Sparks Awards mark 20 years with 20 winners
Annual program honors university’s unsung heroes

By Joe Schulman
jcschulman@gsu.edu

Elgie Ogburn is always on the go. Whether it’s handling multiple projects or doing the little things that not are even part of his job description, he keeps the university running smoothly. Because of his willingness to exceed expectations, Ogburn, superintendent of custodial services, was named one of 20 winners of the 2005 Sparks Awards, which were presented April 26 at the Student Center Ballroom. “I’m very excited,” said Ogburn, who has been employed at Georgia State since 1972. “What it means to me is an honor to get an award because of whom the award is named after. He was a pretty good guy who strived for better things, and I think I fit that mold.”

Named after George M. Sparks, Georgia State’s president from 1928 until 1957, the awards are typically given to 10 recipients annually. But, to commemorate the awards’ 20th anniversary, the Georgia State University Alumni Association decided to double the number of honorees, which include students, faculty and staff members. “(The winners) demonstrated that they go above and beyond the call of duty … without ever complaining,” said Dorian Wallace, a

Service With a Smile: Elgie Ogburn, superintendent of custodial services at Georgia State, was one of 20 recipients of this year’s Sparks Awards, presented annually to university staff, faculty and students who go above and beyond the call of duty.

Hospitality school receives top industry honors
Students upset well-funded competition

By Joe Schulman
jcschulman@gsu.edu

For years, the joke was on Debbi Robbe, a Hospitality Administration instructor in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business. She had become her industry’s version of soap opera vixen (and perpetual star struck) by herself. I used to go steal food from the officers. After being nominated for a fourth time, the classes won for “Best Menu on a Shoestring” and “Best Event on a Shoestring.” It is believed to be the first time a college or university has received an “Allie.” “The kids got a standing ovation,” Robbe said. “They were chanting ‘G-S-U! G-S-U!’” Even the “shoestring” events don’t come cheaply, with spending limits ranging between $30,000 and $100,000, according to Debra Cantion, director of the hospitality school. Robbe’s students spent about $3,750 for each of their events, a fraction of what the competition spent on their parties.

The menu award was given for the 2004 “Wet and Wild” party, held last spring. Using a tropical theme, students served shrimp, mock cocktails and chicken kabobs. Food was cooked across the street by the students then wheeled over to the Student Center Ballroom.

“The WinterSlam” tailgate party, held before a Georgia State Basketball game last year, received the honor for “Best Event on a Shoestring.” Poker tables, slot machines and even stations to play the card game “Uno” were set up. The party was a hit with students. “They didn’t want to leave,” Robbe said. “We had to kick them out.”

Robbe credits her students’ creativity to helping them overcome their more common, similar to the awards’ characteristics the award recognizes.”

Each of the winners, from professors to business managers to undergraduates, has hard work and professional attitudes in common, similar to the awards’ namesake, according to Wallace. “(Sparks) was known for his vision, his humor and love of life,” Wallace said. “He personified those characteristics the award recognizes.”

Mary Nell Stone,administrative specialist-academic in the University Senate and Staff Council office, is another long-time employee being honored with a Sparks Award this year. “It’s nice to be recognized,” said Stone, who is in her 19th year at the university. “You feel like you’re part of the Georgia State University family. You’re recognized for your work, and you feel you matter.”

Each year the association receives about 50 nominees for the awards, with some of the names nominated several times. Often, the winners do not know they have even been nominated until they are informed they won. “A lot of them are totally surprised,” Wallace said. “A lot of them are definitely honored, and they feel privileged.”

– See Page 3 for a complete list of winners.


**Andrew Young School of Policy Studies**

Usery honored with labor studies chair

Seven years after the formation of the Usery Center for the Workplace, the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies is establishing a W.J. Usery Jr. Chair in Labor Studies.

"Chairs are critical to the quality of a university," said Georgia State University President Carl Patton during a reception for the former U.S. labor secretary. "They attract distinguished faculty, and they have a multiplier effect in attracting very highly talented students to study with those faculty members."

In addition to the chair, the Andrew Young School named Usery a Distinguished Executive Fellow in Labor Policy. "I hold an objective in life to leave it a little bit better than I found it, and I pledge to you my very best, in every way I can, to advance the university and the Andrew Young School of Policy (Studies)," Usery said.

Havard prof delivers inaugural lecture

With the number of workers across the planet doubling, the U.S. government will have to work aggressively to ensure those with degrees continue to ensure those with degrees continue to have a fair shot at obtaining jobs, according to a Harvard University professor who delivered the inaugural lecture of an annual series at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

"In the last, roughly, 20 years, the number of people participating in the global work force has doubled," said Richard Freeman, the Asherman Chair of Economics at Harvard. Freeman is also the director of the Labor Studies Program at the National Bureau of Economic Research and a visiting professor at the London School of Economics.

Freeman's lecture was part of a series of events held throughout April marking the grand opening of the school's new building. The speaker's series will resume next spring.

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Honors Day recognizes students, faculty**

More than 574 students, faculty and distinguished guests attended this year's College of Arts and Sciences Honors Day awards ceremony, held April 13 at the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts. This year's event highlighted the college's international programs and included presentations by students who have studied abroad and by members of the school's Arab League and United Nations model teams.

After honoring 574 students, faculty awards were presented. Peter Lindsay received both the Outstanding Teacher and Distinguished Honors Professor awards, while fellow political science professor Michael Smith was named Outstanding Junior Faculty. Physics and astronomy professor Douglas Gies was recognized for Outstanding Faculty Scholarship.

**College of Education**

Professor to edit, contribute essays for book

Joyce E. King, the Benjamin E. Mays Chair of Urban Teaching, Learning and Leadership, will edit "Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century." The book, published for the American Educational Research Association by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., contains essays by several noted African-American scholars, including King.

The volume presents the findings and recommendations of the American Educational Research Association. Through this work, the AERA aims to put black education and research practices in the forefront of the educational community's agenda. The book will be released in May.

**College of Health and Human Sciences**

**Professor publishes book on terrorism**

Understanding the linkage between war and terrorism is essential in defeating terrorism, according to a Georgia State professor who recently published a book on the subject.

Robbie Friedman explores the relationship between hate, vilification, dehumanization and violence in "A Diary of Four Years of Terrorism and Anti-Semitism, 2000-2004."

Friedman's work examines how terrorists and their supporters use the glorification of death to portray their victims as actual terrorists. The book also explores biased media coverage of terrorism and of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the challenges the free world faces from Al-Qaeda along with the growing Iranian nuclear threat.

For more information on Friedman's book, visit www.cughs.net/initiatives/glee.htm.

**College of Law**

Moot court team wins state contest

The College of Law's moot court team continued an impressive season by winning the state championship in the 2005 Intrastate Moot Court Competition hosted at Easley University. Georgia State's team defeated squads from the host university, along with teams from the University of Georgia and Mercer University.

After defeating Georgia in the semifinals, Georgia State squared off against Mercer in the finals, where the team of second-year law students Blake Eno, Stephen Graham and Debra Hunter prevailed. The moot court team was coached by Brandee Kowalyzk and Adwoa Ghartry-Tapie.

A week later, a separate moot court team captured the John J. Gibbons Criminal Procedure Moot Court Competition, held at Seton Hall University.

**College of Business**

**J. Mac Robinson College of Business**

U.S. News ranks college among nation's best

As it has for the past 10 years, U.S. News & World Report ranked the J. Mack Robinson College of Business part-time M.B.A program among the top 10 nationwide. The college moves up a spot from last year to sixth place and rates second among public universities.

The school is the only Southern institution to place in the top 10. The magazine ranked the college's information systems program 10th in the nation.

"We are extremely gratified to again be part of the elite group of business schools that make up the top 10 U.S. News part-time list," said H. Fenwick Huss, dean of the Robinson College of Business. "The fact that this is our 10th consecutive year in the top 10 is a ringing endorsement of the consistently high quality of programs, faculty and students found at the Robinson College."

Hall of Fame inducts state business leaders

The J. Mack Robinson College of Business' Hall of Fame will induct local business leaders A.D. "Bud" Correll, R. Charles Loudemilk and Bonnie L. Phipps at a ceremony May 10 at Inter-Continental Buckhead Atlanta. They are being honored for their business acumen and community service work.

Faculty and staff are invited to attend the ceremony and can purchase tickets at the discounted price of $90 ($140 per couple) by contacting Diane Moore at Ext. 1-2627 or demoore@gsu.edu.
2005 Sparks Awards Recipients

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Staff council members elected 18 new representatives in April.
Those new representatives joined returning council members to elect officers, along with representatives to the University Senate, for 2005-2006. Run-off elections for staff council representatives also were held. Those results were not available by press time but will appear in the May 10 edition of the Villager. Below is a listing of the new staff council representatives and their corresponding departments:

- Randy Trammell, Arts and Sciences
- Tyra Hines, Arts and Sciences
- Carol Miller, Business
- Angela Turk, Education
- Renee Stephens, Law
- Honeybee Sheffield, President/Provost
- Victor Bolet, Information Systems and Technology
- Rhonda Williams, Facilities
- Alvin Gore, Facilities
- Shelly-Anne Williams, Arts and Sciences
- Jean Miller, Business
- Ruby Hopkins, Education
- Angela Arnold, Health and Human Sciences
- Bettejune Vergos, President/Provost
- Sheila Bradley, Information Systems and Technology
- Renee Bazemore, Alumni Association
- Boniata Mitchell, Facilities
- Angela Lefebvre, Library

By Joe Schulman jschulman@gsu.edu

Students from the special events class that organized the award-winning “Wintertailgate” tailgate party also wrote what could become Georgia State’s new school fight song.

The song, which debuted during halftime of a men’s basketball game in 2004, was written by the students, with assistance from John Haberlen, chair of the School of Music. The words were set to music from an original fight song that was never actually completed, said Debbi Robbe, a Hospitality Administration instructor in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business. “The students realized that part of the experience of being at a school was having a fight song,” she said. “We just wrote the words to music that was written five or six years ago but was never used for a song at that time.”

Robbe hopes the tune will soon become a fixture at Georgia State sporting events. “It’s gone really well,” Robbe said. “We want to work with the band so this can be ready for next year.”

Perfecting Their Roar: Students in Debbi Robbe’s special events class helped complete a school fight song they hope will be officially adopted by the university’s sports teams. The class recently received two trophies from the annual Allie Awards, sponsored by the International Society of Event Specialists and the National Association of Catering Executives.

Students write school fight song

Dracy Blackwell, administrative specialist-academic, Department of Sociology
Virginia A. Brown, public relations specialist, Department of University Relations
Robert Daniel, accountant, Department of Chemistry
Angela Garner, business manager, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education
Bob Heck, head softball coach
Deborah Housworth, business services manager, Purchasing Department
Alexandra “Sandy” Land, business manager, Center for High Angular Resolution Astronomy
Elgie Ogbum, superintendent, Custodial Services
Mary Nell Stone, administrative specialist-academic, University Senate and Staff Council office
Albert Patton White Jr., business manager, Georgia State University Alpharetta Center
Vickie Brown, director of career services, College of Law
Dwight Coleman, associate professor and coordinator of voice performance and opera studies, School of Music
Doris Derby-Banks, director, Office of African-American Student Services and Programs
Janie Hardman, educational program specialist, Intensive English Program
Ruby Hopkins, Child Development Center
Jayant Kale, professor of global financial markets, Department of Finance
Katie Lowry, business manager, Department of Counseling and Psychological Services
Avani Raval, administrative assistant-academic, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
Tawanna Tookes, administrative specialist, Department of Communication
Douglas Zimmerman, administrative coordinator, New Student Programs

By Joe Schulman jschulman@gsu.edu

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Elliot Albers, director of the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, received another year of support from the National Institute of Mental Health to continue his research on the phonic entrainment of circadian behaviors.

David Bottoms, an instructor in the writing program, read from his most recent compilation, “Waltzing Through the Endtime,” as part of “An Evening with Southern Poets,” held April 25 at the Woodruff Arts Center. The Georgia School of Policy Studies, Room 750. Free. Registration required. 404/651-0875.

All day. Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Exhibit: LightRoom. Atlanta architect Bill Carpenter collaborates with associates and artists to present drawings, photographs and paintings illustrating an experimental dialogue with architecture. Rialto Center for the Performing Arts. Free. 404/651-0489.

Tonya Cook, an instructor in the Communication Program, published a textbook in the Department of Linguistics’ Intensive English Program, titled “College Vocabulary 4,” addresses academic administration. He also was honored for outlining a new paradigm of fluent and automatic reading.

Carl Patton, Georgia State University president, received the Excellence in International Education Award for his work with the Model Arab League and the Model United Nations teams.

Rashid Naim, a political science lecturer, received the Excellence in International Education Award for his work with the Model Arab League and the Model United Nations teams.

John Thomas, a public administration and urban studies lecturer, is part of a research team centered in Chattanoogas’s Community Research Council that was just awarded a $100,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Walt Thompson, a professor of kinesiology, was awarded a grant from the Todd Wagner Foundation for the MIR-ACLES program, to be deployed in the Atlanta After-School All-Stars project. The program aims to use technology to build educational and life skills for at-risk children.

James Wall, director of the School of Social Work, received a grant from the Georgia Department of Human Resources to conduct a child care market survey in Georgia.

Sally Siewert, assistant director of the Program for Rehabilitation Leadership, received an additional year of funding from the U.S. Department of Education to continue her work on “Rehabilitation Long-Term Training: A Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.”

The Villager prints select events from the university’s official community calendar, available online at www.gsu.edu/news/calendar. To submit an event listing, e-mail cboone@gsu.edu or call Ext. 1-1450.