

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

university of nevada, las vegas

SPRING 2007



Alexis Vernon, (left) won the Vista Group Award in 2003. Sonja and Michael Saltman are reunited with Cynthia McCoy, (above) who received the award in 1987.

Outstanding Undergraduates: Where Are They Now?

Twenty years ago, English major Cynthia McCoy was selected to receive the Vista Group Award, given annually to an outstanding liberal arts undergraduate student.

"I thought, 'Wow, a thousand dollars in cash!'" McCoy said. "That was a lot of money to me."

McCoy, who went on to earn a master's degree and is now teaching at Clark High School, is helping average-level students who show academic potential to succeed in honors courses. The Clark Challenge Program is effective – nine of the original 13 students in the program qualified for the Millennium Scholarship.

McCoy is a perfect example of how recognizing excellence in one person can create a ripple effect into the future.

This was the intention of real estate developer Michael Saltman, managing partner and president of the Vista Group, who started the award program with his wife Sonja in 1986.

"I wanted to celebrate excellence at UNLV," Saltman said. "Over the years we were able to develop a cadre of outstanding liberal arts graduates to receive the Vista Group Award,

and many of them, like Cynthia, went on to do a lot of wonderful things."

Supporting education is important to the Saltmans. They founded the William S. Boyd School of Law's Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution in 2003 and are the driving force behind the Midtown UNLV project.

This year, the Saltmans and numerous Vista winners from over the years will gather to celebrate their achievements.

As the following compilation shows, McCoy isn't the only Vista award recipient who achieved success after graduation.

Melanie (Van Betten) Jeffcoat

Received award: 1986
Degree: '87 B.A. Theater
The daughter of a UNLV English professor, Melanie Jeffcoat went on to make her own



mark as the first recipient of the Vista Group Award.

Jeffcoat earned a master's degree in acting from the University of Washington. While living in Los Angeles, she co-founded the award-winning Circle X Theatre Company, now celebrating its 10th anniversary.

She is now a part-time faculty member at the University of

Montevallo in Alabama. She has worked on two short films with her husband, a musician, and plans to direct a feature film.

H. Lee Barnes

Received award: 1988
Degree: '89 B.A. English
H. Lee Barnes, who teaches English and creative writing at the Community College

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Most people don't know that the College of Liberal Arts is the largest college at UNLV.

Approximately 3,000 students are enrolled as liberal arts majors. With this many students, the need for scholarships—graduate and undergraduate, need-based and merit-based—is great.

As you will read in this issue, the college has nine departments, yet only six have endowed scholarships. When a donor establishes an endowed scholarship, the gift is invested and a portion of the earnings are awarded as scholarships for deserving students. The funds are available in perpetuity.

The college overall has 10 scholarship endowments. I am pleased to report that two

endowments, one in psychology and one in sociology, were created this semester, and progress continues. (See story on page 6.)

In creating a scholarship, donors also create a relationship with UNLV, the college, the department, and the scholarship recipients. Just this past February, the annual luncheon that recognizes scholarship donors and recipients was held at the UNLV Foundations Building.

During the luncheon, I sat with Maria Parra-Sandoval, a political science major, who has an outstanding grade point average. Maria served as a communications intern in Sen. Harry Reid's office, and she is considering going to law school in Washington, D.C.

The featured graduate student speaker was Gregory P. Strauss, who is in his fifth year in the clinical psychology program. He benefited greatly from scholarships, fellowships, and other awards. While at UNLV he researched brain abnormalities that contribute to schizophrenia. Next fall he will begin his clinical residency, followed by a post doctoral fellowship in neuroscience.

And once again, in April, the college will be hosting its annual Honors Convocation where liberal arts students are recognized

for the scholarships and other awards that they have earned this academic year. One of those students, the college's outstanding senior, will receive the Vista Group Award and a \$1,000 check. Given since 1986 by Michael and Sonja Saltman, this award has been bestowed upon an interesting group of accomplished undergraduates. I think you will find the stories of their successes to be fascinating.

UNLV will inaugurate its eighth president at a special ceremony on April 27. This is a truly important day, as it allows all of us in the university family to formally welcome President David B. Ashley and hear his vision for the future. This is a rich academic custom and a wonderful opportunity for the university to connect with alumni, community friends, and leaders of peer institutions. I invite you to learn more about the inauguration tradition on UNLV's website at president.unlv.edu.

As always, I am very proud of the college, its students, staff, faculty, friends, and donors. Together, we are creating an environment that encourages individuals to do their best and to be recognized for their efforts.

Edward J. Shoben
Dean, College of Liberal Arts



Invent the future, leave a legacy. Charitable giving can play an important role in planning for your family's and your estate's future. Your gift through a charitable gift annuity, bequest, pooled income fund or other means can have a meaningful impact on the College of Liberal Arts.

Membership in the Dean's Associates Program. This gift club recognizes donors who give \$1,000 or more to support the dean's vision for the college. Members will receive *UNLV Magazine* and invitations to campus and community events.

“How Can I Help the College of Liberal Arts?”

For more information about giving to the College of Liberal Arts, contact Lynda Buhlig at (702) 895- 2945 or lynda.buhlig@unlv.edu.

Every gift counts. Your annual gift – no matter the amount – to your program of choice in the College of Liberal Arts helps support student endeavors and academic excellence. Plus, your donation today is part of Invent the Future, UNLV's 50th anniversary campaign. Give online at foundation.unlv.edu.



Academic advisor Carolyn Hensley discusses options with a liberal arts student.

Advising Center Expanding

Lea Sexton is a busy woman. As the director of the Wilson Advising Center, Sexton and her staff are responsible for helping 6,000 liberal arts majors and minors register for classes, change majors, add minors, and handle any other school-related issue that arises.

The center, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this semester, has grown tremendously over the past decade.

"In the beginning we had 2,500 students," Sexton said. "Now we have 6,000. We have more majors, more minors, and more faculty than any other college."

With the growing number of students in the liberal arts, the advising center staff expanded to keep up. The number of advisors has jumped from two to five, and the center has also picked up a graduate student, three student workers, administrative assistants, and an office manager.

Students visit the center throughout their academic career. To ensure that the students can find a convenient time to see an advisor, the center takes walk-ins on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is open on Saturdays, a schedule which no other college advising center offers.

Next semester, the Wilson Advising Center, which is named after Hazel Wilson and was funded by the Hazel and Earl Wilson Trust, will move into a new location in Wright Hall. After the move, Sexton said, there will be festivities to celebrate the center's 10th year. – *Lisa Shawcroft* ●

Scholarship Will Honor Rothman

Hal K. Rothman, distinguished professor of history, passed away on Feb. 25 from ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Rothman earned an international reputation as a prolific author and was considered one of the nation's foremost experts on the American West, environmental history, post-industrial America, and all things Las Vegas.

An endowment has been created with a goal of \$100,000 to provide a yearly

scholarship of \$4,000 to a student in history.

Contributions to the Dr. Hal K. Rothman Fund in History can be made online at <https://netcommunity.unlv.edu/NETCOMMUNITY/SSLPage.aspx?&pid=293>; or by check, payable to the UNLV Foundation, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451006, Las Vegas, NV 89154-1006. Write on the memo line: Hal Rothman Fund. ●



Cynthia McCoy is now a teacher at Clark High School.

Where Are They Now?

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of Southern Nevada, is the most published short story writer in Nevada with more than 30 stories appearing in literary journals and magazines.

After graduating from UNLV, he earned his master's of fine arts in creative writing from Arizona State University. In addition to his short stories, he has written four books. A fifth, *Minimal Damage*, a collection of short stories, is due for release in September.

Elizabeth Daniels

Received award: 1989

Degree at UNLV: '90 B.A. History

Elizabeth Daniels began her senior year by selling her first book manuscript, a romantic suspense novel set in England. The book was released the day after she graduated from UNLV. She has had 25 books published since.

Her latest work is an historical romance titled *At Twilight*. Additionally, she teaches composition and speech courses at two community colleges in Ohio.

Julie Beasley

Received award: 1990

Degrees: '91 B.A. Psychology and '93 M.A. Clinical Psychology

After graduating from UNLV, Julie Beasley earned her Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Arizona State University. She now works as a child neuropsychologist.

Beasley also is an adjunct faculty member of the University of Nevada School of Medicine and serves on the board of the Lili Claire Foundation.

"I won the award and everything fell into place," she said. "The plaque still hangs on my office wall to this day."

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Where Are They Now? *continued from page 3*

Persephanie (Cheeseman) Silverthorn

Received award: 1991

Degree: '92 B.A. Psychology

Persephanie Silverthorn earned a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Alabama. After working as an assistant professor at the University of North Texas and the University of New Orleans, she opened a private practice and sees patients ages 3 and up.

"The Vista Group Award paid for an entire semester of college," she said. "Since I was working full-time to put myself through school, the award was very welcome."

Delia "Jo" Hedesan

Received award: 2000

Degree: '01 B.A. History and Economics

Jo Hedesan is a partner in Arrowhead Consulting, a firm that writes proposals and then administers the monies given from the European Union for infrastructure projects within Romania.

A native of Romania, Hedesan arrived in the United States as a foreign exchange student in high school. After receiving an offer from UNLV's Honors College, she began her dual degree program which she completed in four years by taking up to 10 classes per semester.

"Winning the Vista Group Award was a wonderful way to finish college," she said. "I was so proud and overwhelmed, especially being a foreign student. It was nice to be recognized. I still have the trophy on my piano at home."

Emily Raba

Received award: 2002

Degree: '03 B.A. German and History

Emily Raba has spent the last three years

in German-speaking countries. She is currently applying to American graduate programs and plans to work as a high school foreign language teacher.

"When I received the Vista Group Award, I was in my last semester with so many projects that I could hardly see the end since most apparent to me about each was their weaknesses," she said. "So I was astonished to find out I got this award; it showed me that my judgments about my own work aren't the final judgment."

Alexis Vernon

Received Award: 2003

Degree: '03 B.A. Women's Studies

After graduation, Alexis Vernon attended graduate school at New York University. She lives in New York where she manages a theater education program called the Paul A. Kaplan Center for Educational Drama at the City University of New York. She has also taught at John Jay College and New Jersey City University.

In addition, Vernon performs with the Stolen Chair Theater Company and returned to UNLV in March to perform her solo show as part of women's history month.

"The Vista Group Award definitely helped in terms of funding for graduate school," she said. "I am very grateful to have gone to UNLV."



College of Liberal Arts Dean's Associates 2007

The college would like to thank the following individuals for their commitment to the college, its students, staff and faculty.

The college reached its goal of 12 Dean's Associates by Dec. 31, 2006 and is now striving for an additional eight by June 30. Dean's Associates, donors who give \$1,000 or more to the college, will be among those invited to a special spring event.

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please call Lynda Buhlig at (702) 895-2945.

- Robert Clark
- Ellerie and Charles Cleveland
- Jeanne and Don Hamrick
- Nancy S. Hunterton '92
- Kara Kelley '92
- Sam Lieberman '96
- Francine Mazza
- Madelyn F. '71 and Michael J. Montgomery
- Gina Polovina '91 and Ira Sternberg
- Lea Sexton '86
- Elaine and Ed Shoben
- Deborah Young '98 and Michael Green '86



The Saltmans and Cynthia McCoy (above) outside the Vista Group office. History major Zsolt Nagy (left) and political science major Nerses Kopalyan (below).

Zsolt Nagy

Received Award: 2005

Degree: '05 B.A. in History

Zsolt Nagy received his master's degree from the University of Chicago last spring and is considering offers to attend doctoral programs at Oxford University and the University of Minnesota.

Nagy entered UNLV as a non-native English speaker and worked full-time while taking classes, so winning the award was a happy surprise.

"When I won the award, it was a great recognition that made me feel really good about myself," he said.

Nerses Kopalyan

Received Award: 2006

Degree at UNLV: '06 B.A. in Political Science

Kopalyan is currently working on his master's degree in political science at UNLV and also works as a graduate assistant.

Receiving the Vista Group Award last year gave Kopalyan the confidence to continue his education.

"It also brought a sense of prestige to the political science department," he said, "especially to all the excellent professors who have devoted themselves to bettering the academic careers of their students."

– Lynda Buhlig, Lisa Shawcroft,
and Jennifer Lawson ●

Vista Group Award winners from 1986 to 2006:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1986: Melanie (Van Betten), Jeffcoat, Theater | 1996: Ioana Gal, Philosophy |
| 1987: Cynthia McCoy, English | 1997: Matthew Voss, Political Science |
| 1988: H. Lee Barnes, English | 1998: Erin Warnick, Psychology |
| 1989: Elizabeth Daniels, History | 1999: James Smedley, Philosophy |
| 1990: Julie Beasley, Psychology | 2000: Delia "Jo" Hedesan, History and Economics |
| 1991: Persephanie (Cheeseman) Silverthorn, Psychology | 2001: Daniel Gryder, Philosophy |
| 1992: Meri Lull, English | 2002: Emily Raba, German and History |
| 1993: Maryanne (Dawicki) Salm, Political Science | 2003: Alexis Vernon, Women's Studies |
| 1994: Paula (Delespinasse) Lynch, Anthropology | 2004: Kari L. Park, Philosophy |
| 1995: Richard E. Brown, Anthropology | 2005: Zsolt Nagy, History |
| | 2006: Nerses Kopalyan, Political Science |

Have you included the College of Liberal Arts in your estate plan?

In June, UNLV will induct the founding members of the Heritage Circle, an honorary society to thank donors who have named the university in a will, trust, or other charitable vehicle.

To learn more about membership in the Heritage Circle, please contact Bud Beekman, director of gift planning, at (702) 895-2841 or bud.beekman@unlv.edu.

INVENT THE FUTURE

Benefactors Create Legacies at UNLV

Carole Lovinger wanted to create a meaningful tribute to her husband Edward, an emeritus professor of psychology at UNLV, who died in 2001.

She decided to make a lasting impact on the College of Liberal Arts by establishing the psychology department's first-ever scholarship endowment for full-time graduate students of psychology.

"He really loved teaching here and he really loved the university," Lovinger said. "I think this would have pleased him, and I like the notion that this will be given forever."

The first recipient of the Edward Lovinger Scholarship Endowment will be chosen later this year. To qualify, students must have a grade point average of 3.0 or above and demonstrate financial need.

Edward Lovinger taught at UNLV from 1968 until his retirement in 1993. His courses, such as Psychology of the Stock Market, Leadership, Theories of Personality, and Group Process and Personal Growth were very popular with his students.

"It's a very rewarding feeling to be able to help a student who has financial need and to free them from the stress of having to work while taking classes," Lovinger said.

The College of Liberal Arts considers scholarship endowments such as Lovinger's to be among its top funding priorities.

The college has nine departments, but only six have endowed scholarships. Through the Invent the Future campaign, the college hopes to attract additional private support for more scholarship endowments, which will allow students who receive them to concentrate fully on their studies. Two of those endowed scholarships were created earlier this year – Lovinger's in psychology and retired dean James Frey's in sociology.

Frey was a professor of sociology before being named dean, so supporting that department was a natural choice for him and his wife Carol. The Frey's scholarship endowment will be for graduate student research.

"I was there through seven presidents, and I started from the ground up," he said. "It was good for me professionally and personally, and I thought I'd like to do something. It's a legacy for me and my family."
– Jennifer Lawson ●

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS CAMPAIGN FUNDING PRIORITIES

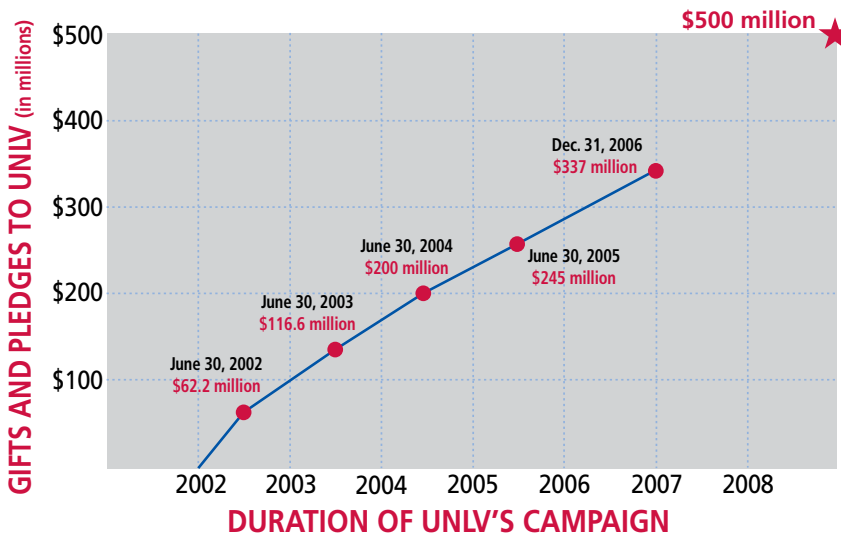
- Faculty development funds
- Faculty opportunity fund
- Undergraduate student scholarships
- Graduate student fellowships
- University Forum Lecture Series
- **Graduate and undergraduate scholarship endowments**

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

The college contains nine departments: anthropology, English, foreign languages, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, and women's studies.

Only six of those departments have an endowed scholarship: anthropology (1), English (2), foreign languages (1), history (3), psychology (1), sociology (1). The college has one general endowment.

A \$30,000 endowment provides a \$1,200 yearly scholarship after the initial 24-month investment period.



Invent the Future is UNLV's first comprehensive effort to secure the promises of tomorrow through a \$500 million fundraising initiative. With your help, private funding for students, faculty, research, facilities, and programs will map a course for Las Vegas' next decade.



DONOR HONOR ROLL

This roll of honor recognizes the contributors to the College of Liberal Arts from Jan. 1, 2006 to Feb. 26, 2007. The college wishes to thank the following individuals, corporations, and foundations for their generous support. Every gift to UNLV is valued. It is important for us to recognize all donors correctly. Please notify the UNLV Foundation at (702) 895-3641 of any discrepancies.

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Tim Street '01
Helene Stumpf '93
Hiroshi Suzuki
Joan Swift
Carole '00 and Norman Terry
Carol Thompson '93
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Ann Zorn

Advisory Board Member Spotlight: Merlinda Gallegos



UNLV graduate and College of Liberal Arts advisory board member Merlinda Gallegos doesn't hesitate to get involved with the community, and she has inspired others to get involved as well.

As vice president of corporate philanthropy at MGM MIRAGE, she oversees the company's charitable giving initiatives. One of the initiatives is the Voice Foundation, the company's nonprofit agency that collects and disburses employee donations to local charities.

Under her leadership, the Voice Foundation has achieved more than a 100 percent increase in employee participation in the work-based giving campaigns at properties acquired through the last merger.

"I am involved with UNLV and participate in the Las Vegas community because I believe it is important to be part of the solution," Gallegos said.

A member of the Las Vegas community for 18 years, Gallegos earned three degrees at UNLV: a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1992, a master's degree in sociology in 1995, and a doctorate in sociology in 1999.

In addition to serving on the college's advisory board, she is also involved with the boards of Nevada Grants Management Unit, the Clark County Neighborhood Justice Center, Conecta Inc., and serves as the secretary of the Grand Victoria Foundation. She was recently named one of the "40 Under 40" local professionals by InBusiness Las Vegas.

"My education has afforded me many opportunities and I want to ensure that others have access to educational opportunities at UNLV, as well as access to other resources so they can reach their full potential," Gallegos said.

Lecture Series Looks to Solidify Tradition

The College of Liberal Arts is searching for a donor to commit to naming the University Forum Lecture Series, which has been bringing stimulating lectures to UNLV by speakers from all over the country since 1980.

According to Steven Parker, associate professor of political science, secure funding is at a minimum and it's difficult to attract some bigger names to come to the university. Not only will the lecture series be named for the donor, it would mean carrying on a tradition at UNLV and making it even greater.

"For the series to be named would mean a secure future for this gift that for 27 years the College of Liberal Arts has been giving to the community and university," Parker said.

The college expects that about 5,000 people will have attended a lecture by the end of this academic year.

If you are interested in supporting the University Forum Lecture Series, please contact Lynda Buhlig, director of development for the College of Liberal Arts at (702) 895-2945. – Angela Sablan ●

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

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