

## Professors receive fellowship to uncover writings, improve reading

Two professors will increase the awareness of 19th century black American literature and improve childhood literacy through their work supported by the Braun Fellowship. Eric Gardner, professor of English, and Gretchen Owocki, professor of teacher education, each will receive grants totaling up to \$37,500 over the next three years to further their scholarly and professional activities.

Gardner's work will focus on uncovering the work of black American writers during the 19th century, particularly those away from the Eastern cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

Gardner has already edited two books that highlight such writers, "Jennie Carter: A Black Journalist of the Early West" (2007), and "Major Voices: The Drama of Slavery" (2005). After traveling to libraries to read original texts and conducting additional research, Gardner plans to publish a book on his findings.

Improving childhood literacy and providing enhanced resources for teachers are Owocki's goals for her fellowship. She will write a book designed for K-5 educators on reading assessment and instruction, and use those strategies in SVSU's reading clinic, which has shown promising results.

Owocki expects to develop around 30 assessment tools as part of her book; she previously has authored or co-authored six books on literacy. In this era of No Child Left Behind and other mandated measures for increased

accountability, she expects her forthcoming work to help teachers meet those standards while also staying focused on each child's development.

Gardner and Owocki form the second class of Braun



Eric Gardner



Gretchen Owocki

Fellows, joining their colleagues Jesse Donahue, professor of political science, and Thomas Renna, professor of history, who received the inaugural awards last year.

Established in 2005, the

Braun Fellowship program was created through a \$1.5 million endowment from the Saginaw-based Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation. Administered by the Saginaw Community Foundation, the program's purpose is to recognize the exceptional accomplishments and potential of select SVSU faculty and staff. It is named in honor of Ruth and Ted Braun of Saginaw.

## Acclaimed author to address SVSU graduates

Best-selling author Ken Follett will speak to graduates during Commencement exercises Friday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. in O'Neill Arena. Follett's archives are housed in Zahn Library.

In all, 448 students are expected to graduate, including 366 who will receive bachelor's degrees, and 82 who will receive master's or education specialist degrees.

Follett is the author of more than a dozen best-selling books spanning three decades. His first five best-sellers were spy thrillers, beginning with *Eye of the Needle* (1978), which won the Edgar award and has sold more than 10 million copies, followed by *Triple* (1979), *The Key to Rebecca* (1980), *The Man from St Petersburg* (1982) and *Lie Down with Lions* (1986).

A native of England, Follett surprised readers by radically changing course with "The Pillars of the Earth" (1989), a novel about building a cathedral in the Middle Ages. It received rave reviews and was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 18 weeks. It also

topped best-seller lists in Canada, Britain and Italy, and was on the German best-seller list for six years.

His latest novel, *World Without End* (2007) is the long-awaited sequel to *Pillars*. The new book returns to Kingsbridge 200 years later, and features the descendants of the original characters. Broad in sweep and massive in scope, it focuses on the destinies of a



Ken Follett

handful of people as their lives are devastated by the Black Death, the plague that inundated Europe in the middle of the 14th century.

Follett last spoke at SVSU in December 2004 when he donated his archives to the University as a result of his relationship with Carlos Ramet, executive assistant to the president. While an SVSU English professor, Ramet studied Follett's writing extensively and developed a series of scholarly articles which culminated in his book, *Ken Follett: The Transformation of a Writer*, published in 1999.

## "Battle of the Valleys" nets \$20,000

Students set a new standard for their fundraising efforts during the annual "Battle of the Valleys" competition. SVSU raised \$20,319 during the week-long challenge with Grand Valley State University Oct. 28 through Nov. 2.

Representatives of SVSU's student government presented the check to the Saginaw Rescue Mission Tuesday, Nov. 20. Following the presentation, students participated in a service project, packing lunches for staff and volunteers who prepared the Mission's Thanksgiving dinner for needy residents.

While GVSU won the friendly competition this year, 2007 marks the first time in the five-year history of "Battle of the Valleys" that either school managed to break the \$20,000 threshold.

# Sara Beth Keough

Assistant Professor of Geography

The quilted map in her office may depict the United States, but the real area of interest for Sara Beth Keough lies north of the border.

“Canada is misunderstood by Americans,” she said. “They think it’s a cultural extension of the United States.”

Keough admits she was guilty of such misconceptions herself despite growing up in New York state near the Quebec border. She says U.S. students often are not taught much about their North American neighbors.

“In the U.S., our elementary and secondary curricula in any subject doesn’t cover Canada in any amount.”

Once in graduate school, Keough decided to say “yes” to Canada, eh.

“I decided to use Canada as a case study for my research on globalization, cultural policy, music and national identity.”

Keough says one area of contrast between the two countries comes in their approach to indigenous people.

“The way Canada has dealt with its native population is quite different,” she said. “They have more of a ‘salad bowl’ approach to ethnic groups, where in the U.S., the government takes a ‘melting pot’ approach.”

Keough says Canada “is a place you really have to experience yourself to really understand the differences.”

Toward that end, she has written a grant to the Canadian government to take her Geography of North America class on a three-week train trip next summer.

Keough expects her students to recognize that geography is multi-faceted.

“I give map quizzes, but there’s much more to my classes than finding things on a map,” she said. “Geography is about looking for the spacial patterns on the landscape, making observations on the landscape and then trying to understand how what you see can tell you about the people who live there or some of the environmental processes that have taken place.”

Keough is multi-dimensional herself. A marathon runner, she also plays the trumpet and will accompany the SVSU chorus during upcoming holiday concerts.

A map of China also hangs in Keough’s office, a gift from students she taught last summer at Tsinghua University, one of China’s elite institutions. The first-year faculty member is getting to know her students and Michigan, but her colleagues have made quite an impression.

“I feel like I’m surrounded by people who are very passionate about teaching, regardless of how long they’ve been here. That’s an environment I haven’t been in before; it’s very contagious. It’s one of the things I like about working here.”



# Becky Clifford

Administrative Secretary, Academic Affairs • November 2007

It has been said that creating legislation is akin to watching sausage being made. The same may be said of crafting curriculum, in which case Becky Clifford is the chief butcher's assistant, laying out all the materials for the meat grinder.

As secretary for the graduate committee, the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, and the General Education Committee, Clifford gets a rare glimpse at how academic courses and requirements are made and modified.

"It's been interesting to be involved in all three areas, and it's definitely been a learning experience," she said. "Not a lot of people get to see the behind-the-scenes part of how a course is created and what channels they have to go through to be approved and actually put into the catalog."

Much of Clifford's recent focus has been to streamline that process and incorporate modern technology.

"A lot of my work this fall has been getting all of the committees on V-Space. We also went to an electronic proposal system instead of the old hand-written form."

As with any adjustment, there have been occasional hiccups, but Clifford says feedback has been generally positive.

"It works well for people. We've gotten a few e-mails thanking us for the change. When it comes to technology, there are always a few people who would rather stick with the

way the process was, but for the most part, I think it's been well-received.

"It definitely has saved people time. The originators of the proposals are finding the benefits of not having to walk hand-written proposals to all of the affected departments."

The electronic proposals are posted to a special area on V-space to be reviewed.

"From there, anyone can go in and review the proposals," she said. "They view it and post their vote in the response area. Once we receive all votes, I submit it to the appropriate committee."

For Clifford, "outside of work, it's all family." She and her husband Tom spend most of their free time with their two daughters, Julia, 4, and Ally, 7 months.

"Just spending time with them is the key," Clifford said.

A seven-year SVSU employee, Clifford maintains her work relationships, too, especially with her "walking buddy," Juanita Garcia.

Clifford says Academic Affairs is a very enjoyable office with "great working chemistry," and this is "probably the best work experience" she's ever had.

Good thing, because, she says, "now it's time to get ready for winter. It starts all over again."



## Professional Profile

- **Fenobia I. Dallas**, assistant professor of English, presented a paper titled "Assaying the Vote: Silencing Civic Discourse" at the Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, Oct. 3-6. Her presentation discussed the ramifications of the passage of Proposition 2 in Michigan and the silencing of individuals' votes in the corrections system.
- **Vanessa Brooks Herd**, assistant professor of social work, conducted a Nov. 2 workshop titled "Do the 'Right' Thing: Ethics and Social Work Practice" for the annual conference of the Michigan Association of School Social Workers in Bay City.
- **Judith Kerman**, professor of English, has had a poem, "Mehitzah," published in the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Fall 2007.
- **Kerry Segel**, professor of English, delivered a presentation titled "Designing Effective Content-Based Language Objectives (K-12)" at the annual Michigan Teachers of English as a Second Language (MITESOL) conference at Eastern Michigan University Oct. 19-20.
- **Laurie Reed**, lecturer of physics, is exhibiting her nature photography during November in the gallery area of Meier Camera Shop, 122 W. Main Street, Midland.
- **Arif Sultan**, assistant professor of economics, authored two papers, including "Lemons in the Used Car Market: An Empirical Investigation," for *Southwest Business and Economics Journal*, (forthcoming), and "Lemons in the Used Car Market: Theory and Evidence," which has been accepted for the Annual Conference of Academy of International Business, U.S. Southwest Chapter, Houston, March 4-8, 2008.
- **Tony Thomson**, director of counseling and health services; **Jennifer Ordway**, assistant director of counseling services; and **Hilary Crichton**, health and wellness educator, traveled to Atlanta for the 32nd annual BACCHUS Network General Assembly, Nov. 7-10. Accompanied by six peer health educators, they joined nearly 800 students and professionals from across the country. Thomson serves as the area consultant for Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio, while Ordway serves as the state coordinator for Michigan.
- **Matthew Zivich**, professor of art, announced that for the third consecutive year SVSU was represented in simultaneous art exhibitions in the Michigan State Government's Anderson House Office Building and the Senate Farnum Office Building in Lansing. Art in the Senate 2007-2008 and Arts in the House 2007 is a partnership with the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan and the Michigan Senate and House. B.F.A. students Caroline Heller and Shoua Kue exhibited an untitled acrylic painting and a wall hanging, respectively. Images of all the student works on display will be made available in the near future on the Senate and House Web sites. Zivich, Heller, Kue and their respective guests attended the opening of the exhibitions Oct. 30 in Lansing.

## New Cardinals

- **Adrian Ramirez**, financial aid advisor, welcomed a girl, Emily Ramirez, July 2.
- **Ryan Stockford**, University Police, welcomed a girl, Ashlyn Taylor (7 lbs., 9 oz., 20 in.), Nov. 4.

## Condolences

- To the family of **William Edwards**, who passed away Nov. 14. Edwards was chairman of the original campaign to establish SVSU. Through his generosity, the Edwards Bell Tower was constructed in honor of his wife, Julia, and the Edwards Lecture on Philosophy and Religion was established.
- To the family of **Charles (Chuck) Graham**, former executive director of the SVSU Foundation, who passed away at his home in Hilton



The SVSU Faculty Association presented several awards at its 22nd annual banquet Friday, Oct. 12. Donald Novey, professor of economics, was recognized with the FA Lifetime Achievement Award. The Faculty Award for Service was given to Marcia Shannon, assistant professor of nursing, who has been a member of the faculty since 1993. Robert Drew, associate professor of communication, received the Faculty Award for Scholarship. He joined the faculty in 1998. In addition, three students received Faculty Association Endowed Scholarships: Joshua Cieszlak, computer science; Nathan Hepworth, history; and Min Xu, communication and digital media design.

Head, S.C., Oct. 25. Graham served the University from Jan. 1, 1995 through June 30, 2001.

- To **Steven Sherlock**, professor of sociology, whose father-in-law, John Robert Geary, passed away Oct. 30.
- To **Andrea Witkowski**, assistant professor of teacher education, whose mother-in-law, Jeanette Witkowski, passed away in October.

## Transitions

For new faculty/staff office numbers, phone extensions, email addresses and other information, see [www.svsu.edu/lookup](http://www.svsu.edu/lookup).

### New Staff

- Said Elfakhani – Harvey Randall Wickes Endowed Chair in International Business
- Melissa Gerst – Archivist
- Dan Shelton – Assistant Baseball Coach

### Promoted/Transferred/Title Change

- Sharon Chenette – Senior Secretary, Financial Aid

## Briefly Speaking

- The first course in the new Master of Administrative Sciences track in University/College Student Affairs Administration will be offered in winter 2008. The first of the four-course track is titled "MAS 585 Foundations in University/College Student Affairs Administration" (Thursday, 7-10 p.m.). Advise students to contact the Office of Graduate Admissions at ext. 6096, 356 Wickes Hall, or [www.svsu.edu/gradadm](http://www.svsu.edu/gradadm), to enroll in this track. The four-course track may be taken apart from the main M.A.S. curriculum.

The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

**Tim Inman**  
Director of Creative Services  
[tmi@svsu.edu](mailto:tmi@svsu.edu) • (989) 964-4086

**J.J. Boehm**  
Director of Media Relations  
[jjboehm@svsu.edu](mailto:jjboehm@svsu.edu) • (989) 964-4055

**Submission Deadline:**  
**Noon on Wednesday before the publication date.**  
**Please send items by e-mail to: [tmi@svsu.edu](mailto:tmi@svsu.edu).**