

THE

# Capstone

The Renée Crown University Honors Program  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2008



# THE Capstone

## FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Samuel Gorovitz

## EDITOR

Eric Holzwarth

## WRITERS

Samuel Gorovitz

Eric Holzwarth

Chris Kyle

Carolyn Ostrander

Grant Reeher

Hanna Richardson

Steven H. Wright

## DESIGN

GiansantiDesign

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Bachrach, Rebecca Bolte, Donna DiDomenico, Michael Hall, MSNBC, Smita Rane, Steve Sartori and Colin Todd with the SU Photo and Imaging Center, Chuck Wainwright, Eric Weiss, Stephen Wright, and various Honors students

## SEND ADDRESS CORRECTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

*The Capstone* Editor  
Renée Crown University Honors Program  
306 Bowne Hall  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, NY 13244-1200

(TEL) 315/443-2759

(FAX) 315/443-3235

(E-MAIL) [honors@syr.edu](mailto:honors@syr.edu)  
[honors.syr.edu](http://honors.syr.edu)

Welcome to *The Capstone*, a new publication from the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University. The title connotes a culminating achievement, marking the successful completion of a process of design and implementation. Honors provides such a “capstone” to each student’s entire undergraduate education, just as the required Honors Capstone Project completes the major powerfully. “Capstone” also acknowledges the Syracuse Latin motto: *suos cultores scientia coronat*: “knowledge crowns those who seek her.”

In this first issue, we provide an overview of who we are and what we do, review our long legacy of excellence in learning, highlight some of our current students and our alumni, and express appreciation to many of those who have helped us in various important ways. We especially affirm our enduring appreciation to the family of Renée Crown for its tribute to her in establishing and then enhancing the endowment that gives our Program its name and supports the remarkable work of our students.

Our Program has a heritage decades old, yet is new and imaginative. Its enduring tradition is that of nurturing admirable qualities of mind and heart by investing care and attention in each student, while holding them to high expectations of accomplishment. Its pioneering reconception is based on asking not what we want students to do here, but what attributes we want them to have as they finish their time with us.

Our students come from every undergraduate school and college at Syracuse, each pursuing one or more majors and adding the enrichment of active participation in the Honors Program for all or most of their time at Syracuse. Their dynamism is astonishing: they are on competitive athletic teams, play in the marching band, appear in dramatic productions, work in the community, hold jobs, start new organizations, and more. No two are alike—and yet they share a joy in what they learn from one another. Close collaboration across different fields and perspectives is central to their experience here. To an impressive degree, they view their time as precious; they do not waste it. They care about others, aim high, and provide grounds for optimism even in these challenging times.

We welcome your reactions to what you read and see here and your suggestions for the future. Conversation is at the heart of what we do in the Honors Program. Please let us hear from you. (Write to *The Capstone*, Renée Crown University Honors Program, 306 Bowne Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY 13244, or email: [honors@syr.edu](mailto:honors@syr.edu).)

**Samuel Gorovitz**  
FOUNDING DIRECTOR



## Honors Today 2

Who we are and what we do.

## Attributes of an Honors Student 4

What makes an Honors student?

## Honors Courses 10

Small classes, innovative teaching, interdisciplinary perspectives.

## The Honors Tradition 12

The Program's enduring lineage.

## Honors Faculty 14

Teaching and learning together.



### CREATING THE HONORS COMMUNITY

**Common Ground 16**

**Commemorating a Bond 17**

**Some Recent Accomplishments 18**

**Unique Opportunities Outside the Classroom 20**



### HONORS ALUMNI TODAY

**An Honors Education at Work in the World 22**

### HONORS & THE ARTS

**Fostering Respect for the Arts 26**

### NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS


**Building on Past Success 27**

### SUPPORTING THE HONORS COMMUNITY

**Reasons to Applaud 28**



# Honors Today

A photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue sleeveless top and light-colored pants, sitting on a set of wide stone steps. She is leaning forward, reading a book. A black bag is on the step next to her. The background shows a brick wall and green foliage.

A unique approach  
to helping students  
achieve more than  
they thought possible

## Embracing Excellence

Intellectual curiosity is a hallmark of the Honors Program. Our nearly 750 students come from every undergraduate school and college at the University—seeking heightened expectations; participation in a vibrant and active community of learners; intensity of intellectual experience; and special intellectual opportunities and responsibilities.

“The students in this Program work with blazing intensity toward becoming the best they can be,” says Samuel Gorovitz, professor of philosophy and founding director of the Renée Crown University Honors Program. “And to the best of our ability, we provide inspiration, nurturance, and support. The gratification of seeing what they achieve and what they become is inexpressible.”

An honors program has been part of Syracuse University since 1963 (*see p. 12*). In 2002, the Program was re-named in honor of Renée Schine Crown '50, a distinguished alumna.

Admission is limited to around five percent of the undergraduate population. A select group of incoming first-year students is invited to join the Program each year; others may be invited during their first year or apply for admission.

## The Honors Curriculum

When the Program was re-conceptualized in 2002, the faculty committee charged by Arts and Sciences Dean Cathryn Newton with its restructuring began not by asking “what should Honors students be required to do?” but rather “what kind of people do we want Honors students to be as alumni?”

The committee selected six attributes that should describe the Honors student at Syracuse. The Program is structured around them:

- Academic Depth
- Academic Breadth
- Global Awareness
- Command of Language
- Collaborative Capacity
- Commitment to Civic Engagement

Each student demonstrates these attributes in ways that suit their individual curricular needs and interests; no two students do it exactly the same way. With the help of dedicated Honors Program staff (including three full-time professional advisors), students chart their own paths through the Program, demonstrating the attributes through various courses and experiences, within the Honors Program and beyond it, on campus and off. More about each attribute appears in the following pages.



Honors is an enrichment program. Each student also completes a major in one of SU's nine undergraduate schools or colleges; indeed, many Honors students complete two or three majors, or a combination of majors and minors. Students begin with an Honors seminar in their first semester of the Program. They also choose from a set of innovative and often interdisciplinary Honors courses from a wide range of academic areas. Some courses incorporate travel during the semester or spring breaks or are linked to distinguished visiting speakers.

Honors encourages students to learn in imaginative ways. For example, a student might deepen global awareness by a sustained experience abroad in a resource poor country or in a refugee community within the United States. Students might assist in voter registration or help build houses for the homeless. To facilitate their research projects, they may need financial support for materials, equipment, or travel to remote sites, and the Honors Program awards Crown Scholarships and Wise-Marcus Fifty-Year Friendship Awards to outstanding juniors and seniors for such purposes. The Program also mentors students regarding graduate programs, prestigious post-graduate scholarships and fellowships, and career development.

"The Honors Program is what you make of it," says illustration major Sarah Silkwood. "They have all of these wonderful opportunities and it is up to the student to make the most of them."

The home base for these activities is a comfortable suite in Bowne Hall, designed to encourage interaction among students.

Even the original art that adorns the suite was selected for its educational value. Students have their own lounge and computer cluster, and are given their own keys so they will have access after business hours.

### The Honors Student Association

Special academic and social opportunities are central to the Honors experience. The Honors Student Association describes itself as "a vibrant community of learners dedicated to fostering academic, personal, and social growth while serving each other, the Syracuse University Community, and the greater Syracuse area." They organize mentoring and tutoring at local schools, roundtable discussions with faculty members, trips to the theater and the symphony, social activities with Honors and non-Honors students, and more. It is entirely student run. 🏠



# ATTRIBUTES OF AN HONORS STUDENT

Each Honors student demonstrates these important attributes, often in unusual ways. Originality, rigor, and flexibility are essential to the process.



## GLOBAL AWARENESS

Seeing the world's connections



Honors students Colin Fanning and Megan Dobbertin spent the Spring 2008 semester abroad. Here, they and Kathleen Wrinn visit with Big Ben in London.

**H**onors students must demonstrate global awareness, including a non-Eurocentric focus. Typically, they take at least one relevant course, and have one international experience. These experiences often entail study abroad for as little as a week or as much as a year; they can also take place on campus or elsewhere in the U.S. For example, students may participate in Hendricks Chapel's "International Young Scholars" program, which pairs SU students as mentors with refugee secondary school students. Others might take a seminar on "Refugee Communities in Syracuse," or participate in the semester-long "Maxwell in Washington Undergraduate Semester" where they take courses and have significant internships concerned with global issues.

Ideally, students find a way to spend at least some time abroad, but that's not always possible. Matthew Mockaitis, a senior in civil engineering, did it by taking an interdisciplinary course, ECS 400/FIA 441 Leonardo DaVinci, Artist/Engineer, co-taught by art historian Gary Radke and civil engineer Samuel Clemence, including a one-week trip to Italy during Spring Break. It was his first trip outside the US or Canada.

After climbing to the top of Brunelleschi's Duomo in Florence, Mockaitis wrote: "The adventure to the top of the Duomo has been one of the most remarkable things I have ever done. As we climbed higher and higher I was more and more impressed by the ingeniousness of Brunelleschi's design. Once we reached the summit I couldn't stop smiling. I was so happy and excited to be on top of one of the most beautiful engineering feats in the world and overlooking some of the most beautiful landscapes I had ever seen. The top of the Duomo is an experience in itself, and to see the far mountains that encircle the ongoing terracotta rooftops is something I will never forget. I spent as much time as possible up there; I could think clearly about what's important and I forgot about any of my worries or problems. In that particular space I was unbelievably happy."

When Kathleen Wrinn left for her Spring 2008 semester in London, her intentions were "...to tap into my more easy-going side this semester and just see where my travels take me. I hope to acquire an even more open mind and hopefully be shocked once or twice (or ten times) by things I did not expect to learn." She climbed cliffs in Dorset, danced to Mozart in the streets of the Czech Republic, visited Shakespeare's grave, and



Denis Iserovich and Matthew Mockaitis in Florence, Italy, with Brunelleschi's Duomo in the background.

survived by herself in Paris. She saw 26 shows in London, including Vanessa Redgrave's one-woman show *The Year of Magical Thinking*, which received a rare English standing ovation. "I was so happy for her in that moment and—as strange as it may sound coming from so young an actor—very proud of her."

Reflecting further, Wrinn wrote, "It is truly a privilege for a young actor to be able to study in that city, riddled with artistic talent, and I have come back with such a great appreciation for my craft and for the people, like Vanessa Redgrave, who do it so well. Theatre has the potential to affect people so deeply, no matter if they are native Londoners or tourist kids studying abroad for a couple of months, and I was irrevocably changed for the better by my theatrical experiences abroad."

Tom Stewart, a senior biology student, spent the fall semester of his junior year studying tropical ecology in Costa Rica, with side trips to Nicaragua, Panama, and Ecuador. The program included identification of local flora and fauna with lessons that integrated concepts of ecological theory and factors such as the local economy and the region's cultural and political history. Field time was incorporated into both the hard science and the human dimensions of the experience, giving students the opportunity to participate in field research and meet local farmers and historians. After negotiating mind-numbing rain at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, a swarm of killer bees in Palo Verde, and long periods away from the internet, he caught a disturbing glimpse of overfishing in Ecuador: from one vessel alone, he saw 23 albacore tuna, 5 swordfish, and 18 sharks lined up on the beach. As he prepared to leave, four more boats pulled in, ready to unload.

On his return, Stewart reflected: "Life was simpler during those five months with my belongings fitting into two bags. Back on campus, with my things filling the back of my car, I was embarrassed by how much stuff I was carrying. Consumption here is much more shocking to me than ever before." >

"...the courses I took for this requirement were some of the most influential, compelling courses I've taken in my college career."

FROM ALUMNI SURVEY

## command of language

**ALL HONORS STUDENTS** must be able to communicate effectively about their interests and fields of study to diverse audiences unfamiliar with the topics involved, both through public presentations and written texts. They must be astute critics of arguments and information. They must have accomplishment in quantitative analysis or creative expression, and preferably both. After all, even the most powerful ideas have no impact unless they are expressed effectively to someone, somewhere, through print, images, music, or some other form of representation.

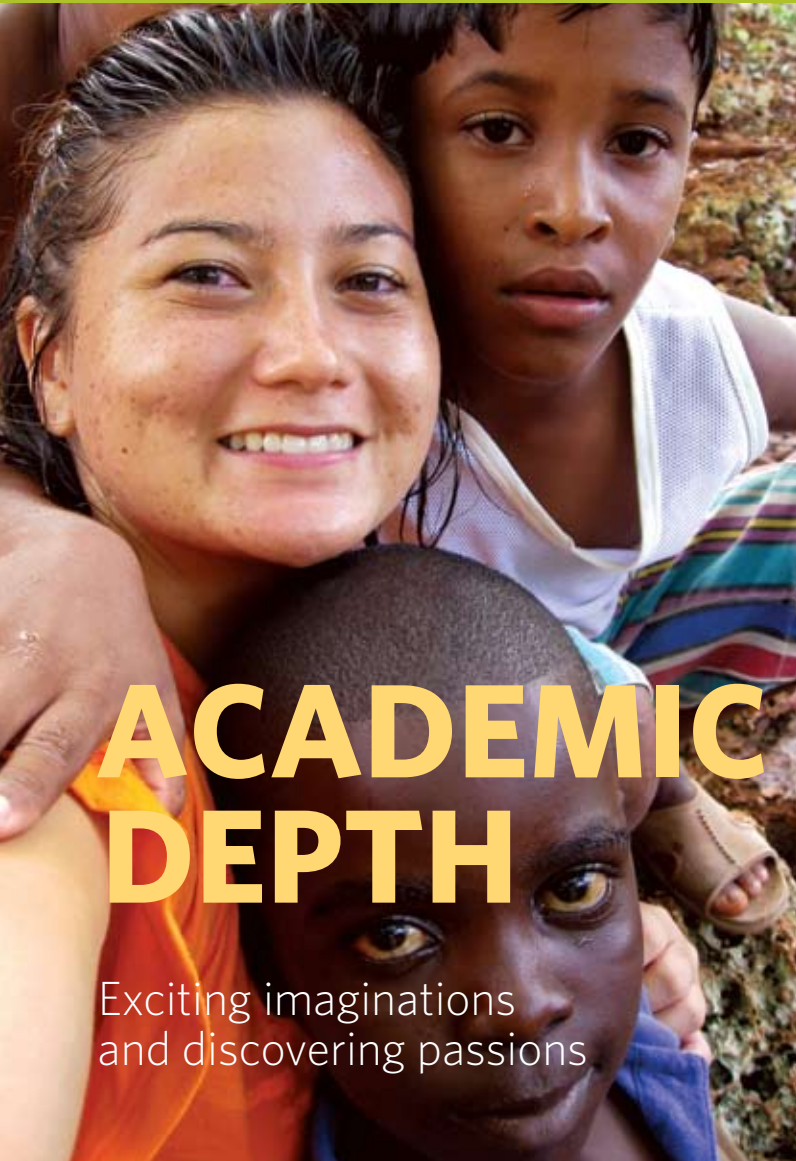
The Capstone Project is a sophisticated work that communicates to a specific audience, often consisting of professionals or advanced students in that field, whether biochemistry, theater set design or some other domain. To ensure that our students can communicate effectively with a wider audience, Honors requires that each Capstone Project be accompanied by a summary of the project written for a general audience.

Students must also communicate their ideas to a live, non-specialist audience on Capstone Presentation Day. Many students complete a course with a substantial public presentation requirement—a course in public advocacy, broadcasting, or acting, for example. Other students participate in co-curricular activities such as Mock Trial or the Debate Club.

In all cases, the goal is to become articulate advocates for their ideas, interests, and values.

"My study abroad and Washington programs were fantastic. I learned a language, cultures, foreign politics and philosophy, etc. I really feel like I better understand the world and myself because of study abroad. I am much more of a global citizen."

FROM ALUMNI SURVEY



# ACADEMIC DEPTH

Exciting imaginations and discovering passions

Sofia Pablo-Hoshino's Capstone Project is on *Ethnomathematics in the Dominican Republic*; here she takes a swimming break with her students.

Every fall, Honors Deputy Director Eric Holzwarth asks Honors juniors “if you could spend two years studying, designing, creating, building, learning anything you want, and had the resources of a major research university to help you, what would it be?” He watches the faces start to light up with possibilities. “That’s the Honors Capstone Project,” he says, “and you are mentored by a faculty member who will inspire and guide you.”

This is how Honors launches students on the project, a major undertaking that fulfills the “depth” requirement. Students work on a topic that they care deeply about and that they select (although science students’ choices may be more constrained); they are mentored by a faculty member they ask to help them, and create a project that serves as the “capstone” of their major: the final element that makes a whole of their undergraduate career. For many it also marks the beginning of a serious research or professional trajectory.

“We start by exciting their imaginations,” says Holzwarth. “The best projects are those for which students set wonderfully high goals. Then the faculty advisors challenge, encourage, and support students in reaching them.” Time after time, students achieve more than they ever thought they could.

The project typically takes four semesters to complete. Capstones come in many varieties: screenplays, performances, written theses, films, engineering projects, paintings, and more. Students acknowledge that it’s intensely hard work, and they also say it is among the most rewarding aspects of their college experience.

Suzanne Vroman, a junior biochemistry and history major from Windsor, New York, says the Honors Program has had a huge impact on her academic path, as it challenged her to venture outside of her comfort zone. “I came in with plans of only majoring in biochemistry, but I ended up taking an Honors course on the history of medicinal plants and realized there were some aspects of history that I found really interesting,” she says. “As a result, I ended up taking more courses in the history department and eventually decided to make history my second major.”

Vroman is focusing her Capstone Project on the 1918 influenza pandemic, and exploring it from both a historic and scientific perspective. “With the current threat of an avian influenza pandemic, it is really important to understand how the 1918 pandemic



“Completing my Capstone was the most rewarding thing I have ever done academically...I have incredible knowledge of my subject... a great relationship with my advisor, and a document I am so proud to have written.”

FROM ALUMNI SURVEY





“Every day I wake up and want to work more on my already completed project. If that says [anything] at all, it whispers how proud I am about what I have completed and the potential heights I can possibly take it to from here. I needed the push.”

FROM ALUMNI SURVEY

affected us as a nation socially, and scientifically to understand what mechanisms contributed to the virulence of the virus.” With support from the Honors Program, Vroman spent summer 2007 and the summer and fall semesters of 2008 engaged in scientific research on a strain of the actual 1918 influenza virus with Professor Michael Katze at the University of Washington. The experiences that Vroman has had with this project have helped her discover her passion for public health and preventative medicine, and she plans to pursue a Ph.D. or M.D. in infectious disease and epidemiology after graduation.

Shannon Kane, from Saylorsburg, PA, majored in music education in the College of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Education. She staged a concert in March 2008 on the SU campus as part of her Capstone Project. Entitled “Tradition and Innovation: The Music of Women Composers,” the concert was a live performance of works by women composers that Kane documented in a 45-page paper exploring how women composers were affected by societal expectations.

Kane and Vroman both received competitive Crown Scholar grants to support their work.

“This project was a lot of work, but it was worth it,” says Kane. “The Honors Program gave me the support I needed to pursue my interests independently. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do a project this huge and do a really good job. I have learned so much, and yes, I would do it again.”

Honors grants approximately 25 Crown and Wise Marcus Awards each year to support Capstone Projects. Individual awards range from a few hundred dollars to \$5,000. Honors has funded research travel to the Library of Congress, South Asia, Europe, the Caribbean and many other places; purchased scientific equipment and software; rented rare musical instruments; provided video cameras, voice recorders and computer drawing tablets, and in various other ways supported the imaginative and ambitious projects of our students. ➤



## breadth

**HONORS REQUIRES** that students also demonstrate intellectual breadth in various ways, including taking Honors courses from at least two academic divisions. We encourage students to be curious about all aspects of the world, to become as generally knowledgeable as they can, and to study questions and problems from multiple, interconnected perspectives. Students all take at least one interdisciplinary course that deeply engages at least two distinct academic or professional disciplines in an integrated way.



# COMMITMENT TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Learning through engagement with the public

“AP World History is the first Advanced Placement course that Nottingham students can take...Every time I sat down with a student, I knew our session wasn’t just about history, it was about that young person’s future.”

TOM HACKMAN '07

Honors students typically have an enduring and inherent commitment to civic engagement. It is an aspect of their character—a recognition that the pursuit of purposes larger than their personal agendas gives greater meaning and value to the goals they pursue. The motivation comes from within because it is part of who they are, and it will persist when they are alumni. The primary role the Program plays is to help them identify opportunities for civic engagement, facilitate their connection with those opportunities, and encourage them to learn as much as possible from the experiences—both when all goes well and, as often happens, when they encounter unexpected complexities and frustrations. In doing so, Honors collaborates with the Center for Public and Community Service (CPCS), the Policy Studies Department, Hendricks Chapel, the Center for Career Services, colleagues at SUNY Upstate Medical University, and countless other agencies and individuals. The Honors Program applauded the arrival of Chancellor Nancy Cantor, whose emphasis on civic engagement under the rubric of Scholarship in Action has reinforced this core value of the Honors Program. Shown above, Honors welcomes Hughes Elementary School students for tutoring and mentoring—an ongoing project run through the Honors Student Association.

The AP World History Mentoring Program at Nottingham High School pairs Honors students with tenth graders at Nottingham to help those students succeed in the course and on the Advanced Placement exam in May. The impetus for this program came in 2006 when the Syracuse School District contacted the Honors Program about exploring ways to help promising students become successful in college-level classes, with the goal of encouraging them to attend college.



Left, the Honors Student Association donates \$1500 dollars, raised at their 2007 Gala, to the Golisano Children's Hospital.

Below, a collaborative project with Open Hand Theater.



“My work at the Temple Society of Concord Food pantry has been a great experience. It’s wonderful to engage the Syracuse community and help so many people. And it’s important that students work with the surrounding community and see what a difference their actions make.”

EMILY FRIEDMAN '10

### The Food Pantry at Temple Concord

Honors students’ involvement at the Food Pantry at Temple Concord followed the initiative of Emily Friedman, a junior in Arts and Sciences. In Fall 2007, Emily sought to start a program connected with the Hunger Project of Syracuse. That inquiry led, via the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service, to the Food Pantry at Temple Concord, part of the greater Food Bank of Central New York. Steve Wright and Emily then worked with the Weisses, a retired couple who manage the Food Pantry. During the holiday season in late 2007, Emily worked there every week, stocking shelves, doing inventory and staffing the store. In the spring semester, at an Honors Student Association (HSA) meeting, Emily recruited more students to work at the Pantry—which is within walking distance of the campus.

These are illustrative examples of the many projects in which the Honors Program plays an important facilitating role. Other such projects will be highlighted in future issues. †

## capacity for collaborative work

**FEW PEOPLE PURSUE LIVES** as solitary individuals. We live and work with other people, often in teams, on a daily basis. Knowing how to work together is a critical skill for success in the workplace, family, and community, but is one that few college curricula address explicitly for all students.

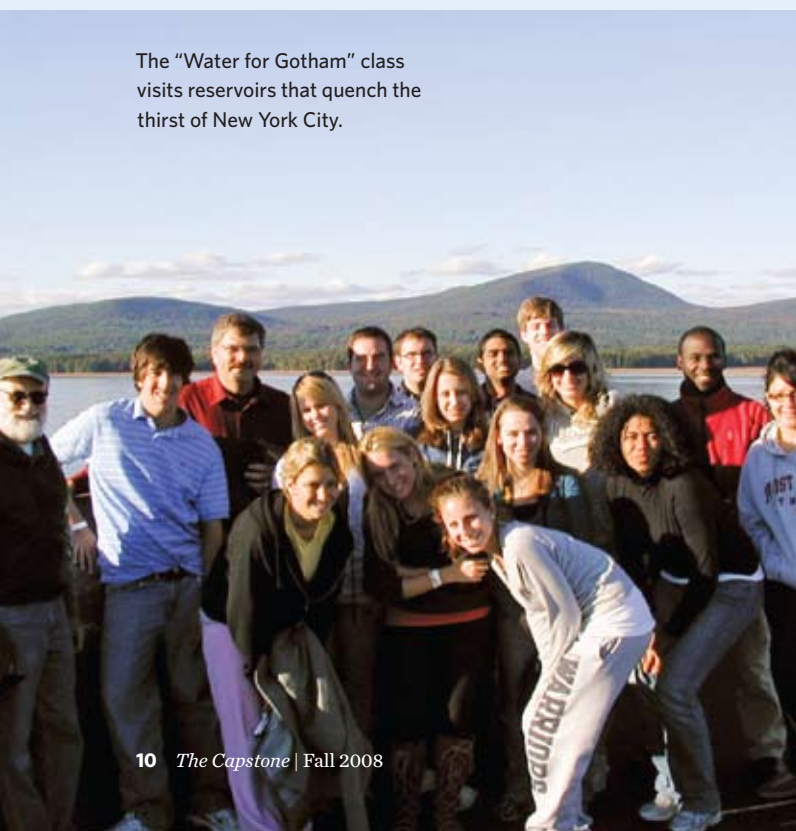
In Honors, each student demonstrates a capacity for collaborative work. Some do this through their majors: engineering and architecture students work in design teams; and management students collaboratively create business plans, for example. Honors students in other disciplines select specially-designed courses—either within Honors or outside of it—which include a substantial collaborative project that culminates in a product for which they are graded.

Through this activity, they learn how to function within a diverse group of people, often with widely differing views, talents, and skills, and how to lead such a team to a successful outcome.

# Honors Courses

The Honors Program provides an inviting venue for teaching imaginative courses that transcend the typical boundaries of their own disciplines. Faculty respond eagerly to this opportunity, with new proposals to develop and teach such courses arriving each semester. Students benefit greatly from these innovative classes, which enroll students from many different majors and sustain an intellectual exploration that expands their sense of connections among problems, ways of thinking, and solutions. Here are some examples.

The "Water for Gotham" class visits reservoirs that quench the thirst of New York City.



## Water for Gotham

More than one billion gallons of water flow daily from watersheds in the Catskills and Taconic Mountains to New York City. The story of the development of a safe water supply for America's largest city is a tale of engineering marvel and political intrigue involving surprising figures from US history. This course discusses the major historical, political, and engineering issues in the development of water resources for New York City, and how engineers plan and develop major water resources projects in general; it includes a weekend field trip to the Catskills region.

## American Parsifal

The United States has longstanding intellectual and artistic traditions, and a deep-seated mistrust toward artists and intellectuals. This course examines this strange dichotomy, one that has been both invigorating and debilitating for our cultural development and our standing on the world stage, through works by William James, W.E.B. DuBois, Walt Whitman, Jack Kerouac, Louis Menand, William Faulkner, Elizabeth Bishop, John Ashberry, Mark Rothko, Jasper Johns, Charles Ives, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Charles Mingus, and Miles Davis, among others. The lens is America's desire to be a kind of cultural Parsifal, the "wise fool" who rescues the world from impotence and shame, and the implications of that role for us as contemporary citizens.

## Seeing Light

This lab course changes how students "see" by investigating concepts of light, color, and vision, ranging from everyday experience to abstract approaches, such as understanding light as both a wave and a particle. Applications include understanding how computer monitors display color, explaining color blindness, explaining the limits of spy satellites, and reviewing what light tells us about the history of the universe. The course includes a brief introduction to relativity: light is a central clue to demonstrating that time is closely related to space. The course includes presentations by an expert in textiles, a visit to Syracuse Stage to discuss lighting, and to Holden Observatory to use the telescope.

## Artist as Icon: Media Image & the Creative Spirit

Creative people who achieve fame have participated in creating their own celebrity. How does this occur? This course examines how images and narratives are selected and repeated to create the iconic persona of a celebrity (or, in marketing terms, a brand). In the worlds of fashion, painting, architecture, literature, music, film, or popular culture, how do we think of creative icons and their work? How do the media interpret creative work and present creators to the public? The course explores theories of fame and celebrity, and examines the lives, works and media images of such cultural icons as Frida Kahlo, Truman Capote, Jackson Pollock, Frank Lloyd Wright, Madonna, Andy Warhol, Ray Charles and others.

## Linked Lenses:

### Science, Philosophy, and the Pursuit of Knowledge

Science and philosophy each pursues knowledge, by apparently different approaches. Each influences and is influenced by the other. What are the philosophical underpinnings of scientific thought? What are the scientific contributions to philosophical thought? This course, taught jointly by a scientist and a philosopher, considers such questions, with readings by both contemporary and historically important philosophers (e.g., Peirce, Hume, Popper) and scientists (e.g., Darwin, Gould, Margulis).

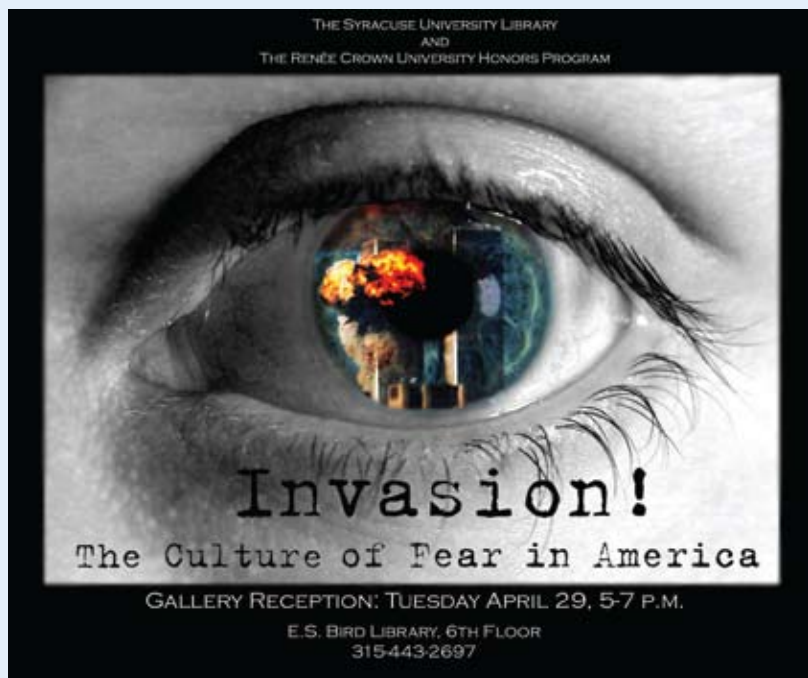
### American Fear

The nightly news bombards Americans with tales of murder and mayhem, and “terror alerts.” How did we get to this point? What types of fear bind Americans together? How has this changed over time? Drawing upon primary sources in SU’s Special Collections Research Center, “American Fear” considers the role that fear has played in American culture by consulting original sources in the arts, literature, and social science. The course starts with Michael Wigglesworth’s popular poem of 1662, Day of Doom, then moves to works by Hawthorne, Poe, James and Lovecraft, and then 20th century documents concerning the depression, the world wars, the impact of Freudian psychoanalysis on popular culture, racism, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and finally, in the 21st century, 9/11. Students read original editions of the works in question—handling the same textual artifacts that contemporaries were reading is critical to imagining the contexts in which peoples’ fears made sense. The final project is a student-curated exhibit on “American Fear” displayed in the University Library.

### Presidential Politics and the New Media

The 2008 election differs from previous national contests because of the increasing significance of the “new media” in transforming the style, substance, and conduct of American politics. The course explores the roles of these media with particular attention to the Presidential race. Among the resources are networking sites (from Facebook and MySpace to Eons, BlackPlanet, MiGente, and Faithbase); YouTube, Digg, Twitter, and Flickr; candidate sites; various blogs; television programs such as “The Daily Show” and “The Colbert Report;” and electronic outlets for traditional news media. Critical to the class is a unique inter-generational component: it includes ten senior citizen participants from “Oasis,” a cultural enrichment program for senior adults. The class explores the differences between how those born early and late in the 20th century participate in the electoral process and think about citizenship. The course prepares students to understand the transforming world of American politics, and also helps them reflect on the challenges and consequences of using online materials in pursuing scholarly research and inquiry. †

At right (from top to bottom): Professor Cathryn Newton meets with Honors students from her “Linked Lenses” class. Poster announcing the “Invasion” exhibit designed in conjunction with the “American Fear” course. Honors students and senior citizens learn how TV, the internet and podcasts are reshaping politics in “Presidential Politics and the New Media.”



# The Honors Tradition

The launching  
and legacy  
of Honors

1963–2008



**F**orty-five years ago, Syracuse University changed forever. On July 26, 1963, from the first floor of the stately Hall of Languages, a welcome letter went to the first Honors Program cohort at Syracuse. It was the tercentenary of the birth of William Shakespeare; fittingly, the first Director of the Program was the renowned Shakespearean, Mary Marshall. The Program offered lower division Honors sections in every discipline of the Liberal Arts, from Anthropology to Zoology. Honors students could enroll in challenging, small discussion groups on topics as diverse as the works of Franz Kafka, the writings of Emile Zola and the noble laureate Sir Peter Medawar's influential text on science and philosophy, *The Future of Man*. Honors was to be an innovative interdisciplinary program, offering unique, small classes taught by the most distinguished faculty and—as a special perk, a library card giving Honors students the right to browse in the hitherto closed stacks of the old University Library.

By 1969, 352 students were enrolled, with the most popular disciplines being Political Science, Psychology, English and Chemistry. Innovation, flexibility and opportunity continued as the hallmarks of Honors. Four students every year had the chance to experience life in a British University, taking courses in Sociology and Philosophy at Bedford College, London. 'Unorthodox' majors were encouraged in Afro-American and in Southeast Asian Studies, and seminars were offered in everything from the novels of Herman Hesse, to Shakespeare's Political Teaching and...Yoga. In the often tense and radical 60's, Honors confronted the challenges faced by American society. A course was introduced on the Vietnam War and the environment was a key concern. In Fall 1970, students examined major issues which resonate today: utopian and green communities, conservationists' battles with the US Forest Service, and pollution in the waterways and air.

Ten years after the Program's founding, it was widely acknowledged that it served the needs of Arts and Sciences students well, but the professional schools were excluded. This concern was resolved in 1976 when Honors became a University-wide program, introducing at the same time a core lower division program. Under the new Director, William Hall, courses became more interdisciplinary, something he hoped would instill in students "a sense of identity as a member of the academic community." Peter Marsh, assuming the post in 1978, expanded this concept further. Honors now emphasized integrating different disciplinary approaches between professional schools and traditional Arts and Sciences disciplines. Students had the opportunity to take classes on Film in History, for example, using the visual, cinematic

expertise of Newhouse to combine with the study of the past. Co-teaching, utilizing the different perspectives and approaches from management to philosophy, became important in the new Honors setup, and diverse disciplines, such as engineering and management, were brought together in one classroom.

Not only in the classroom did Honors lead the way. In the early 1980s, the Program moved into the community. A pilot sophomore arts seminar engaged Honors students with the urban context, taking advantage of the myriad cultural activities in the city. Other seminars followed. This community engagement as well as taking students off campus to such events as *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at the Syracuse Stage and a Jackson Pollock exhibition at the Everson, has since become a core experience at Syracuse, not only in Honors, but later in the whole University.

In January 1990—at 10 degrees below zero—the Honors Program, led by Director Gary Radke, packed up and trekked across the Quad to a new home in Suite 306 Bowne Hall. Honors had shifted from the first floor of the Hall of Languages to the third floor after the renovation of the building in 1980, but Bowne Hall offered more space and perhaps, most importantly, one of the few dedicated computer clusters in the University. From 2004–2007 the suite was completely transformed—adding sophisticated seminar rooms, new furnishings, and artworks from the University's collection, creating a friendly, comfortable atmosphere for students and staff alike. A dedicated student lounge offers freshly brewed coffee, the latest magazines and newspapers and a place to relax; and the upgraded computer room draws those eager to complete assignments and check their email.

This happened as the Program underwent a fundamental change. Through the wonderful generosity of the family of trustee emerita Renée Crown, the Program received financial support sufficient to ensure its excellence. A new curriculum now focuses on the core values of breadth, global awareness, civic engagement, collaboration, command of language, and a Capstone Project for all seniors. The old system of two-year general honors and a thesis project for juniors and seniors was replaced by a four year program designed to offer new challenges and opportunities for advanced, in-depth study. Under the leadership of founding director Samuel Gorovitz, the Renée Crown Honors Program now stands among the most distinctive programs in the country. Distinguished core faculty from throughout the University guide and teach in the program, undergraduates frequently have their work published in prestigious fora, and over 700 students are enrolled. Much has changed over the years, but Honors remains true to its legacy—innovation, flexibility, a challenging environment and the finest education possible. †

At left: Professor Mary Marshall, the first Director of the Honors Program

For a list of past directors, see page 27.



# Honors Faculty

## Honors Teaching

Honors faculty are a superb group of scholar/teachers, known throughout the campus for their extraordinary dedication to students and their ability to make classrooms exciting. Honors course evaluations each semester are filled with statements like “this is the best class I’ve ever taken—I look forward to it every week,” “courses like this are the reason I came to college,” and “I wish every student could take this course.”

“We rely completely on the splendid contributions of Honors faculty,” says Honors Director Samuel Gorovitz, “they are supremely adept at helping students discover their own intellectual and creative powers and raise their aspirations. Honors students seek challenge, because they prize the satisfaction that comes with substantial accomplishment. The path is often difficult, and our faculty are masters at guiding students along it.”

To teach an Honors course is a mark of distinguished pedagogical talent and outstanding scholarly and professional accomplishment. To work with such wonderful students is a privilege for any professor. Not surprisingly, Honors receives more requests to teach than it can accept.

**CORE FACULTY** assist in curricular and policy development and academic strategic planning. They are among the most accomplished scholar/teachers in the University.



**Hubert Brown**  
Associate Professor and Chair,  
Communications Department,  
S.I. Newhouse School of Public  
Communications



**Gerardine M. Clark**  
Professor of Drama, College of  
Visual and Performing Arts



**Samuel Gorovitz**  
Founding Director, Renée Crown  
University Honors Program,  
Professor of Philosophy,  
College of Arts and Sciences



**Sandra Hurd**  
Associate Provost for Academic  
Programs, Professor of Law and  
Public Policy, Whitman School of  
Management





Capstone student Amy Otuonye working with her advisor, Professor Tewodros (Teddy) Asefa on her project, "Multifunctional 'Gated' Nanoporous Materials for Controlled Targeted Release of Drugs."

“courses like this are the reason I came to college”

### Capstone Advisors and Honors Readers

Our faculty also serve as Advisors and Honors Readers on Capstone Projects. They supervise students from start to finish, helping them explore their topic, research and develop it, and produce a polished creative work or piece of undergraduate scholarship of which both the student and the advisor will be proud. More importantly, Advisors and Readers model what it is to have an engaged and curious mind, to be creative in approach—whatever the subject matter—and to strive for innovative solutions to the challenges they face.

### Academic Advising

Many Honors students carry two or three majors; they travel abroad, take internships, pursue interests in the arts or athletics, and contribute to their communities. Balancing all this can be daunting, and Honors depends on faculty advisors from throughout SU's schools and colleges to guide students along a successful path. They help students plan a long-range course of study that will enable them to meet their goals, and work with them each semester to select the optimal courses and activities. They are assisted by three full-time professional staff advisors in the Honors Suite.



Here and on the facing page, Political Science Professor Gavan Duffy visits Bird Library's "Banned Books" exhibit with his class.



**Chris E. Johnson**  
Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering, L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science



**Johanna Keller**  
Director, Goldring Arts Journalism Program, Associate Professor of Newspaper, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications



**Grant Reeher**  
Associate Professor of Political Science, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the College of Arts and Sciences



**James T. Spencer**  
Director of the Soling Program, Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences

# Common Ground



**THE HONORS PROGRAM IS A COMMUNITY** of stimulating conversation, pervading the many places where we gather and connecting the many perspectives we have. It starts at the opening dinner we host for our incoming first-year students, where they meet their seminar professors and classmates. It continues in classes, in faculty offices and homes, in the Honors Student Lounge in Bowne Hall, at events—on and off campus—sponsored by the Honors Student Association, in chance encounters on the quad or in the sculpture garden next to Bowne Hall, at the tremendously popular Honors Café we host twice a semester, at professional meetings our students sometimes attend, in advisors' offices, in the hallways, in small groups meeting with distinguished visitors, and in the various settings, near and far, in which the students pursue their commitment to civic engagement.

To be in this ongoing conversation is to learn constantly, and to teach as well. Faculty frequently comment on how much they learn from the students, and students treasure what they learn from the school children, refugee families, nursing home residents, or government agencies they encounter. We each learn from and teach all the others.

We understand this conversation to be central to how students grow within the Program. It is serious conversation, but is rarely solemn because humor and laughter are valuable parts of the joy of discovery—about oneself, about the world of ideas and of cultures, and about the circumstances in which we and others live, meet our challenges, and pursue our aspirations. The conversation is about everything—including the art of authentic face-to-face conversation, unmediated by cell phones or email. This absorbs and energizes us all, and helps our students prepare to be informed, effective, and at ease in communicating with people from every walk of life. 🌱





Current Lockerbie Scholars Kirsty Liddon and Lauren Flynn

# Commemorating a Bond

On December 21, 1988, PanAm 103 was blown out of the sky by a terrorist bomb, and 35 Syracuse University students died over Lockerbie, Scotland. In the immediate aftermath of this searing tragedy, both Lockerbie and SU struggled to meet the needs of those affected, and even to clarify such facts as who was on the plane. Eleven citizens of Lockerbie died when their homes were obliterated by falling wreckage. Even as the residents of this small village grappled with their own losses, they faced an immense influx of investigators, reporters, relatives of victims, and more. Few in Lockerbie—perhaps none—had heard of Syracuse, nor had we heard of Lockerbie. But these two communities were thrust together with common purpose, and each supported the other in powerful ways.

Syracuse later established the Remembrance Scholars program with 35 prestigious annual scholarships in honor of the 35 murdered students. Many of these highly competitive awards are won by students in Honors, and we are always proud of the academic distinction, exemplary service, maturity of judgment, and interpersonal talent their selection demonstrates.

In Lockerbie, after the bombing, Neil McIntosh, the County Executive for Dumfries and Galloway, coordinated all activities on the ground—with such extraordinary strength and sensitivity that he was ultimately knighted for exemplary accomplishments as a public servant. On one of his visits to SU, he and then Dean of Arts and Sciences Samuel Gorovitz spoke of the bond of mutual respect, admiration, and affection that had grown between Lockerbie and Syracuse University, and resolved to commemorate it in some lasting and constructive way. Those conversations led—with great help from many other people in both communities—to the Lockerbie Scholars at Syracuse Program, under which two students from Lockerbie Academy are selected annually for a fully funded year at Syracuse between high school and university.

These awards are also highly competitive. The students from Lockerbie bring great intellectual prowess along with their sparkle, illuminating perspectives, and historical connection. We made their matriculation into Honors automatic for their year at SU.

Prof. Gorovitz, now directing Honors, said, “I find this especially gratifying given my connection with the origins of that scholarship so long ago. I have never known more gracious or enthusiastic hospitality than that of the people of Lockerbie and the leadership of Lockerbie Academy in particular. Nor will I ever forget the emotionally overwhelming experience of presenting a wreath on behalf of Syracuse University at the memorial at Tundergarth, and then having a young man approach, thank me for being there, point to the sloping field behind the memorial, and say ‘That’s where they recovered my brother’s body.’ Our new students were not yet born on that day of grotesque carnage, but they are enriched by the presence of our wonderful visitors from Lockerbie, and by the way Syracuse helps them understand the legacy of this program and its relevance to the horrors that persist in our troubled world.” 🙏



(Above) Lockerbie Scholar Adam Brooks, 2006–2007, and (right) the first Lockerbie Scholars, 1990–91, Fiona Griffin and Katharine Grant

# Some Recent Accomplishments

Honors students have high aspirations and often achieve remarkable successes of many kinds. Here are a few recent examples:



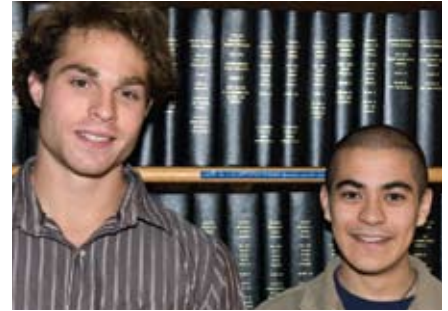
## Rebecca Rought

**IN SPRING 2007**, space shuttle astronaut and SU alumna Eileen Collins '78, H'01 presented Honors student Rebecca Rought, a senior aerospace engineering major, with a \$10,000 scholarship from the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation—one of 19 given nationally. Rebecca, a Remembrance Scholar, maintained a 4.0 average while helping middle school students with science experiments, playing a leadership role in the engineering sorority Alpha Omega Epsilon, and being in the color guard of the SU Marching Band. She has begun doctoral studies in Aeronautical Engineering at Cal Tech.



## Avi Hameroff

**IN SUMMER 2007**, Avi joined Dr. Andrzej Krol's lab at Upstate Medical University and worked with a multinational team developing non-invasive x-ray technology that uses lasers and could become a portable device for field use. Avi received a \$10,000 Astronaut scholarship from NASA for the 2008-09 academic year. In summer 2008, Avi participated in research at the University of Pennsylvania with the support of a Clements Scholarship. He is also student coordinator of the Percy Hughes Magnet Elementary School Mentoring Program.



## Gavin Hartnett (left)

**GAVIN, A GOLDWATER SCHOLAR**, is pursuing a double major in Math and Physics. Gavin's array of research experiences is remarkable for a rising senior. He's worked on modified source gravity with SU's Trustee Professor Mark Trodden and on gravitational waves with Peter Saulson, the Pomerantz Professor of Physics at SU. At Cornell in summer '07 he worked on quintessence and scalar tensor theories with Prof. Rachel Bean and on cosmic strings with Prof. David Chernoff. Gavin's Capstone Project is on topological defects of condensed matter, with Professors Mark Bowick and Christina Marchetti as advisors.

## Tom Stewart (right)

**TOM IS A GOLDWATER SCHOLAR** and also a McNair Scholar. He is doing research under the supervision of Prof. Craig Albertson on bilateral asymmetry in left and right jawed fish from Lake Tanzania. He and Prof. Albertson are close to identifying the genetic markers for this asymmetry. In his first year, Tom collaborated on a project with Cornell University on invasive species in Oneida Lake. In fall 2007, Tom did field research in Costa Rica where he experimented with different approaches to research design. In one of his most creative approaches, Tom was able to lure adult male black iguanas to a mirror, where they reacted to their own aggressive behaviors.



### Greg Papp

**GREG, A NASA AERONAUTICS** scholarship recipient, is pursuing degrees both in Aerospace Engineering (in the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science) and in Philosophy (in Arts and Sciences). In summer 2008, Greg interned at the Federal Aeronautics Association in DC analyzing the merits of private, manned space programs and ventures. In summer 2007, he contributed to a research project funded by NASA at the University of Maryland in which he analyzed photographs from observatories around the world and from individuals who documented the impact of a deep space probe with a comet. Greg is also working with an engineering group to create an exhibit at Syracuse’s Museum of Science and Technology (the MOST).

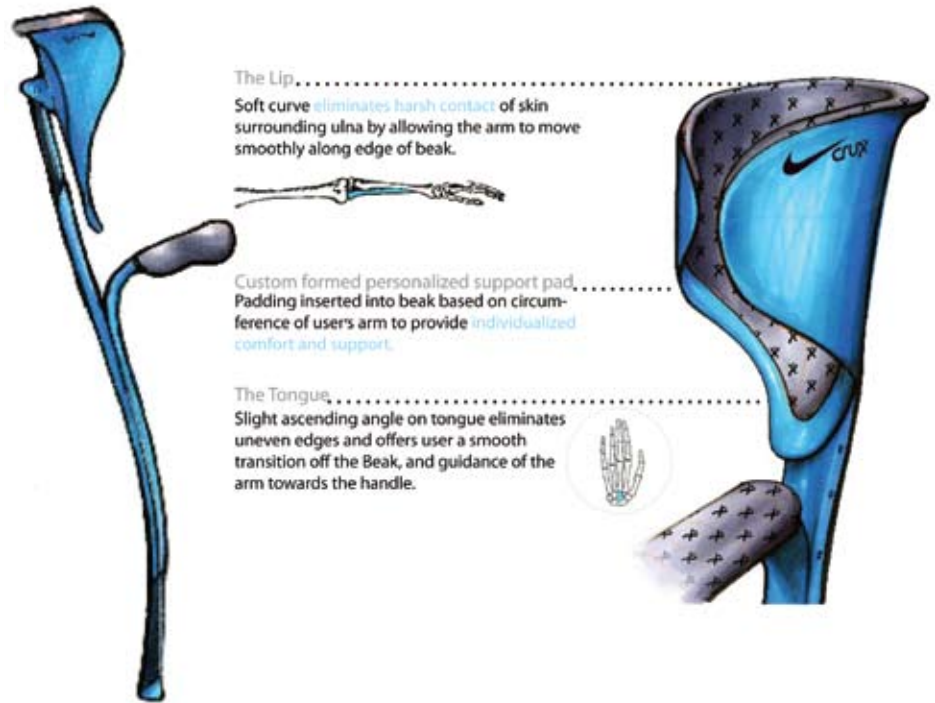


### Sheila Menz

**SHEILA MENZ '06** was a Rhodes and Mitchell Scholarship finalist in Fall 2007. A member of Senator Hillary Clinton’s Senate staff, she briefs the Senator most evenings about the coming day. At SU, Sheila was 2006 student Commencement speaker and captain of our Division I Women’s soccer team. Prior to her work for Senator Clinton, Sheila worked for Senator Joseph Lieberman.

### Kate Vallon

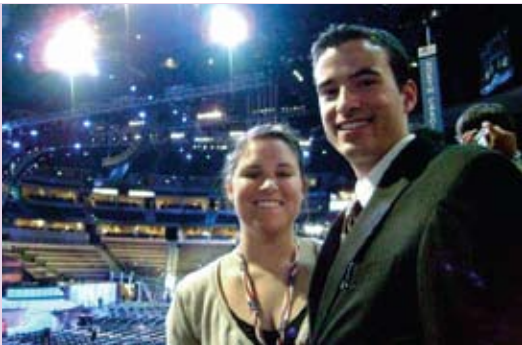
**WELCH-ALLYN IS AMONG THE WORLD'S LARGEST** and most innovative medical instrumentation companies. Honors can now place an intern with Welch-Allyn each summer, fully funded by the company. Kate Vallon, senior in industrial design, is the first recipient of this award. She writes, “Interning at Welch Allyn was a great opportunity to learn how industrial design is integrated into a large and diverse company. I interacted with some of the most talented people in a variety of disciplines, gaining real-world experience that continues to benefit my growth and confidence as a designer.” The company was equally pleased. Bob Corona, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, wrote, “Kate’s impact was felt on her very first day at Welch Allyn. She was put on a critical design team and exceeded everyone’s expectations. She performed like a 20-year product development veteran. We call Kate The 2 Million Dollar Woman, because we paid that much to a design company that did not contribute half as much as Kate! We are so impressed with Kate’s intelligence, creativity, interpersonal skills, work ethic and humble demeanor that we all hope she will soon be a permanent part of the Welch-Allyn Team.”



An illustration from Vallon’s Capstone Project on “Adaptive Medical Equipment for Children”

# Unique opportunities outside the classroom

Honors brings its new students together for a lecture or discussion with prominent guests about important topics; this gives them common ground for conversation. We also send them into various parts of the world to encounter people, places, and events that contribute to their growth.



**H**onors students Michelle McClafferty and Kevin Eggleston (at left) attended the Democratic National Convention, with the help of funds from Honors, A&S iLEARN, and the Coronat Scholars program. Michelle (center) is pictured here with New York governor David Paterson, and Kevin (bottom) with political analyst George Stephanopoulos.

**“WHEN I RECEIVED MY VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT**—Security—you can imagine my surprise. I came to learn and see the action, and all I imagined was guarding a door turning people away who just wanted to see the excitement like me. That all changed the first day of work. My job was to greet and converse with friends and family of the keynote speakers: Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Joe Biden. My experience increased my political awareness, not because I agreed with every speaker, but because their passion was contagious. Tens of thousands traveled to be a part of history; millions more watched from home. Their determination to act resonated with my own desire to be involved.”

—MICHELLE MCCLAFFERTY



**“AS A POLITICAL SCIENCE AND NEWHOUSE STUDENT** with an additional interest in theater and playwriting, I’m fascinated both by the machinations of politicians and the media and by their personal motivations and stories. In Denver, I was able to meet with senators, presidential candidates, major media stars, politically interested movie stars, like-minded students....I was able to talk to them and collect stories from the ‘inside’ as well as make observations of my own....I learned not to be afraid to jump right into the political process and get to work. Political and journalistic role models are a lot less intimidating when you are riding roller coasters with them at Denver’s Six Flags. You find them to be regular people who work incredibly hard at what they do.”

—KEVIN EGGLESTON





(Above) **ELIZABETH KOLBERT**, staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1999. Her three-part series on global warming, “The Climate of Man,” won the 2005 American Association for the Advancement of Science Journalism Award, among others. (Right) **JEFFREY ROSEN**, Professor of Law at George Washington University, named by *The Chicago Tribune* as one of the best magazine journalists in America.



**GEORGE SAUNDERS**, MacArthur Fellow, award winning fiction writer and essayist, author of *The Braindead Megaphone*, published in 2007.



**PETER LEVINE**, a Rhodes Scholar, is Director of The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University.

In February 2007, writer George Saunders from SU’s Creative Writing Program joined education policy expert Peter Levine to discuss “Who Knows Best How To Educate You For Citizenship?”

“The 2008 Presidential campaign will profoundly affect our students’ futures,” said Founding Director Samuel Gorovitz, who moderated the discussion “but in following it, the average citizen encounters diverse views from experts of all sorts. Do these experts merit our trust? Is expertise real, or an illusion? What voices should we heed, as we think about how to function as citizens in a democratic society?” The discussion prompted many excellent exchanges among panelists and students about experts and citizenship.

Other recent events include “A Conversation with Elizabeth Kolbert,” one of the nation’s premier science writers, who had just published her landmark work on global warming, *Field Notes From A Catastrophe*; and a timely lecture in 2006 by Jeffrey Rosen on “How to Think About the Supreme Court and Why You Should Want To.” A few weeks earlier, Rosen had written the *New York Times Magazine* cover story on the appointment of John Roberts as chief justice to the Supreme Court. †

Honors regularly hosts small group discussions with distinguished visiting scholars, writers, artists, and public figures. Examples in recent years include:



**Karen Armstrong**  
Author of *The Battle for God*,  
and *A Short History of Myth*



**Owen Gingerich**  
Author of *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolas Copernicus* and *The Eye of Heaven: Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler*



**Claudia Orange**  
Director of History and Pacific Cultures at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa



**Judge James Robertson**  
US District Court in Washington, D.C.

FACE-TO-FACE

# AN HONORS EDUCATION

Each journey that begins at “Commencement” is unique: careers, graduate or professional school, travel, entrepreneurship—our alumni follow many paths.

What alumni share, however, is a continuing appreciation of an Honors experience that has helped them in many ways. Careers and lives take surprising turns; what endures are the intellectual skills, the unbridled curiosity about the world, the capacity for sustained work, and the commitments to the life of the mind and the creative spirit that were developed in Honors.

Honors alumni all have stories to tell. Here are just a few examples, drawn from across the decades.

If you are an Honors graduate, we’d love to hear what you’re doing, and perhaps share it with others. Visit our website to reconnect with us: [honors.syr.edu](http://honors.syr.edu)

## Cindy Brodhead '68

Cindy Brodhead '68 vividly recalls her days in the second class to graduate from the Honors Program after its founding by Professor Mary Marshall, who was her advisor and mentor. Brodhead says, “The personal attention and the exposure to serious academic work were tremendously important to me. I discovered the excitement of learning in a serious way and of working independently to a very high standard of achievement. My professors showed me what a life of learning could require and the satisfactions it could give. My whole life has been determined by the academic and cultural enrichment—and the love for the academic life—that I first tasted in the Honors Program.”

Brodhead recalls Marshall as “a tall, imposing woman with a striking physical presence, who embodied the intellectual leader on campus as one who had mastered the worlds of learning and culture. She set a tone, opened a world of culture— theater, poetry, literature,” Brodhead says, adding, “She did what a great professor does, which is to propose the intellectual world, that great world of intellectual and cultural achievement, as something you can participate in, and are expected to participate in.”

Marshall, a Shakespeare scholar and master teacher, was a powerful figure at a time when few women had tenured appointments, at Syracuse or nationally. She continued to be an active, vital, and beloved intellectual figure well into her 90s.

Brodhead went on to do graduate work in literature at Yale University, where she married her fellow graduate student Richard Brodhead, an American literature scholar and long-time professor and Dean at Yale who is currently President of Duke University. Forty years later, having worked in publishing and then practiced law for many years, she still lives on campus and continues to savor the academic environment she learned to love at Syracuse.

The most enduring influence of the Honors Program on who Brodhead is today concerns her values. “One’s life is not one’s career,” she emphasizes. “The greatest influence of the Honors Program is not on what I have worked at, but on my sense of what is worth working for.” She also credits the Honors Program with providing students “a unique opportunity to invent themselves”—and, indeed, with the confidence and intellectual resources to reinvent themselves throughout their lives.



**“The greatest influence of the Honors Program is not on what I have worked at, but on my sense of what is worth working for.”**



# AT WORK IN THE WORLD



“I learned the danger posed by zealots of all political stripes and nationalities.”

## Robert Shwartz '72

**R**obert N. Shwartz '72 is a litigation partner in the New York law firm of Debevoise & Plimpton. During 1987-88 he served as a senior Associate Counsel in the Office of Independent Counsels in the Iran-Contra investigation. Iran-Contra was the infamous Reagan administration scheme orchestrated by the Director of Central Intelligence, Bill Casey, and National Security Advisor, Admiral John Poindexter, to trade arms to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages, while using the proceeds from those sales to support Nicaraguan Contras in their efforts to undermine the duly-elected, Communist-led Nicaraguan government. The scheme was largely implemented by Marine Lt. Colonel Oliver North.

Shwartz was responsible for the investigation and analysis of the flow of funds and all other financial aspects of the Iran-Contra scandal, including all international requests for assistance.

Despite his extensive knowledge of political processes, Shwartz described the experience as “an advanced civics lesson in the way our government really works.” He was surprised to see how a lowly Lt. Colonel on the President’s National Security staff could tell a three-star General in the Pentagon what to do. “That’s not how things are supposed to work.”

His investigations took him to France, Israel, and Switzerland, among other places, where he had to separate fact from fiction. He also got a first-hand look at how our government functions in times of constitutional stress, when Congress through its powers of the purse and oversight was trying to restrict the President’s foreign policy authority to aid the Contras. But the real lesson was broader. “I learned the danger posed by zealots of all political stripes and nationalities: people who will say or do anything to advance their own agenda. People who are so convinced they are right that they will use any means—legal, truthful or otherwise—to advance their cause.”

Shwartz credits Honors for allowing him to create his own major, drawing upon an interesting mix of political science, economics, history and elements of the Metropolitan Studies graduate program

in the Maxwell School. This allowed him to step outside the usual frames of reference and consider issues from a fresh, often unorthodox point of view: a useful analytical tool for a litigator, a special prosecutor, or a public-minded citizen.

Today Shwartz’s legal practice consists principally of civil and criminal litigation. Apart from his trial practice, he focuses on complex commercial disputes, civil fraud, and class action litigation. Mr. Shwartz has also conducted numerous internal investigations of alleged wrongdoing by corporate officers and employees, often in conjunction with criminal, SEC or other regulatory investigations.

He lives in New York City with his wife, Susan Greenberg, a 1972 graduate of SU’s School of Social Work, and their two children, Marisa (13) and Jacob (10). He travels widely with his family, loves to read and continues to play tennis and follow SU basketball. ▶

## Contessa Brewer '96

Contessa Brewer, '96, celebrated MSNBC news anchor, is convinced that television news is not dying. "It's becoming more fluid, more creative. We're standing on the edge of a new frontier, reminiscent of the shift from radio to TV," she says. Brewer started her career as a "one man band" researching, shooting, editing, and producing her own stories for KRNVT-TV in Reno, Nevada, and now lives in an international media arena. She sees TV news as an open field—for those with something to say—adding that knowledge and insight into the world, not technical journalistic training, often drive what's new in the rapidly evolving media market.

Blogs, web casts, YouTube—people are communicating in new ways, and commentators can find an audience in venues that didn't exist a decade ago. "Expertise about the world opens doors," she says, citing Rachel Maddow's recent success. (Maddow, a Rhodes scholar, started as a generalist working as a "pundit" and is now an MSNBC anchor.) "So know your subject!" she exhorts her interns.

Brewer's expertise grows daily, given the remarkable diversity of stories she works on. "Every day is new," she says, "I talk to YouTube's 'Obama Girl' one day and Virginia Governor Tim Kaine the next," she says.

An "NPR junkie" addicted to their in-depth coverage, she sees a parallel depth in cable news, but in a different format, appropriate to their mission. Some cable TV news stories deepen over the course of the day, allowing for the kind of serious coverage she most enjoys. In each case, it's about taking the time to be careful, thorough, and thoughtful. "Stories need to breathe," she says.

She recalls one Newhouse professor saying "it's all well and good to be McNeil Lehrer, but what if no one's watching?" That message hit home. But how do you keep the public engaged? Brewer's approach is to "find the story embedded within the news event, and tell that story. That way you do serious journalism, and you'll find that large audience," she says.

Brewer certainly didn't shun serious issues at Syracuse. Her Capstone Project was a documentary film about a woman dying of cancer, and the attendant—and difficult—family dynamics. "It was an early lesson on how fleeting life is, and on how tenuous our legacy can be. The project was incredibly taxing, but it taught me that it's important to be honest, to be real. Being honest is at the heart of good journalism," she says.

**"Being honest is at the heart of good journalism."**



“If you don’t care deeply about your business, you’ll fail.”

(Above) Donna DiDomenico on the Great Wall of China.

## Donna DiDomenico '07

**D**onna DiDomenico entered Syracuse University with a passion for photography and strong entrepreneurial interests. Through the Honors Program, she combined them—with marvelous results. “I wanted to do interesting projects that I was absolutely committed to, but they were unusual. Whenever anyone said no, Honors said yes, says DiDomenico.

Her ideas were unusual and out of sync with typical procedures. As a sophomore she applied for Capstone funding—a year earlier than most students. Her proposal was bold: to travel with the “Semester at Sea” program and create a photographic essay on Islamic culture outside the Middle East, in places like Puerto Rico, Brazil, and China. Honors asked to see examples of her photographic work and her project plans. Although approving this project was taking a substantial risk, Honors funded her.

The resultant project—a 105 page photo essay entitled *Islam Through My Eyes*—is stunningly beautiful. The book includes an essay on how Islam spread beyond the Middle East and excerpts from her trip journal. “Virtually everyone we showed it to wanted to buy a copy,” says Director Samuel Gorovitz, “so Honors had 30 of them printed and placed at the bookstore. They sold out quickly.”

But what most viewers see as a lovely and insightful photography project, DiDomenico saw as analogous to a business venture. “The project was, for me, an entrepreneurial one,” she says, “I needed to come up with an original project, create a business plan, develop a tight budget, implement the plan, solve problems as they arose, capitalize on opportunities, and deliver a product.” she says, “And I loved every minute of it.”

Her approach also met the entrepreneurial requirement of supreme dedication. “If you don’t care deeply about your business, you’ll fail,” DiDomenico says. “Passion and tenacity are just as important as the

numbers on the bottom line. I put my whole heart into this project.”

DiDomenico worked as an analyst at Bear Stearns after graduating. She received an offer from J. P. Morgan Chase when it took over that company, but she moved to Blackrock, Inc. in 2008, where she is an analyst in the Multi-Asset Portfolio Strategies (MAPS) group, responsible for developing, assembling, and managing investment solutions involving multiple strategies and asset classes. DiDomenico is involved in client service and marketing efforts. Her “sponsored statement” entitled “Multi-Asset Class Investing & Active Asset Allocation—Why Now?” was published in the September Issue of *Asia Asset Management: The Journal of Investments & Pensions*.

And *Islam Though My Eyes* will be published in spring 2009 by Womensphere Press. At Donna’s initiative, a percentage of the proceeds will return to the Honors Program to help support future Capstone Projects. 🙏

If you are an Honors graduate, we’d love to hear what you’re doing, and perhaps share it with others. Visit our website to reconnect with us: [honors.syr.edu](http://honors.syr.edu)

# Fostering Respect for the Arts



In September 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published several cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad that prompted protests, riots, and substantial loss of life. Cartoons, like other forms of visual imagery, can be profoundly important. In the Honors Suite, when discussing this international crisis, we pointed to three framed, original 19th century cartoons—by Nast, Daumier, and Cruikshank—on one of the walls, emphasizing that art can be educative, not merely decorative.

We are fortunate that our premises—electronically secured by a direct link to the Public Safety Office—enable us to display valuable original art chosen from the University’s extensive collection. The classic portrait of Martha Graham, by renowned photographer Barbara Morgan, highlights two major artists and two arts—dance and photography. A rare sculpture in wood by Rodger Mack—who worked primarily in bronze—stimulates reflection on the relationship of form and material. At every turn, the Honors Suite affirms our view that the arts influence how people see and think, and therefore how they act.

We make this point by including respect for the importance and power of the arts in all we do—in our physical environment, in the design standard we try to meet in our communications, in our trips to concerts, plays, museums, and in our support for student projects in music, theater, and the visual arts. We encourage those individual students who organize film series, work in galleries, or teach animation to school children. Attending to the aesthetics of our physical, intellectual, and cultural environments is not a luxury, but is essential to appreciating and protecting those environments. Our students have worked on the aesthetics of stage sets, medical instruments, bridesmaid gowns, books of poetry, saddles, and more. Our goal is that as alumni, they will have internalized an appreciation of the arts, a commitment to supporting them, and an understanding of their significance to all we do. †

(Top left), Thomas Nast, *A Group of Vultures Waiting for the Storm to “Blow Over”—“Let us Prey”* (Wood engraving on newsprint, published in *Harpers Weekly* September 23, 1871). (Bottom left), George Cruikshank, *“A Going! A Going! The last time, A Going!—Down!!!”* (Hand colored etching and engraving, 1921). (Right), Roger Mack, *Untitled (Syras Series)* (Wood, 1969, 89 ½ x 34 x 22).



# Building on Past Success

## Preparing students for competitive scholarships and fellowships

Professor Grant Reeher, of the Political Science Department, is the new coordinator of national scholarship preparation for the Honors Program. He assumes this role after many years of precisely this kind of mentoring. Reeher says, “It has been my privilege to work individually with some astonishingly talented students as they pursue the lustrous opportunities afforded by prestigious scholarships like the Rhodes, Gates, Marshall, Goldwater, and NASA Astronaut awards.”

Honors is building on past successes: Grace Yu '01 and Elliott Portnoy '86 as winners of Rhodes Scholarships, and more recently, Thomas Stewart '09 and Gavin Hartnett '09 as winners of Goldwater Scholarships, Stephanie Rivetz as a winner of a Fulbright Grant, Avi Hameroff '09 as a winner of a NASA Astronaut Scholarship, and Greg Papp '10 as a winner of a NASA Aeronautics Scholarship, among others. In recent years Honors students have been finalists for the most competitive scholarships—in particular Sarah Ryman '06 and Sheila Menz '07 as finalists for the Rhodes—and these are important successes also. Elliott Portnoy has made a major gift to help fund these efforts; he knows firsthand how valuable they can be.

Reeher will spearhead the recruiting of more students to pursue national scholarships, with strong support from staff members Steven Wright and Judy O'Rourke, from the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and a new faculty committee on scholarship preparation. A key element is for students to begin thinking early in college about the possibilities. Reeher's committee will work closely with all students who express an interest, to help them think about courses of study, co-curricular activities, and internship and work experiences that will best position them to be competitive in the selection processes later. The project has broadened the base of faculty who are involved in this effort, because excellent faculty mentoring is a distinguishing feature of all the success stories to date.

A guiding belief that informs the new initiative is that the journey itself must be rewarding. Regardless of whether they ultimately win awards, students pursuing these scholarships benefit greatly from a set of experiences they will find nowhere else in college. What they learn from the preparation and attempt—perhaps most importantly what they learn about themselves—pays dividends years after graduation.

Students putting themselves forward have the benefit of the close attention of a faculty group who will help them think through how to make the best use of their undergraduate years, will guide and assist them in the pursuit of summer activities, and will work closely with them in the final year as they craft their scholarship applications and practice for in-person interviews. In this last effort, students receive an attention to their essays—through multiple drafts—that forces them to think sharply and write crisply. And they undergo rigorous mock interviews, with critical reactions helping them become far stronger in such pressured settings. It's a great professional and personal development training experience.

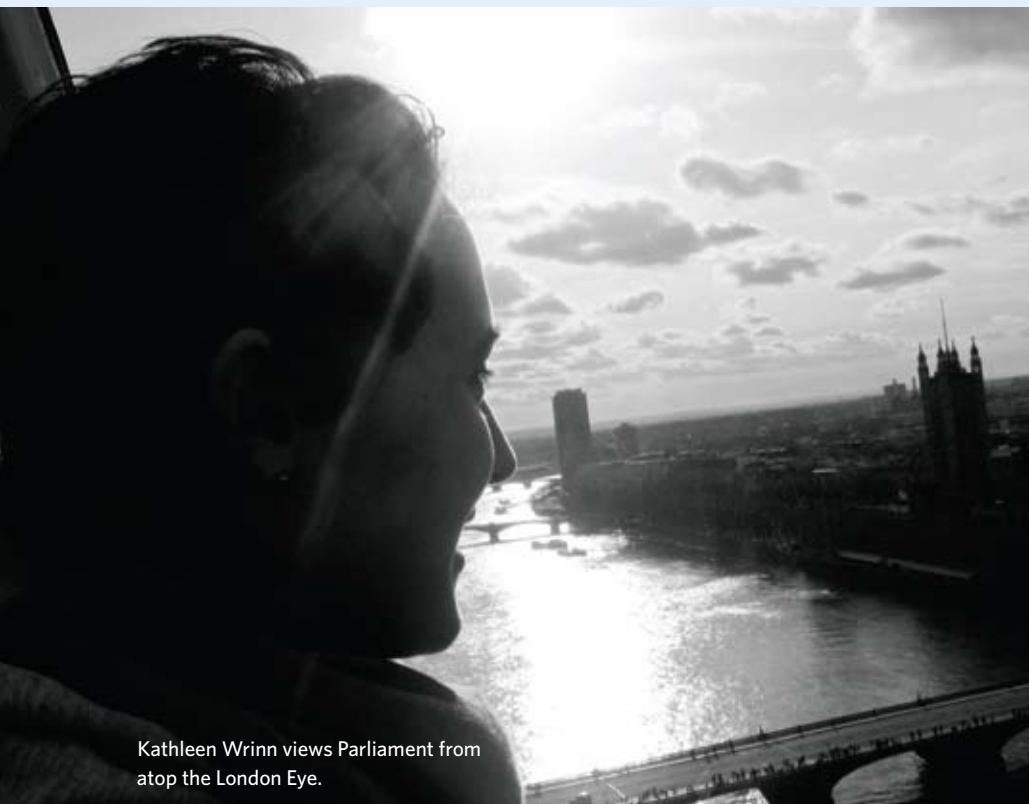
Two examples illustrate the point: In working on her many applications, Grace Yu honed a precision in her writing that matched her intellect. And Sheila Menz learned that she can hold her own in a political discussion—with anybody, and that the names at the top of prestigious law firm letterheads belong to people much like her. That confidence is priceless, and was only found in the crucible of the Rhodes interview experience. 🌟



Honors Scholarship initiatives are funded by a major gift from Rhodes Scholar Elliott Portnoy '86.

## Honors Directors

Mary Marshall	1963–1968
Larry Hardin	1968–1975
William Hall	1975–1978
Peter Marsh	1978–1982
Pat Moody <i>Interim Director</i>	1982–1983
Peter Marsh	1983–1987
Robert McClure	1987–1989
Gary Radke	1989–1993
Sandra Hurd <i>Acting Director</i>	1993–1994
Gary Radke	1994–1996
D. Bruce Carter	1996–2001
Judy Hamilton <i>Executive Director</i>	2002–2004
Samuel Gorovitz	2004–present



Kathleen Wrinn views Parliament from atop the London Eye.

# Reasons to Applaud

The individualized mentoring, small classes, and special opportunities that our students enjoy are costly. We are fortunate that the Renée Crown University Honors Program is well supported both by Syracuse University and by many generous friends of the Program. First among these, of course, is the family of Renée Schine Crown, whose naming gift in her honor, and whose substantial additional gift, have created the endowment that gives us both the flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities and the resources to underwrite outstanding Capstone Projects.

We appreciate every gift. Among the most gratifying contributions are those from very recent alumni and others who want to share in supporting us to the extent they can, and send a sum that, although small in dollars, is large in meaning. We also especially appreciate the gifts from Syracuse University faculty and staff who believe in what we are doing, and want to help financially in addition to doing the good work that is essential to our success.

We are grateful to those listed at right.

For information about how you can contribute, contact [honors@syr.edu](mailto:honors@syr.edu).

## Capstone Patrons

\$10,000 AND ABOVE

The Crown Family  
William M. Marcus  
Lynne H. Parker  
Elliott Portnoy  
The Whiteman Foundation  
Harry H. Wise

## Leadership Contributors

\$1,000 TO \$9999

Joel H. Coler  
Karen A. Fausnaugh  
Samuel Gorovitz  
Michael I. Jentis  
Myrna S. Root  
Richard Dos Santos

## Honors Supporters

Ruth C. Benedict  
Danielle V. Borasky  
John R. Casolaro  
Clive R. Cohen  
Donna J. DiDomenico  
Catherine Blair Dixon  
Nancy J. Girondo  
Eric Holzwarth  
Ann K.M. Gualtieri  
Sherri J. Katz  
Jason P. Linde  
Robert J. and Wendy H. Morrison  
Rene B. Peres  
Ellen S. Podgor  
Hanna Richardson  
Marc S. Seigle  
Kimberly A. Simpson  
Jocelyn A. Starzak  
Ann Marie Stephenson  
Heather V. Taylor  
Neil I. Title  
Petra Renee Wicklund  
Stephen J. Zilora

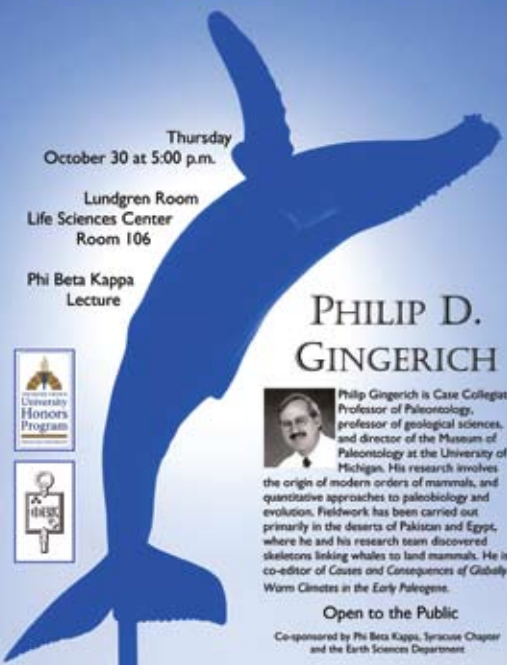
Honors welcomes students to many events. Here are some illustrative examples. The invitations were designed by Honors students.

**"Origin and Early Evolution of Whales: A Profound Transition from Land to Sea"**


Thursday  
October 30 at 5:00 p.m.

Lundgren Room  
Life Sciences Center  
Room 106

Phi Beta Kappa  
Lecture



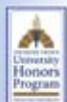

**PHILIP D. GINGERICH**




Philip Gingerich is Case Collegiate Professor of Paleontology, professor of geological sciences, and director of the Museum of Paleontology at the University of Michigan. His research involves the origin of modern orders of mammals, and quantitative approaches to paleobiology and evolution. Fieldwork has been carried out primarily in the deserts of Pakistan and Egypt, where he and his research team discovered skeletons linking whales to land mammals. He is co-editor of *Causes and Consequences of Globally Warm Climates in the Early Paleogene*.

**Open to the Public**

Co-sponsored by Phi Beta Kappa, Syracuse Chapter and the Earth Sciences Department

**Honors Café**



**Menu:**


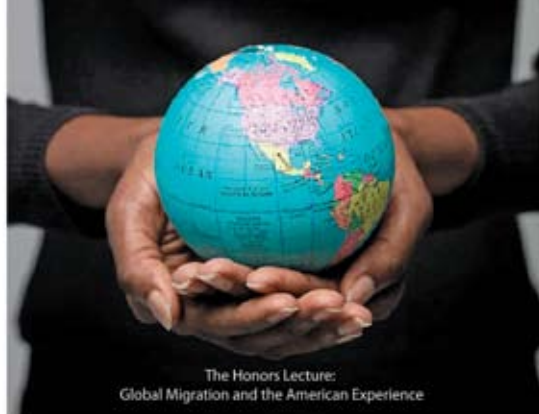
- Empanadas
- Paella
- Lentil Salad
- Spanish Omelets
- Brazilian Chili
- Peruvian Potato Salad
- Dulche de Leche Cake
- Chocolate Balls

**Drop in!**  
11 AM - 2 PM  
Wednesday, October 10  
Honors Suite  
306 Bowne Hall


**Honors Café in Casablanca**

Thursday, November 13th  
11:30 - 2:30

Featuring Moroccan Cuisine





The Honors Lecture:  
Global Migration and the American Experience



**Marcelo Suárez-Orozco**  
Worldwide Expert on Globalization, Immigration and Education

Tuesday, October 28  
in Hendricks Chapel, 7:30 p.m.



We are in the midst of the largest migratory wave in human history. What is the impact of globalization and immigration on businesses around the world? How do we educate newly arrived immigrant children? These are some of the major questions that Marcelo Suárez-Orozco addresses. A distinguished voice on immigration, globalization and education, he is the co-founder of the Harvard Immigration Project, and has lectured around the world. He is currently the Courtney Sale Ross University Professor of Globalization and Education at New York University.



Visit the Honors Program online at [honors.syr.edu](https://honors.syr.edu)

Above, the Costa Rica countryside, photographed by Honors student Tom Stewart during his field research; Tom is pictured on the front cover.



THE RENÉE CROWN  
**University Honors Program**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

306 BOWNE HALL  
SYRACUSE NY 13244-1200

*CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED*

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
SYRACUSE, NY