**Torch of Peace award winners honored at convocation**

By Elizabeth Klipp • eklipp@gsu.edu

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.” In recognition of efforts to create a healthy multicultural environment on campus and in the Atlanta community, Georgia State’s Office of Student Life and Leadership/Intercultural Relations bestowed the Torch of Peace award to several individuals during the King Convocation on Jan. 19.

An undergraduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences, Alice N. Barrett, was honored for her commitment to the betterment of immigrant communities through both scholarship and action. A graduate student in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Susan Manikowski, was recognized for her volunteer and paid work with three different community organizations, leadership in the department’s graduate student organization and work as a graduate assistant.

Faculty member Cynthia East, clinical assistant professor of social work in the College of Health and Human Sciences, was honored for her commitment to social justice and diversity. Staff member Frances Williams-Simmons in the College of Education received the award for her community service; providing ministry for people in need, feeding the homeless and volunteering to help those with disabilities.

The student organization recognized was the Golden Key International Honour Society in the Division of Student Affairs. The alumni award was given to the first African-American female Honorary Consul for the Embassy of the Republic of Liberia, Cynthia Blandford Nash.

The Hosea Williams Award for Community Activism was presented to community activist Brenda Jackson and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., MECCA Chapter for the promotion of human rights.

**GSU’s final winter homecoming**

Experience the “Elements of Blue”

By Elizabeth Klipp • eklipp@gsu.edu

Georgia State will conclude its wintry homecoming for the last time this month, before transitioning to festivities centered around football in the fall.

Homecoming 2010 includes events for students, faculty, staff members, alumni and community supporters during the day and at night.

The theme, “Elements of Blue,” highlights the different aspects of the university that work together to make Georgia State a vibrant institution, said Carole Golder, Homecoming Committee 2010 chair.

The homecoming basketball game is set for 6 p.m. on Feb. 6 as the men’s team takes on William & Mary. Georgia State students get in free with a Panther ID, and the first 1,000 fans receive a free t-shirt. Everyone is invited to get ready for the big game beforehand at the Homecoming Tailgate Extravaganza from 3:30 to 5:45 p.m. in the Urban Life Plaza. The women’s team takes on William & Mary the following day at 1 p.m. in the Sports Arena.

From 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 6 in the Urban Life Building’s West Exhibit area, Georgia State’s Alumni Association also will be holding its Annual Homecoming Celebration.

“Homecoming is an important time in the life of a Panther,” said Greg Abt, president of the Student Government Association. “Homecoming is a great chance to come together and celebrate the things that make this university great.”

Come meet next year’s football coaches and head coach Bill Curry talk about the prospects being signed to the Panthers during the Signing Day event at 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 3 in the Student Center Ballroom.

Homecoming Week will also include the annual Golf Cart Parade, which starts at 12:15 p.m. on Feb. 2 at the corner of Piedmont Avenue and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue. The Homecoming Carnival is scheduled for 3:30 to 5:45 p.m. on Feb. 3 in Hurt Park, Unity Plaza and Gilmer Street with free food, music, carnival booth, games and other activities.

For more information, visit www.gsu.edu/homecoming or call 404-413-1610.

**What is an ombudsperson?**

In any large institution, conflicts and misunderstandings arise. The Ombuds Office is a safe place where anyone at any level within the university can discuss their concerns confidentially and get assistance in finding resolution. I work with students and staff to resolve conflict on campus, and Valerie Fennell handles faculty conflicts.

**What are the typical concerns you deal with?**

Typical concerns include interpersonal conflicts, which are conflicts between an employee and their manager or between two or more employees. People discuss fear of retaliation, policy or procedural issues, conflicts within or between departments and ask questions about complaints and appeals. I also see a lot of student-and-student conflict and student-and-faculty conflict, such as students who are unhappy with the grading process.

**What are the mediation and informal processes like?**

The entire process is confidential. We do not report your visit, your identity or any other information you bring to us. Individuals make an appointment to come in, we do an intake process and then I meet with them one-on-one. From there, a number of things can happen. I can refer them to other appropriate resources. I could schedule mediation between them and the party they are having conflict with. I could do coaching with them because sometimes they don’t want the person to know they’ve approached us and want to resolve it on their own.

**What other services are offered by the Ombuds Office?**

We offer education and training. For 2010 and 2011, we’re going to schedule brown bag workshops focusing on conflict prevention. We hope to start these workshops in March. They will give people tools and strategies to handle conflict before it escalates, including how to manage their own response to conflict. We also act as consultants to chairs, managers and administrators to assist them in responding appropriately to complaints, informally resolving disputes and creating strategies to improve employee and student morale.

**Is conflict unavoidable?**

Conflict is a fact of life. It will happen. These problems can create stress, decrease productivity and interfere with the growth and success of the organization and the people within it. It’s very important for people to understand why conflict exists and to have tools to deal with it before it gets to the point where the relationship, whether work or personal, is damaged.
Getting kids on the move
By Jeremy Craig • jcraig@gsu.edu

America is facing a health crisis among its youth—a preventable crisis that could portend a future of diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure and heart problems for many. Policies on multiple fronts are needed, and that’s where assistant professor of public health Rodney Lyn and the Policy Leadership for Active Youth (PLAY) come in.

“We really have a crisis on our hands if we think about the health and economic burdens that this will place on the health care system down the road,” Lyn said. “It’s a big, complex problem, and there’s no one silver-bullet solution here.”

Over the past 20 years, the rate of obesity among children ages 6 to 11 has more than doubled, from 6.5 percent in 1980 to 17 percent in 2006. But addressing individual behavior alone won’t do the job in combating this problem, Lyn said.

Headquartered at Georgia State, PLAY is aimed at examining positive policies to address obesity across schools, communities and health settings—from serving nutritious foods, to providing opportunities for more physical activity.

Lyn says that parents must be equipped with knowledge about nutritious foods and decrease the amount of time their children spend in front of the TV or video game console.

Another prong of the fight is in schools. Bringing P.E. classes back is a start, Lyn says, and school leaders can also open up gyms and other facilities after school so kids can play. Schools can also change the items in the vending machines or ditch them entirely.

At the community level, environment plays a huge role. The majority of suburban spaces aren’t designed with walking in mind.

Lyn has completed an evaluation of school districts in Georgia to analyze government-mandated school wellness policies, in which he evaluated their strengths and weaknesses in creating a healthy environment for children.

Federal grant helps to further research projects on West Nile virus
Differences in susceptibility and severity are studied
By Jeremy Craig • jcraig@gsu.edu

Regents’ Professor of biology Margo Brinton recently received a $289,000 federal stimulus grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue her research on West Nile virus, which is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes.

In most infected people West Nile virus causes either a mild illness characterized by short-term flu-like symptoms or no symptoms at all. But for some, infection results in severe illness, with the possibility of permanent neurological effects or death, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Specifically, this grant will focus on studies aimed at understanding how West Nile virus manipulates and commandeers cell proteins and processes to enhance its own replication.

“By gaining a detailed understanding of these complicated interactions, we’re defining new targets for the development of antiviral therapies, and we’re also learning more about cell functions,” Brinton said.

Another project in Brinton’s lab is focused on understanding why a small number of people infected with West Nile virus become extremely ill, even though they have normal responses to infections with other types of viruses. This work may lead to the development of a way to identify individuals who are highly susceptible to West Nile virus. They would be good candidates for vaccination with a “killed” vaccine but not a “live” one for this virus.

The idea that genetic factors could control the severity of West Nile symptoms in individual humans is based in part on work done by Brinton’s lab on mice. In mice, a single, dominant gene determines whether a mouse lives or dies after a West Nile infection.

Although the general location of this gene in the mouse DNA genome had been determined, the identity of the gene was not known until 2002, when Brinton’s lab compared a region of 650,000 DNA base pairs in resistant and susceptible mice and found the single change between them that made the difference.
Two Staff Council elections to be held this month
► Georgia State University’s Staff Council will be holding two elections in February – for University senators and for next year’s Staff Council representatives.

Within the University Senate, the campuswide body that votes on issues of general educational policy, 10 positions are available for staff members. These positions provide a vital way for staff to make sure their concerns are taken to the university level.

Staff senators are elected by the Staff Council, an advisory body to the university president that acts on behalf of staff members. You do not need to be a Staff Council member to run. All staff senators are automatically Staff Council members and report to Staff Council meetings.

Interested parties are invited to submit applications to staffcouncil@gsu.edu by Jan. 29. To download an application, visit http://www.cas.gsu.edu/docs/staffsenateapp2010.doc. The election will take place at the Staff Council meeting on Feb. 17.

The Staff Council also will be holding its annual election soon. Employees will be invited to nominate and vote for staff members in their respective areas to serve on the council. For more information, please contact Ann Claycombe, the council’s staff relations director, at claycombe@gsu.edu.

Georgia State accepts first-ever early admission class
► In a sign that the institution is becoming more competitive, Georgia State University accepted the first time for an early admission class for fall 2010.

The 1,307 undergraduates had an average high school grade-point average of 3.51 and an average SAT score of 1,167.

“Georgia State is a first choice of an increasing number of students in Georgia,” said Timothy Runzlik, GSU’s associate provost for academic programs. “This is a way of accommodating their interests and letting them know they have a seat and we want them to come here.”

The early admits have until April to confirm they are coming to GSU. Of the 1,307 students, 166 were made initial scholarship offers in December – another first for the university. These students had GPAs of 3.85 and SAT scores of 1,332.

GSU also is setting records for enrollment for spring 2010. More than 29,000 students have registered for more than 350,000 credit hours, an increase of about 8 percent over last spring. And with almost 1,900 incoming students, Georgia State hit an all-time high for the number of new students admitted for spring semester.

Becker battles for childhood literacy
► President Mark Becker recently joined other top educators and executives in participating in the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy’s “CEO Battle,” a friendly competition to raise money for the organization. Becker was recently filmed reading a favorite childhood book to raise money in GSU’s Childhood Development Center. Other college presidents and CEOs also were filmed reading favorite books to kids. You can vote for Becker’s video at www.firstfoundation.org during the week of Feb. 1-8 by making a donation for his video (the minimum donation is $3).

The Ferst Foundation provides books for local communities to prepare Georgia preschool children for reading and learning success.

Neurological and sleep impairment expert named nursing endowed chair
► The College of Health and Human Sciences at Georgia State University has established the Byrdine F. Lewis Endowed Chair of Nursing in the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and appointed Michael J. Deckrer as the first chair holder.

The Byrdine F. Lewis Endowed Chair was established to promote scholarly work, research, publication, and excellence in teaching. The endowed chair fosters learning to enhance the delivery of excellent nursing care.

Deckrer, associate professor of nursing, joins the faculty from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prior to his employment at the CDC, Deckrer was an assistant professor of neurology at the Emory University School of Medicine and held a secondary appointment in the Neil Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing.

Strategic planning update
► The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) recently elected Paul Alberto of the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education and Pamela Barr of Managerial Sciences as co-chairs to provide faculty leadership of university strategic planning in 2010.

The university community will be engaging in a broadly participatory process to develop a comprehensive university strategic plan with one-, five- and 10-year goals and with programmatic emphases for the university for the next 20 years and beyond.

On Jan. 11, the SPC and the Administrative Council met with Maury Cotter, director of the Office of Quality Improvement of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and David Ward, chancellor emeritus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and retired president of the American Council on Education (ACE), to tap their expert advice on strategic planning in a research university setting. On Jan. 21, President Mark Becker, Provost, Risa Palm and the SPC traveled to Arizona State University to see first-hand the transformational impacts of strategic planning and to learn about the planning processes employed there.

An evening with the work of Mauricio Kagel
► Georgia State University’s Center for International and Collaborative Arts (CENCIA) and the Alumni Association present “Mauricio Kagel: Film Music, Music Performance, Performance Film” at 8 p.m. on Feb. 12 at the Florence Kopleff Recital Hall. The event is free and open to the public.

A German-Argentine composer and filmmaker, Kagel who died in 2008, was notable for developing the theatrical side of musical performance. He produced more than 170 scores and 19 films over a 50-year career.

Many of his pieces give specific theatrical instructions to performers; such as to adopt certain facial expressions while playing to make stage entrances in a particular way or to physically interact with other performers. Some have compared his work to the “Theatre of the Absurd.”

Bert Frequent Contemporaries Music Ensemble will collaborate with the film company “Frequent Small Meals” to present the program of Kagel’s short films and music. A reception will be held beforehand at 6:30 p.m. in the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery.

University Voices

Reflections on Black History Month – are we there yet?
By David Smith • dsmith@gsu.edu

We do you celebrate Black History Month? The education of Americans concerning the historical journey of the African-American race in America is an ongoing effort. People from every occupation, day by day and year by year, strive to educate the public on the contributions black people in America have made toward the prosperity of this nation. Often, Black History Month brings all of these individual and group efforts into the spotlight. A month, by any measure, is not long enough to celebrate the historical achievements of any race of people – but it is a start. In order to truly understand each other, we must truly know about the historical journey our ancestors have made on our behalf.

The Office of African American Student Services and Programs (OAASSP), led by its founding director, Doris A. Derby, a renowned civil rights pioneer of the modern Civil Rights Movement, has coordinated a universitywide Black History Month Committee to share and implement creative ideas for celebrating Black History Month on campus.

An online calendar (www.gsu.edu/oassp) lists the numerous events that are planned for our campus community including nationally known speakers, photography exhibits including Derby’s Civil Rights-era photography, with the theme of the black arts movement and the struggle for civil rights, dialogues and much, much more. Please engage this year in a meaningful way with Black History Month!

No one else has this kind of success, not even mutual fund or hedge fund managers.
Alan Zindrovizki, associate professor of real estate, to The Washington Post on ethics concerns of stock ownership in Congress.

“It’s going to be an important time to have some people with financial acumen.”
Harvey Newman, professor of public management and policy and chair of the Department ofPublic Management and Policy to the AJC regarding the new Atlanta council members.

This is not the spark. This is not the solution to the long-term unemployment problem.
Rajeev Dhawan, director of the Economic Forecasting Center to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on how the green energy stimulus is growing fewer jobs than expected.

GSU in the news

David Smith Jr. is assistant director in the Office of African American Student Services and Programs.
E mmet G. Welch, Georgia State University’s oldest alumnus and namesake of the School of Art and Design, died Dec. 26 at the age of 103.

A prominent businessmen for most of his life, Welch chose to reinvent himself in his late 80s, enrolling at Georgia State to study photography, rather than retiring. He taught himself to use the computer in his early 90s and earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1999 at 93 years old. At 92, he was working on digital photography with platinum palladium prints as his specialty.

For four years he stopped, faculty and staff alike to be open to new experiences and new ventures no matter how old you are,” said Cheryl Goldsleger, academic director of the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design. “He had been a successful businessman for most of his life and yet here he was starting down a whole new path with the same excitement as any other freshman.”

Also, Byrdie F. Lewis, for whom the Byrdie F. Lewis School of Nursing is named died Jan. 5 at the age of 85.

The school was named in honor of Lewis, the mother of Kenneth D. Lewis, in 2003. He contributed $2.5 million to the School of Nursing and the university as a way to honor his mother’s 46 years as a bedside registered nurse.

“Her dedication to the nursing profession was so noteworthy,” said Barbara Woodring, director of the school. “Even after being given the opportunity to rise into management roles, she elected to return to bedside patient care. We at the Byrdie F. Lewis School of Nursing will continue her tradition of caring by preparing excellent nurses, practitioners, educators and researchers.”

Namesakes of two GSU schools remembered

The Andrew Young School of Policy Studies’ Georgia Health Policy Center received a grant of $30,207 to provide technical assistance and consultation for SharedCare Inc., in Myrtle Beach, S.C.


Roy Bahl, Regents’ Professor of economics, presented a paper titled “Fiscal Decentralization and Tax Assignment,” at a conference in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.


Richard Baskerville, Mark Keil, Arun Rai, Daniel Robey and Dtemar Straub, professors of computer information systems (CIS), and Michael Gallivan, assistant professor of CIS in the Robinson College of Business, were listed among the top 30 IS researchers in the world in a recent paper published by the Association for Information Systems. No other university had more than one researcher on this prestigious list.

President Mark Becker was honored as a Penn State Eberly College of Science Outstanding Science Alumni award winner for the year 2009. The award, established in 1997 by the Board of Directors of the Eberly College of Science Alumni Society, recognizes alumni who have a record of significant professional achievements in their field and who are outstanding role models for current students in the college.

Raheem Beyah, assistant professor of computer science, was recently selected as a minority in Research Science Trailblazer at the 24th annual REYS Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Global Competitiveness Conference.

William R. Feldhaus, associate professor of risk management and insurance, received the Professional Liability Underwriting Society’s. Founders Award in recognition of his lasting and outstanding contributions.

Gwen Prishkoff, assistant professor of psychology is the principal investigator of a new subcontract for the NIH grant “ERP and behavioral studies of word-to-text integration and word learning.” The multi-university research grant is based at the University of Pittsburgh, with about $75,000 awarded for research at Georgia State on brain and behavior markers of word knowledge and comprehension in healthy adults and children.

W. Bartley Hildreth, dean of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, and professor of public management and policy, was appointed to the finance committee of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

Hildreth also recently co-authored “Mapping a Field’s Development: 20 Years of ABFM Conferences,” in Public Budgeting & Finance.


Peter Lyons, associate professor of social work, is co-author of a new book called “The Dissertation from Beginning to End,” published by Oxford University Press.

Lisa Martin-Hansen, associate professor of science education, recently published a paper titled “Inquiry Pedagogy and the Pre-Service Science Teacher,” with Cambria Press.

David L. Spigset, director of the Fiscal Research Center, recently presented “Possible Options for Tax Reform” to the Georgia Chamber of Commerce’s Tax Seminar.

J. Todd Swarouth, research assistant professor of economics, recently co-authored an article, “Procurement Auctions for Diversified Goods,” in Decision Analysis.


Roger Wee, professor and coordinator of the graduate rehabilitation counseling program in the College of Education, received his third lifetime achievement award, spanning his 40-year career. He was honored at the annual Professional Association on Rehabilitation Specialists of Georgia statewide conference in November.


Karen Zabrucky, professor of educational psychology and special education, joined the editorial board of The International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education. Zabrucky is one of five editorial board members from the U.S., with remaining board members from Turkey, Norway, Australia, Belgium, Portugal, Canada, Israel, Slovakia, Nigeria and New Zealand.

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