Deadlines & Punchlines.”

Other featured speakers include former Georgia Tech men’s basketball coach Bobby Cremins, nationally renowned sport risk management expert Herb Appenzeller, Ph.D., VCU professor of psychology and preventive medicine Steven J. Danish, Ph.D., and Fred Tattersall, president of Richmond First Tee—a chapter of the World Golf Foundation’s initiative to make golf more accessible and affordable to people who have little exposure to the game.

The conference is geared toward anyone involved in the administrative or coaching aspects of youth sports, and will provide an opportunity to consider issues faced by individuals and organizations designing sports programs that can enhance the development of young people. The conference fee is $100 per person for those who register before Feb. 10. Groups of 5 receive one free admission. After Feb. 10 the cost is $125 per person. Group rates do not apply after Feb. 10.

The VCU SportsCenter is a graduate program offering a master’s degree in Sport Leadership, combining classroom theory with exposure to sports activities. Students trained through the VCU SportsCenter are prepared to assume the responsibilities for developing professional and amateur athletes and managing sports programs in a variety of academic, public and private sectors.

VCU Initiates Effort to Make Richmond a Tennis City

Advantage: Richmond Opens Discussions

by Melissa Jones
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University will work with a group of prominent local and national leaders to explore the possibility of establishing Richmond as a premier tennis city. VCU President Eugene P. Trani, Ph.D., and VCU Athletic Director Richard Sander, Ph.D., will convene the initial gathering of individuals who have committed to exploring the concept of bringing tennis to Richmond.

“This is an important effort on the part of the community, building on the history and growing popularity of tennis in Richmond and the success of VCU’s tennis program.”

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This program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander. “And more importantly, this program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander. “And more importantly, this program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander. “And more importantly, this program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander. “And more importantly, this program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander. “And more importantly, this program will give us an opportunity to enhance the tennis experience for youth in our community,” said Sander.

VCU Sports may include games that will be held along Floyd Avenue and Linden Street, leaving the outdoor courtyard and green area largely unused.

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PHASE III continued from page 1

The renovation and expansion includes:

FIRST FLOOR
• Additional of a food court, slated to include five vendor spaces.
• Additional lounge space.
• An expansion of First Year Student Services.
• A larger space for the Multicultural Center, currently located on the second floor.
• A usable computer lab.
• Office space for Disability Services and student organizations.

GROUND FLOOR
• Expanded student activities area.
• Expansion of the game room.

SECOND FLOOR
• Additional lounge space.

HOLOCAUST continued from page 1

The Virginia Holocaust Museum is not only a memorial to the six million Jews slaughtered by the Germans, but also an indispensable educational medium for remembering and trying to understand, said Spira. “That’s why the partnership between VCU and the museum is so fitting.”

The Virginia Holocaust Museum is dedicated to remembering the victims who lived through or died during the Holocaust and increasing awareness and understanding in the community. Founded in 1996, the museum attracts about 1,000 monthly visitors.

The museum is currently located at 213 Rosemoseh Road. In 2002, it will move into new quarters at Cary and 20th streets.

VCU prepares for Commencement Ceremony

Virginia Commonwealth University’s Commencement exercises will take place at 10 a.m. on May 19 in the Richmond Coliseum. Participating faculty will wear academic apparel, which may be rented through the VCU bookstores. The following are prices, not including sales tax:
• Bachelor’s cap and gowns: $25
• Master’s cap and gowns: $125.50
• Doctoral cap and gowns: $14
• Bachelor’s hood: $12
• Master’s hood: $12.50
• Doctoral hood: $14

Rental orders should be placed with the bookstores by no later than 4 p.m. on March 23.

Additional meeting space that can be converted into a grand ballroom when needed.

The Student Commons project will help VCU improve retention rates and recruitment of students.

Students involved in project planning cited a campus need for more food choices, lounge space, meeting space and activity space. Phase III was designed to address those needs.

“We believe we will have a better retention rate by improving our facilities. Research suggests that when students feel more connected to the university, they are more likely to stay. I believe this project allows that connection,” Rhone said.

The improvements are also expected to help in student recruitment efforts.

“By enhancing the student commons, I think it improves VCU over all,” said Rhone.

The project is expected to take about three years to complete. The additions will be built along Floyd Avenue and Linden Street, leaving the outdoor courtyard and green area largely unused.
Project Peds Helps Students See Special-Needs Kids in New Way

by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

Virginia Commonwealth University students are gaining valuable insight into the family life of children with special health-care needs through Project Peds, which stands for Parents Educating Doctors and Students. Developed by the Department of Pediatrics, third-year medical students are paired with families of special-needs children to learn firsthand about the unique issues these families face.

Paul Kaplowitz, M.D., VCU pediatric endocrinologist, launched Project Peds in 1999 after learning of a similar program at the Uniformed Services University in Maryland, in which students met with patients and their families in the home setting.

"I thought this would be a great program for VCU because we care for a large group of children with special needs," Kaplowitz said. "Because our students get limited exposure to this challenging group of patients and their families, home visits can give them a unique perspective they don't get in the hospital.

The program has become an important part of the pediatric rotation for all VCU medical students. Pairs of students conduct social visits with families, usually over dinner or at a playground. They are given the child’s diagnosis prior to the visit, so they can become familiar with disorders such as cerebral palsy, autism and Down syndrome.

"This project made me realize that parents of exceptional children have a tremendous task at hand. It made me realize how important my role as a primary-care physician will be to discuss funding issues, coping strategies and health issues with these families."

"This project made me identify that when students come away from the visit with new respect for parents whose lives are shaped by their child’s changing needs. The students also learn that, as physicians, they will need to be sensitive to how different parents cope with adversity."

"This project made me realize that parents of exceptional children have a tremendous task at hand," said Lisa Ellis, a VCU student. "It made me realize how important my role as a primary-care physician will be to discuss funding issues, coping strategies and health issues with these families."

VCU student David Moss, who participated in the project in July, was surprised by the resiliency of the family he visited. "If I hadn’t been told that these children were disabled I may have never known," Moss said. "The family’s strength and the generosity of the community was incredible."

Barbara Dudley, VCU pediatric program development specialist, and her son with autism, are just one of 40 families who regularly host students during their two-month pediatric rotation. She is impressed by how much the families are gaining from the experience.

“When you have a child with special needs, many times you feel very helpless,” Dudley said. “Project Peds allows parents to take some control, it empowers them to know they are helping future doctors.”

During a recent reception at the Richard T. Robertson Alumni House, Frank Baskind, Ph.D., Virginia Commonwealth University dean of social work, presented Jacqueline Corcoran, Ph.D., professor of social work, with a framed cover of her recently published book, “Evidence-Based Social Work Practice with Families.” Framed book covers were also presented by Baskind to eight other VCU School of Social Work professors who have produced a total of six books this year. The remaining authors, consisting of undergraduates and graduate professors, include Kia J. Bentley, Ph.D., Anne Kisor, Ph.D., Lori Lester, Ph.D., F. Ellen Netting, Ph.D., Robert Schneider, Ph.D., David Stoiesz, DSW, and Joe Wallis, Ph.D.
In Brief

Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign Ends Successfully

Virginia Commonwealth University ended its 2000 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign with more than $280,000 raised to support 345 charities. The top five charities receiving CVC contributions from VCU faculty and staff are VCU's Massey Cancer Center, the United Way of Richmond, the Hospitality House of Richmond, the Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity, and the Daily Planet.

VCU President Eugene Trani, Ph.D., hosted a luncheon for CVC Steering Committee members and campaign associates to thank them for their efforts in making this year's campaign a success.

For more information, visit www.cvc.vprnet.org.

Nominations Sought for Distinguished Faculty Awards Program

Nominations are now being sought for the VCU Distinguished Faculty Awards Program, a paid formal tribute at Convocation to faculty members who conduct VCU's mission with distinction and exemplify what is best about the university.

Each year, four professors receive Distinguished Faculty Awards in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and overall excellence. Nominations are due by Feb. 12. For more information, call 828-7024.

Applications Sought for Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Award Fund

The Virginia Center for Aging at VCU is accepting grant applications for the Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Award Fund. Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1982, the fund promotes research involving causes, diagnosis, and treatment, public policy on care and support programs and impact studies on the effects of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders on individuals, families, and communities.

Awards are limited to $25,000 and restricted to research projects only. Applicants must be affiliated with colleges or universities, research institutions or other not-for-profit organizations in Virginia.

Applications are due April 2. Funding period begins July 1. Projects must be completed by June 30, 2002. For application forms or more information, call 828-1525 or visit vceu.edu/coa/award.htm.

Boise Cascade Office Products to Hold Show

Boise Cascade Office Products, the university's principal office products vendor, will hold its spring Office Products Show this month.

VCU employees will have the opportunity to visit with representatives from Boise Cascade, VCU Business Services and affiliated contractors. This show will feature Boise's new "Order Point" Internet ordering service. Questions, comments, and suggestions are encouraged, and information on new products and services will be available. A door prize will be awarded, and refreshments and gifts will be offered to all participants.

The event will be held on Feb. 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., on the Academic Campus in the University Student Commons' Capital Ballrooms A through C and on Feb. 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., on the Medical College of Virginia Campus in the Medical Sciences Building. For more information, call 828-1782.

Veteran Science Journalist Named Dabney Professor

by Mary Beth Alford

A medical and science reporter who covered the greatest breakthroughs in the last half of the 20th century is teaching future reporters how to tell their readers how complex issues in medicine, science, and technology are changing their world. Beverly Orndorff, whose award-winning career was launched with the beginning of the space age and the earliest organ transplants, is serving as Virginia Commonwealth University's 2001 Dabney Professor.

During more than 40 years at the Richmond Times-Dispatch, until his retirement in 1997, Orndorff covered key science and medical breakthroughs, including the beginning of the space age and the earliest organ transplants. He reported on the rapid development of lasers, the early efforts to understand DNA's code and on the controversial area of in-vitro fertilization.

The professorship, named after Virginia Dabney, was established in 1988 by the Virginia General Assembly as a special research professorship and includes research and support funds.

"I feel honored to be in a position that carries the name of Virginia Dabney," Orndorff said. "I knew him well; he was a truly admirable man."

As Dabney professor, Orndorff is teaching an upper-level mass communications course, "Science and Medical Reporting." The class focuses on tracking future journalists how to report on complex issues in medicine, science, and technology.

"The majority of the public receives their information on science, medicine and technology from the mass media," he said. "It is important for journalists to have the skills to explain these complex issues in a way that the public will understand."

During his career, Orndorff has received many journalism awards, including the American Heart Association Howard Blacklee Award. He also has been recognized by several science organizations, including the Virginia Academy of Science, the Science Museum of Virginia and the Virginia Natural History Museum.

In 1997, Media General Inc. established a $25,000 scholarship in his honor; The Beverly Orndorff Scholarship. He also was inducted into the 2000 Virginia Communications Hall of Fame in 2000.

Cheryl D. Mills, center, former deputy counsel to President Bill Clinton, discussed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy in celebration of Community Learning Week.

The Jan. 25 event was held at Virginia Commonwealth University's Performing Arts Center. Mills is currently the senior vice president for corporate policy and public programming at Oxygen Media. Pictured to the left, Catherine Howard, Ph.D., left, director of community programs, and Roderick McDavis, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs, speak with Mills prior to her presentation.

Learning Week
A recent study published in the scientific journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics indicated that clinic-based literacy programs, such as the Reach Out and Read program at Virginia Commonwealth University, have been successful at promoting parental participation and language development in inner-city preschoolers. The study described two similar groups of children, one group attended a clinic with a longstanding Reach Out and Read program; the second group visited a clinic without the program. The children exposed to Reach Out and Read were found to have developed better language skills and were read to more frequently.

The Reach Out and Read program, developed at Boston City Hospital in 1989, seeks to foster parent-child reading activities in inner-city families by giving books to children during hospital visits. VCU's Medical College of Virginia Hospitals began distributing books to children last May during scheduled appointments as well as emergency department visits. “It is a very popular program among our patients,” said Robin Foster, M.D., an emergency pediatrician and head of VCU’s Reach Out and Read program. Foster hopes to expand funding later this year that will enable her to sponsor an additional program at Richmond’s Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

VCU to Host Forum on Research Issues

Speakers Will Debate Implications of Collecting Data on “Third Parties”

by Erin Lucero
University News Services

Hot-button issues like personal privacy and the expanding federal oversight of research involving human subjects will take center stage at a Virginia Commonwealth University forum next month. At the Third Party Rights and Risks Forum, which has been nationally prominent speakers will discuss issues surrounding the collection of data about “third parties”—the parents, spouses, caregivers, colleagues, siblings and others who may be affected by information provided by subjects who are enrolled in research studies.

“For at least 50 years, it’s been standard practice for researchers to collect information about a subject’s family history,” said Leen Murry, Ph.D., co-director of VCU’s Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry and forum organizer. “Such information, for example, was essential in proving that a family history of breast cancer is one of the most important risk factors a woman can have for developing the disease herself.”

Critics of the practice argue that collecting information about a third party’s behavioral or medical history could be an invasion of their privacy. For that reason, they maintain that investigators should receive consent from third parties before collecting such information.

Others argue that in this complex, contemporary world, perfect privacy is not possible and is not required in any other field. They cite the easy availability of credit information as an example of a lack of privacy that is widely tolerated.

“Family history data is not critical to all research, it is essential and routinely collected for many projects. Because current regulations are unclear about whether anyone other than the primary subject must provide consent, some U.S. researchers have chosen to temporarily discontinue collecting third party data until the issue is resolved.

Forum organizers expect the event will serve as a first step toward establishing a consensus among researchers about third party data collection. Toward that end, they will publish a collection of scholarly papers prepared by the forum’s presenters, which will include scholars from universities, private sector research interests and federal regulatory agencies.

The forum is one of many educational opportunities that VCU has hosted in the past year since federal attention focused on the university’s research involving human subjects. Federal regulators paid particular attention to a 25-page survey that had been distributed by VCU investigators to adult twin research volunteers for nearly 20 years. The survey sought information from twins about their own health history as well as that of family members.

“We estimate that survey had been distributed to more than 400,000 study participants over this period,” said Murry. “But, due to the rapid evolution of technology and consequent concerns about individual privacy, researchers in our field have known that this issue would need to be addressed by the scientific community at some time. VCU just happened to be the first place it happened. We recognized immediately that it would have broad implications for all health history information collected in the course of research.”

Forum organizers point out that though the issue of third party data often is discussed in the context of genetic research, the issue has the potential to impact all fields of research that ask about the behavior or health of a parent, spouse, sibling or other relative.

The March 9 forum will be held in the auditorium of the Medical Sciences Building. The $15 registration fee will include a copy of the published proceedings and lunch. A reduced fee is available for VCU faculty and staff for $10, and students with a valid I.D. for $50. Reduced-cost seating is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Details about the forum, is available online at www.vcu.edu/info/forum.html.

VCU Researchers Study Internet Use Among Elderly Arthritis Sufferers

by Laura Arbogast
University News Services

Affecting one in six Americans, arthritis is the nation’s most prevalent chronic illness and the leading cause of disability among the elderly. Virginia Commonwealth University’s Sunghee Tak, Ph.D., is working with the National Arthritis Foundation to study how older people who are using the Internet and other computerized devices can benefit from a Web-based arthritis self-management program.

Last fall, Tak began studying people over age 60 who were using the NAF online program, “Connect and Control.” Arthritis suffers log on to the program through the NAF Web site and fill out a questionnaire about themselves. “Connect and Control” then develops a self-management program tailored to the user’s needs. The program sets goals for managing arthritis and tracks the user’s progress through diaries.

Tak, who has long been interested in using technology to help seniors, learned about the program through her work with the Virginia Arthritis Task Force. She launched a study to see if elderly people are using and benefiting from the program. Tak’s previous research had shown that only 2 percent of the elderly population in the country use the Internet. However, she believes that making computers more available to seniors will help improve their quality of life.

“Through the Internet, they can connect with people who have the same problems. They can also get information on medications and exercise.”

The NAF is cooperating with Tak’s research by sending her all questionnaires submitted to “Connect and Control” by people over age 60. In March, after reviewing about 300 questionnaires, Tak will apply for National Institutes of Health funding to expand her research. She hopes to create and link to her own Web site study within “Connect and Control,” which will enable her to study how effective online self-management programs are for seniors.

“I would really like to see how this Internet program benefits the elderly,” Tak said. “If we find that this is something they want to use, we can design a program specifically for the elderly to manage their arthritis online.”

Tak has been researching chronic disease management of older adults since graduating from Seoul National University in Korea in 1997. In 1998, she received the Outstanding Doctoral Graduate Award from the University of Texas following her research on life satisfaction among older women with osteoarthritis.

NIH Stroke Prevention Study Enrolling Participants

Two Virginia Commonwealth University researchers are enrolling participants in a multi-center study to determine if vitamin E can effectively prevent strokes. Vitamin Intervention for Stroke Prevention is a multi-center clinical trial sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders, a division of the National Institutes of Health.

John B. Taylor, M.D., with Neurology and principal site investigator, and Warren L. Felton III, M.D., chairman of Neuro-ophthalmology and co-investigator, have enrolled 50 study participants locally at VCU’s Medical College of Virginia Hospitals and the Hunter Holmes McGuire Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. It is planned to enroll 3,600 participants among 55 sites. Eligible subjects include men and women age 35 to 85, suffering a stroke within 120 days, who are found to have elevated homocysteine levels, a known risk factor for stroke and coronary artery disease.

For details, call 828-4906.
Say ‘I Love You’ and Support Breast Cancer Research

Massey Cancer Center’s “Ribbons for Research” Valentines Available at Select Locations

Honorable special person on Valentine’s Day by purchasing a Ribbons for Research. In its fourth year, Ribbons for Research benefits the Massey Cancer Research Program at Virginia Commonwealth University’s Massey Cancer Center.

With a $10 donation, a pink ribbon can be inscribed with the name of a person to be honored. That ribbon then will be hung on a “Wall of Courage” located in the James Center beginning Feb. 8. Those purchasing ribbons also will receive a Valentine’s Day card, which can be sent to the honoree. The ribbons and cards can be purchased Feb. 5 - 14 at:
- Richmond-area Bank of America branches;
- The James Center Atrium, 1011 E. Cary St., from 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

“Ribbons for Research gives the public an opportunity to support a worthy cause within the spirit of Valentine’s Day generosity,” said Gordon Ginder, M.D., director of the Massey Cancer Center.

Sponsors of the Ribbons for Research program include the Board for Women’s Health and the Junior League of Richmond. For more information on Ribbons for Research, call VCU’s Massey Cancer Center at 804-825-1450.

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People in the News

- The White Collar Crime Research Consortium, a group of researchers and scholars specializing in white-collar and economic crime, recently elected JAY ALBANESE, Ph.D., chair of criminal justice, to serve as president for a two-year term. Albanese has served as interim research director to the National White Collar Crime Center, an investigative support and training agency funded by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance in the Department of Justice. Currently, he is studying organized-crime groups in Ukraine. His research is sponsored by the National Institute of Justice.
- The National Council of Teachers of English recently published Both Art and Craft: Teaching Ideas that Spark Learning, co-authored by LEILA CHRISTENBURY, Ed.D., professor of English education at Michigan State University. Christenbury is the present elect of NCTE’s “Endocrine Disruption in Invertebrates: Endocrinology, Testing, and Assessment,” by PETER DEFUR, Ph.D., adjunct professor of environmental studies, recently received an Excellence Award in the Society of Technical Communication’s 2001 Florida Technical Communication Competition.
- JILL FOX, Ph.D., associate professor of teacher education, was recognized recently by the Richmond Public Schools for her work as the VCU Professional Development School liaison to Mary Munford Elementary School.
- KRISTI LEWIS, education coordinator for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Education Project at the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities, presented a workshop on “Developing and Implementing Training on Lead Poisoning for Primary Health Care Providers” at the National Centers for Disease Control/Environmental Protection Agency/Housing and Urban Development Tri-Agency Conference in Atlanta. Lewis also displayed a poster on “Partnership for Lead Poisoning Prevention Education” that addressed outcomes associated with a media campaign conducted with the Virginia Department of Health.
- JOEY WALLACE, Ph.D., policy analyst for the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities, provided the keynote address and a workshop for the Alternative Financing Program National Conference held in Washington recently. Wallace spoke on “Creating Assistive Technology Loan Programs” and “Features of Successful Loan Programs.”

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Academic Success Program Helps Students Improve Academic Performance

by Cynthia Brown
University News Services

The Academic Success Program is offering workshops to help students improve their academic performance. The workshops are designed to provide practical information on sharpening study skills to enhance academic success. Students can attend all sessions or select those that meet their needs.

The one-hour workshops include:
- Feb. 8, 3:30 p.m., “Identifying Learning Styles”
- Feb. 12, Noon, “How to Get Beyond Academic Warning or Probation”
- Feb. 15, 3:30 p.m., “How to Get Beyond Academic Warning or Probation”
- Feb. 18, Noon, “How to Successfully Balance Work, School and Personal Life”
- Feb. 22, 3:30 p.m., “How to Successfully Balance Work, School and Personal Life”
- Feb. 26, Noon, “How to Make the Most of Study Groups”
- March 1, 3:30 p.m., “How to Make the Most of Study Groups”
- March 5, Noon, “How to Be Successful in a Large Classroom”

- March 8, 3:30 p.m., “How to Be Successful in a Large Classroom”
- March 18, Noon, “How to Use APA and MLA”
- March 22, 3:30 p.m., “How to Use APA and MLA”
- March 26, Noon, “Navigating the Academic Student and Professor Relationship”
- March 29, 3:30 p.m., “Navigating the Academic Student and Professor Relationship”
- April 2, Noon, “Health Professions Programs: Getting Accepted and Being Successful”
- April 5, 3:30 p.m., “Health Professions Programs: Getting Accepted and Being Successful”
- April 8, Noon, “Maximizing Memory”
- April 12, 3:30 p.m., “Maximizing Memory”
- April 16, Noon, “Preparing for Finals”
- April 18, 3:30 p.m., “Preparing for Finals”

The Academic Success Program also offers consultations with faculty members to assist with identified areas of academic success needs. Academic coaching, a new service, allows students to meet one-on-one with Academic Success Program staff weekly to discuss ways to improve areas of academic concern.

All workshops will be held in the Commonwealth Room. For details, call 804-828-6200.

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Martha Curtis, Virginia Commonwealth University chair of dance and choreography, gave a solo performance and a lecture on video/choreography with Bruce Berryhill last month at the Puffin Room in New York City. Curtis’ dance and video demonstration was presented as a showcase for the Dance Films Association’s Dance on Camera Festival. Founded by DFA in 1971, the festival is the oldest annual dance, film and video festival in the world and is intended to foster creativity and encourage collaborations between dancers and filmmakers. In 2000, the festival began touring nationally and internationally.

Performing Solo
clinical pharmacology, hypertension
faculty presents scholarships

six area high-schoolers to be rewarded for academics and community contributions

by laura arborgast
university news services

domenic sica, m.d., is a man on a mission to make a difference in the lives of richmond city schoolchildren. for the last five years, the virginia commonwealth university professor has been creating unique opportunities to involve middle-school and high-school students in the richmond community.

"we need to encourage our inner-city youth to become active citizens and community members," said sica, chair of the division of clinical pharmacology and hypertension. "they are the ones who will shape the future of the richmond community.

an avid sports fan, sica is using vcu sporting events to integrate children into the community. sica's newest initiative took place on feb. 3 at the men's basketball game putting vcu against american university. sica presented six $1,500 college scholarships to richmond city high-school seniors.

a committee composed of sica, a high-school student and several members of the university community will select the scholarship recipients. selection was based on the student's academic standing and contributions to the community.

sica's activities in recent years include giving away thousands of vcu men's basketball tickets to area school children as well as sponsoring student-free-throw contests and free health and blood pressure screenings at games. over the next two years, sica hopes to offer more scholarships and create some events that involve the vcu baseball program.

"i see sporting events as a vehicle to help young people," sica said. "it gets kids off the streets and gives them a fun and supervised environment to interact. my hope is that many people will get involved in this effort and we can generate more financial support for our kids," sica said.

"we have to keep reaching out to our children."

sica's community vision doesn't end in richmond. he is hopeful that in the future other inner-city communities will use and benefit from similar programs.

scholarships were given out during half-time of the vcu-au basketball game, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the stuart siegel center.

an exhibition featuring the artwork of diana cooper, recent recipient of the john simon guggenheim memorial fellowship, is on display at the bradford-reinick gallery, located on the main floor of the fine arts building, cooper, whose artwork combines painting with installation, has had individual exhibitions in london, england, new york city and philadelphia.

in addition, her extensive group exhibitions include art in general, r.s. 1 and white columns in new york city; spaces in cleveland, ohio; the edinburgh international art festival in edinburgh, scotland; and gallery kawafume in tokyo, japan.

vcu to present french films to central virginians

by mary beth alford
university news services

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irginia commonwealth university has partnered with two public broadcasting station affiliates to broadcast a pair of educational and cultural french films never before seen in the united states. pbs affiliates wcve in richmond and whjt in charlottesville will air two french films programmed by the vcu french film festival and the stations beginning this month.

"the broadcasts, all subtitled, hope to encourage the study of french as a foreign language and expose watchers to contemporary french culture," said peter kirkpatrick, ph.d., french professor and director of the vcu french festival.

the opening film, "the music freelancers" (les cachetons), directed by denis dercourt, will air at 5 p.m. feb. 11 on wcve (channel 23), and whjt (channel 41). the comical film, regarding a group of parisian freelance musicians compiled for a new year's eve concert in normandy, tells the humorous tale of the newlyacquainted musicians as they struggle to work together and make a living. "the music freelancers" will be followed immediately by the short animated film entitled "the well" (le puits), directed by jerome boulles.

the second film, "african child" (l'enfant noir), directed by laurent chevallier, will air on the same channels at 5 p.m. march 25, the week proceeding the ninth annual vcu french film festival. the "african child" tells of the trials and tribulations that a young boy, babu, encounters in his coming of age in his native village of kourouza.

"we selected these two films to kick off the series because there is something in each film for every viewer, whether student, teacher or community member," kirkpatrick said.

the 2001 festival, scheduled for march 31-april 1 at the byrd theatre, will introduce more than 12 french films to american audiences. each film will be presented by its director and/or starring actors.

for film festival information or for more details, visit www.frenchfilm.vcu.edu.
Drama to Explore Prejudices, Class Struggles of 1960s

Theatre VCU to Present ‘The Day the Bronx Died’

by Mary Beth Alford
University News Services

Theatre VCU opens its spring mainstage season with the Richmond premiere of “The Day the Bronx Died,” a play that explores prejudices and class struggles in the 1960s. The Virginia Commonwealth University department is offering the play, written by Bronx native playwright Michael Henry Brown, as part of the campus celebration of Black History Month in the Making. The VCU production will run at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 15-17 and 21-24 and at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at the Raymond Hodges Theatre in VCU’s Performing Arts Center.

Directed by Gary C. Hopper, assistant chair of Theatre VCU, “The Day the Bronx Died” explores relations between different social cultures, prejudices, class struggles, gang violence and the loss of innocence in an urban neighborhood.

“We wanted to present a play that addresses vital social issues as part of VCU’s celebration of Black History Month,” Hopper said. “Not only does this production address issues of race, class and sexuality, but these issues are still very relevant and applicable today.”

The play opens with Big Mickey, played by Raymond Lee Anderson, shortly after his son is brutally beaten and shot by a gang on a New York City subway. The tragic event sparks a series of flashbacks, taking him back to his childhood in the Bronx in the late 1960s. Young Mickey, played by Peterson Townsend, is torn between his two best friends — Billy, a Jewish boy, played by Joshua Farghson, and Alexander “the Great,” played by Clifton Duncan, an African-American boy who joins a gang when his family moves to the projects.

The flashbacks, seen throughout the play, start up shortly after the death of Big Mickey’s father and before the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. After King’s assassination, the Bronx riots of 1968 ensue, and the play ends with young Mickey reflecting on the heart of the community.

Young Mickey soon learns that Billy is moving out of the Bronx.

For tickets call the Theatre VCU Box Office at 828-6062. Tickets are $10 for general admission, $8 for seniors and VCU faculty and staff, and free to VCU students.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The play is not recommended for audiences under age 15 due to graphic violence, strong language, adult content and shots fired on stage.