Georgia State gets glamorous for Homecoming
2006 Homecoming events set around a Hollywood theme

By Wendy Bigham
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Can't make it to this year’s Academy Awards? No worries. Georgia State organiz-
ers have planned a slate of Hollywood-style events for Homecoming week, Feb. 6-11.

This year’s theme, “Glitz, Glamour, Romance,” pays homage to the Hollywood mainstays Claire Danes and Steve Martin. On Wednesday, faculty, staff and stu-
dents can laugh to comedian Cocoa Brown at 8 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.

Thursday will feature three Homecoming events, starting at noon with the Pep Rally and 3rd Annual Golf-Cart Parade, which starts at Panther Pen (the corner of Decatur and Piedmont streets) and weaves through downtown. Some energy for the men’s basketball game against Hofstra at 7 p.m. in the Sports Arena. End the evening at the Coronation and Ball, where the 2006 Royal Court will be crowned. The events start at 9 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom and will include food, dancing and entertainment. On Friday, don’t miss the “Premier Night” Variety Show, where students will perform skits, dances, songs and step routines.
The week wraps up on Saturday with a host of activities, including the inaugural Family Day. Faculty, staff and students can laugh to comedian Cocoa Brown at 8 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.

Infinite Appeal at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6 in the Student Center Ballroom.

For details on any 2006 Homecoming events, call 404/651-2190 or visit www.gastatealumni.
edu/coming.html.

Biologist Baumstark earns Excellence Award

By John Allen
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Barbara Baumstark, professor of biology and director of the department's instruc-
tional programs, is a winner of the 2005 University System of Georgia Board of
Regents' Teaching Award.

Baumstark was recognized for her work with Georgia State students and her role as director of the Bio-Bus program, a community-service outreach to the state's K-12 students.

“I am surprised and very pleased to receive the award, particularly because of the recognition it confers on the Bio-Bus program,” she said. “I plan to donate any prize money I receive to this program in honor of the phenomenal group of teach-
ers, faculty, students and staff who have all worked together to keep the Bio-Bus on the road.”

Baumstark founded the Bio-Bus pro-
gram in 1999, and in the first five years the mobile laboratory has visited more than 75,000 Georgia students in 23 counties. She has always believed that the excitement of scientific discovery through hands-on experiments holds students' attention, not just memorizing facts and formulas.

Within the biology department, Baum-
stark has helped restructure the genetics lab course and the lab experiences for the introductory biology for majors’ course. In both cases, she has created compelling experiments, including one that tasks stu-
dents with finding the source of a toxin that makes babies sick in a rural Georgia town.

“It is only fitting that Barbara receive a starstruck award for her extraordinary teach-
ing,” said Lauren Adamson, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “She has already been recognized at Georgia State, and all of these awards are small tokens of our strong admiration for the major contributions she is making to education, both at the university and at public schools throughout Georgia.”

The individual Teaching Excellence Award is given annually to three professors in the university system. Baumstark won in the research university category. She is the third Georgia State faculty member to win an individual award in the nine years since its inception. She was also instrumental in the biology department winning the 1997 Teaching Excellence Award for programs or departments.

Judges look for teachers with a strong record both inside and outside the class-
room, and each winner receives $5,000 and a certificate of achievement.

“Dr. Baumstark richly deserves the award,” said Phung C. Tai, biology chair. “It is a credit to her dedication to instruction at Georgia State as well as the innovative Bio-
Bus program.”

What is your role?

My role is to serve as the supervisor of Peer
Health Educators and expand health education. I also look at some of the big
topics we deal with on campus, such as alcohol use, and I work with various campus departments and organizations to find our best strategy to acknowledge these issues.

What can faculty and staff do to promote good student health?

First and foremost, we need to set examples in terms of healthy living and sharing ideas of how we deal with stress.

Any health tips for faculty and staff?

It’s the little things like drinking enough water and getting enough rest. For instance, even though it’s easy to get donuts for meet-
ings, it’s probably just as easy to stop by Kroger for fruit and vegetables.

Can you give more details about the Bio-Bus program?

It’s a high percentage of our students are Latino, African-American and Asian, which means they often can’t come to the Health Center if they don’t have transportation or money for a bus. The Bio-Bus is a medical van where medical providers are on hand and they go to their doorsteps instead of them having to go to us. It’s kind of a mobile clinic.

Down at the Depot: Georgia Speaker of the House and Georgia State alum Glenn Richardson (center) is flanked by members of Georgia State’s 1913 Society at the Leadership Appreciation Night. The annual event, held this year on Jan. 10 at the Georgia Railroad Freight Depot, allows university administrators to network with state legislators in conjunction with the opening session of the Georgia General Assembly. Making its public debut at the event was the 1913 Society, a team of 16 Georgia State juniors and seniors who represent the university at various activities. Shown here, from left to right, are Stephanie Lee, Richardson and Smita Solanki.
Georgia State employee makes award-winning short film

Melissa Skye leads a double life. During the day, she works as an administrative assistant in modern and classical languages. But nights and weekends, she is a devoted filmmaker.

She and her husband, Ruckus Skye, have their own production company, Joybean Studios. Their recent short film, Prayers from Pelham, has been accepted on the festival circuit, securing 15 times and winning a Best Actress Award for cast member Claire Bronson at the Long Island Film Festival.

Prayers is the story of Aaron, an Atlanta businessman who returns to his hometown of Pelham, Ga., where the short was filmed – to care for his dying aunt. That, a neighbor starts spreading the news that Aunt Enid will take prayers straight to God for anyone who asks. Enid’s house quickly turns to chaos, and Aaron struggles to control the situation while trying to spend time with his aunt.

Skye, who goes by the name Lane Skye in her film career, cowrote and coproduced the short with her husband, who also directed the picture. The couple had worked on a number of small projects before, including music videos, but the 27-minute Prayers from Pelham was a big step forward.

“We learned a lot about what we didn’t know,” Melissa Skye said. The film crew worked nearly 20-hour days to get what they needed during the 10-day shoot, she said.

That was before she started working at Georgia State, but Skye still finds time for her film work by working nights and weekends and boarding vacation days. And modern and classical languages has been “very understanding,” she said.

Joybean Studios is currently working on some short commercial projects, and the Skyes also are formulating another short film. The pair has written a screenplay for a some short commercial projects, and the Skyes also are formulating another short film. The pair has written a screenplay for a short feature film. The couple had worked on a number of small projects before, including music videos, but the 27-minute Prayers from Pelham was a big step forward.

“This has been a hit on the festival circuit, taking it to festivals and handing out copies to other filmmakers,” Melissa Skye said. “I think it’s a pretty darn good effort for a first film.”

The keynote speaker is Leilis Christenbury, a former high school English teacher who is a professor of English education at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va. Georgia State’s department of middle-secondary education and instructional technology is hosting the event in cooperation with metro-Atlanta literacy educators.

For details, contact Mary Axtel at 404/651-
0177 or matiaxtel@gsu.edu, or Gertrude Tinker Sachs at 404/651-0174 or gtsaechs@gsu.edu.
Georgia State honors students, faculty, staff, community with awards.

Georgia State announced winners for its annual community service awards. The Martin Luther King Jr. Torch of Peace award and the Hosea Williams Community Activism Award were recognized at the 23rd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation Jan. 19.

Torch of Peace award winner Bryce Farbstein, a law and public administration graduate student, created a system of reporting bias to university administrators. The Bias Response Initiative includes instructions for documenting incidents, distributing information and using university resources to address problems bias creates.

Other Torch of Peace faculty and staff winners are: Akinjle K. Umoja, associate professor of African-American Studies, the faculty advisor for the department’s student organization, Sankofa Society; and a board member of the Community Aid for Development, a nonprofit organization that sponsors programs aimed at developing African-American youth; and Leslie Gordon, director of the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts, who helped transformed the center with new and diverse programming.

Tribute to Ronald McNair kicks off Black History Month events

The Office of African-American Student Services and Programs will sponsor “A Tribute to Ronald E. McNair, Astronaut and American Hero,” as the university’s opening event for Black History Month. McNair was one of seven crew members who died in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle disaster.

The event, which is free and open to the public, begins at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 1 in the Student Center Speaker’s Auditorium. Seating will begin at 4:30 p.m.

The tribute will feature a panel discussion on McNair’s legacy and a video presentation on the astronaut’s life and contributions to the field. The event also will highlight the release of a biography on McNair, written by his brother Carl S. McNair, former assistant director of university career services at Georgia State. Carl McNair will sign books following the presentation. For more information, call 404/465-9000.

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Hosea Williams organization award recipient Rachael’s Daughters, Inc., founded by Georgia State alumna Shemeka Tinch, is an after-school program for young women ages 12–18 that tries to break the generational cycle of teen pregnancy and encourages girls to set meaningful goals for themselves. Since it began in 2003 at Atlanta Housing Authority’s Henry Grady Homes, Rachael’s Daughters has served more than 300 girls and chartered student-led organizations at Georgia State and Emory University.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Torch of Peace Award recognizes students, faculty, staff, alumni and student organizations that demonstrate outstanding abilities to promote positive intercultural relations in Georgia State’s community. The Hosea Williams Award for Community Activism honors an individual and an organization that demonstrates purposeful risk-taking for the betterment of the community, strong community activism, leadership skills and courage. Torch of Peace award recipients were selected by a committee of faculty, staff and students. Williams’ award winners were selected by a community member, as well as a faculty member, staff and students.

Kevin Powell discussed Martin Luther King Jr.’s life at convocation

Author and activist Kevin Powell gave the keynote speech at Georgia State’s 23rd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation, titled “Global Perspectives, Classrooms, Initiatives.” Jan. 19 at the Student Center Speaker’s Auditorium.

Powell, who also is a poet, music producer and hip hop historian, has lectured on multiculturalism, American and black American history, civil rights and leadership. He has written six books, including Who’s Gonna Take the Weight: Manhood, Race and Power in America, which was named a best seller in Essence magazine.

The ceremony, sponsored by the Office of Student Life and Leadership/Intercultural Relations, also featured a performance by singer Myrna Clayton and a poetry reading by local poet Khia Stone.

Nominations for Staff Council representatives open next month

Georgia State employees can nominate representatives for Staff Council from Feb. 1 through Feb. 14. The council is the staff representation in the University Senate, which also has student and faculty representation. Staff Council’s mission is to foster effective communication within the university community.

To be eligible for a Staff Council position, nominees must be full-time Georgia State employees for at least one year. Winners will be notified the first week in March. Staff representatives are elected for two-year terms.

The open representative seats and number available are: Arts and Sciences, 4; J. Mack Robinson College of Business, 1; College of Education, 3; College of Health and Human Sciences, 1; Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, 2; University Library, 1; President/Provost, 3; Information Systems and Technology, 2; Vice President for Student Services, 4; Vice President for Finance and Administration, 5; Vice President for Development, 1; Facilities Management Services (day), 2; Facilities Management Services (night), 3; and University Police, 2.

Staff Council meets at 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month. Meetings are open to all employees. For details, e-mail Debbie Rupp at drupp@gsu.edu.

Rec Center offers class for new moms

The Student Recreation Center recently began offering a Fit for 2 class, which focuses on safe exercises before, during and after pregnancy. The class also covers topics such as exercise modification, nutrition, flexibility and relaxation. Spring 2006 classes include: Why Get Fit, March 14; exercise session, March 16; Flexibility and Relaxation, March 21; and Sound Nutrition, March 28. The free classes are located in the Recreation Center and are open to members and non-members. Participants must register for the class by contacting Debbie Rupp at drupp@gsu.edu.

Economically speaking: U.S. Treasury Deputy Secretary Robert M. Kimmitt discussed the U.S. economy and the outlook for 2006 at a luncheon held by the J. Mack Robinson College of Business Jan. 6. Kimmitt also talked about how Americans can expect to change jobs several times during a career, which is evidence of “the dynamism of the economy,” he said.

Open for business: Ron Henry (left), Georgia State provost; J. Mack Robinson (center), College of Business namesake; and H. Fenwick Huss, College of Business dean, celebrated the grand opening of the Brookhaven Center Jan. 6. The center, which is the second Georgia State facility to be operated away from the downtown campus, began offering classes for the Robinson Flex MBA program this past fall.

Village