



# The COMM Husker

University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
Department of Communication Studies Newsletter

## From the Chair's Chair

*Greetings Current Faculty and Students, Alumni, and Friends of UNL Communication Studies.*

I can't believe another six months have gone by since our last newsletter.

Although, I must say this has been a rather long six months given the weather we have had in Lincoln. It has been a bit colder and a lot more snow than in recent winters. Ugh! The past six months, however, have resulted in many amazing accomplishments by our undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty.

More of our undergraduate students are working with faculty on research projects, involved in our Communication Club, and are actively participating in departmental activities than ever before. Each year we have over 200 undergraduate students involved in instructional and work related internships. Our introductory communication course had over 100 interns and our business and professional course had around 80 interns this year. These interns assist in classroom instruction and tutor their peers. There were over 20 undergraduate students who held internships in business, government, non-profit, and volunteer agencies this past year as well. In spite of the economy many of our undergraduates who have graduated have obtained good paying jobs with a variety of organizations as well as many others are going on to graduate or law colleges to further their education.

Our graduate students continue to produce outstanding research and have received many top papers on competitive panels at national and regional conferences. Many of them are also getting their research studies published in national and regional journals. In addition, a good



*Bill Seiler,  
Professor and  
Chair*

number of our GTAs are outstanding classroom teachers and several of them have been nominated for and received teaching awards this spring.

Our forensics program once again is proving to be one of the top programs not only in the state but in the nation as well. The speech team has won five straight state championships and for the first time in a long time has won the debate portion of the state tournament as well. Every member of the speech team will be participating in American Forensics Association's National Individual Events Tournament and debate team members will be participating in the National Forensics Association's Tournament.

Fund raising is always a delicate subject to bring up, especially during these trying economic times but never before in the history of the department has your financial support been so important to the success of our program. Please, please consider supporting the department; see page 3 of the newsletter for more details on how and why to contribute.

As many of you know I am about to complete my 20<sup>th</sup> year as department chair at the end of May. I am presently working with a great group of individuals—maybe it's because I have hired each one of them. The past 20 years as chair have been interesting, stressful, joyful and exciting. There have been many ups and downs--- fortunately more ups and for that I am truly grateful. The department, in my humble opinion, has come a long way over the years.

The department continues to improve with many more good things to come. Please keep us posted on your news. And if you should return to Lincoln, please make sure that you stop by and visit us.

*Bill Seiler  
Professor and Chair*

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*Newsletter Editors:  
Colleen Colaner &  
Dawn O. Braithwaite*

## Department Updates - Highlights from student groups

On February 19th and 20th the UNL forensics team competed at the 2010 Nebraska College State Tournament held on the campus of Doane College.

For the first time in the program's history UNL captured the state championship in speech and debate and the overall title. This is the 5th year in a row that UNL has won the state speech championship. For the first time in more than a decade the team won the debate portion of the tournament.

Also, for the first time in school history UNL claimed the parliamentary debate championship by closing out the final round. The undefeated team of juniors Caroline Casias and Emily Schlicting placed first, just ahead of the team of junior Stephanie Fleming and sophomore Eli Barts. The speech portion of the tournament was highlighted by individual state championships in communication analysis, extemporaneous speaking, and dramatic duo interpretation. Sophomore Nick Herink also captured the overall individual sweepstakes title for the tournament, making him just the third underclassman ever to accomplish this feat.

The team is currently preparing for its upcoming national tournaments. March 30th through the 5th of April the speech team will participate in the American Forensics Association's National Individual Events Tournament on the campus of the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. The team qualified 60 events for the tournament and most importantly qualified every student on the team. April 14th through the 20th the debate team will travel to Ohio University for the National Forensics Association's Tournament.

## Comm One Comm All!

The Communication Studies Club has had a great year so far! This Spring semester we have invited guest speakers from the Buckle organization to give our members insight into the career search. We also had Communication Studies faculty and graduate students deliver presentations about their areas of research. These presentations were insightful and provided a great opportunity for our membership to hear about the research going on in the department. In February, club officers and our advisor traveled to Omaha, NE to represent the department in this year's big Red Road Show. We are also planning on participating in UNL's annual philanthropy the Big Event on April 10<sup>th</sup>, which serves the Lincoln Community by doing service projects. This semester the Comm Studies Club made t-shirts for our membership. We hope the t-shirts help spread the word about our Club. The shirts are available for \$8 and \$6 goes to make the shirts and \$2 goes to help the club financially. In March we held elections for our new officers. We will conclude the semester with a celebration to welcome our new and outgoing members, officers and advisors.

*Heidi Behrens, Comm. Club Co-President*

*Angela M. Hosek, Advisor*

## From the Desk of the Graduate Director

Here we are in April already! Our graduate students have had a terrific year. We have an excellent group of students who are preparing themselves as scholars and teachers. In one of our professional development seminars this year we talked about what it means to establish a line of research. Both graduate students and faculty came together to talk about our statements and work on statements that describe our line of research. We traded ideas and provided feedback on our statements, recognizing that all of us are continually developing our scholarly identity. Just this semester, several students have had publications accepted, presented papers at conferences (several Top Papers), and been elected to leadership positions in our associations. You'll see news about some of these accomplishments on p. 9 of the the newsletter.

We had a record-setting number of applications to enter our graduate program this year. We have

admitted an excellent class of new students in the fall. We also send our congratulations to graduate students who completed their doctoral degrees and graduated in December or will graduate this coming May: Becky DiVerniero, Emily Lamb Normand, Michelle Maresh, Josh Hammonds, and Erin Willer. Others will finish very soon. Josh Ewalt will be completing the MA and joining the doctoral program at University of Georgia. Former MA student Elissa Arterburn is joining the doctoral program at University of Oklahoma. We are very proud of you all!

We do appreciate how our alumni support our current students, helping them to collect data for their research, giving advice on the job market, and reading dissertation chapters. In addition, thanks to those of you who help with much needed financial support to help our current students.



*Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite,  
Director of  
Graduate  
Studies*

# WAYS TO GIVE BACK

We appreciate our undergraduate and graduate alumni who have thanked us for our role in their lives. We are especially thankful for those who are donating to the department. We do need your help and others to join you. We will be extremely grateful.

Like most everyone, we are coping with shrinking budgets. At this point, we do not have the funds to hold our reception at NCA this coming fall that many of you attend or to fund our visiting scholars next year.

Your financial support is important to our program and we use it to help our graduate and undergraduate students and the mission of the department. Donated funds:

- Help graduate and undergraduate students attend professional conferences
- Support the Communication Studies Club
- Recruit undergraduate majors and

graduate students

- Host our reception at the National Communication Association annual meeting

## Phyllis Japp Student Development Fund:

We have launched this fund in honor of Dr. Phyllis Japp who has retired from UNL this year. Please help us honor her and help top students with research and conference expenses. Those of you who were graduate students remember how challenging it was to fund these critical activities. For example, two alumni colleagues contributing \$20 a month will support one Phyllis Japp Scholar next year. Together we can make a real difference for students.

## MAKING A DONATION:

We need **financial donations**, both big and small. It is easy to set up to do an automatic monthly donation of \$10 or \$20 or any

larger amount. Making a donation takes just a couple of minutes. Follow this link: <http://nufoundation.org/Page.aspx?pid=450> or click the "Give Now" button and choose "one-time gift" or "recurring gift."

Also, we welcome **"in-kind" support**. Donors have invited students to stay with them at conferences or paid for a room for students. Others have donated technical expertise to help with our website or departmental brochures or offered to be a guest speaker at a Communication Studies Club meeting.

Contact Bill Seiler to discuss how you can make a financial or in-kind donation: [bseiler@unl.edu](mailto:bseiler@unl.edu).

We assure you that all of your support—big or small, dollars or in-kind services—mean so very much to us and our students. There *is* no Place Like Nebraska. **Go Big Red!**

Give Now!

## Spotlight on Undergraduate Alumni: An interview with Ronald E. Hallett, PhD

### 1) During which years were you a student at UNL? Which degree(s) did you earn at UNL? When did you graduate?

I completed my undergraduate degree in Communication Studies at the University in 1999.

### 2) Why did you choose a degree in Communication Studies?

I attempted several different majors before finally choosing, which is why I spent five years earning a degree. At that time the Communication Studies Department was partnering with the business and journalism schools to offer a public relations emphasis. I enjoyed my internship organizing recruitment events for the university admissions office and planned to pursue a career as a corporate event director. The combination of programs was a good fit.

### 3) What brought you to study Communication at UNL?

Being a first-generation college student, I was unaware of the college application process and my parents did not necessarily expect me to pursue a college degree. After (barely) earning my high school diploma, I started working the night shift for a telemarketing firm in Omaha. A high school English teacher, Sarah Sawin, tracked me down and strongly encouraged me to consider college. Sarah, an alumna of University of Nebraska and the Speech and Debate team, was pursuing her Master of Arts in Education at the University and offered to let me ride with her if I registered for a summer school class. I took Communication Studies 109. Every day for five weeks

she drove me from Bellevue to Lincoln. I was hooked after the first day of class. Although I was a mediocre high school student, college offered me the opportunity to engage in learning that I found useful and important.

### 4) What have you been doing since leaving UNL?

The two years after graduating I served as a member in the AmeriCorps National Civil Community Corps. I participated in service projects on the West Coast ranging from trail work and tutoring to repairing roofs on Native American reservations and assisting with the International Special Olympics. In 2001 I moved to Washington, DC to begin my public relations career; however, the culmination of missing community service and witnessing the events of 9/11 left me uncertain that I wanted to remain in the business world. Soon after I became an emergency credentialed special education teacher and earned a graduate degree at the George Washington University. In 2003 I moved to San Diego to teach students with emotional and behavior disorders. Two years later I was offered a research fellowship to support my doctoral studies in urban education reform at the University of Southern California. I am currently a first year assistant professor in educational administration and leadership at the University of the Pacific.



### 5) What has the communication degree brought to your career?

Although my focus has shifted, my interest in human behavior remains. My research focuses on increasing educational access for underserved students attending low performing schools. Many of the difficulties that students in these schools face are a result of limited access to information. I study how school staff, community groups, and peers can support these students through the educational process.

### 6) What is a favorite memory of your time in Communication Studies at UNL?

Academically speaking, Dr. Krone's course in business communication offered me an opportunity to engage in learning outside of the traditional classroom context. She encouraged us to put our learning into practice. I value her continued support of my career. In addition, being a member of the Speech and Debate team provided many opportunities to grow academically and personally.

### 7) In what ways can alumni support our department and students?

I honestly think staying connected is essential. Many opportunities exist to collaborate on projects.

### 8) What advice do you have for current undergraduate/graduate students in our department?

Communication Studies is a broad field. Alumni from the department have varied career paths within and outside of the academic environment. Find a topic that you are passionate about and actively seek out opportunities to participate in learning more about this area.

## Spotlight on Graduate Alumni: An interview with Dr. Lynn Harter, Steven and Barbara Schoonover Professor of Health Communication, Ohio University

**1) During which years were you a student at UNL? Which degree(s) did you earn at UNL? When did you graduate?**

I earned my PhD in 2000

**2) Why did you choose a degree in Communication Studies?**

My interests focus on health, healing, and organizing for social change. I found the communication discipline rich with perspectives on how lived inequities take shape and meaning through signifying practices. How do individuals experience vulnerability? What symbolic and material resources allow individuals to be resilient in the midst of inescapable suffering, trauma, illness, and disability? How can we organize resources in ways that dignify rather than diminish the human spirit? I continue to find invaluable theoretical resources in the communication discipline to answer these questions--to be responsive to lived experiences.

**3) What brought you to study Communication at UNL?**

I came to study with Dr. Kathy



Krone, and left with life-long friendships with her and Dr. Phyllis Japp.

**4) What have you been doing since leaving UNL?**

I am the Steven and Barbara Schoonover Professor of Health Communication at Ohio University. I just completed producing a documentary on pediatric cancer care sponsored

by the American Cancer Society. The documentary invites viewers into the worlds of five families living with cancer, its treatment, and what remains in the aftermath.

**5) In what ways can alumni support our department and students?**

I hope alumni will take seriously the invitation to support the Phyllis M. Japp Scholar Fund, a source of support that honors her legacy while supporting the scholarly needs of graduate students.

**6) What advice do you have for current undergraduate/graduate students in our department?**

In graduate school, I realized that the life of the mind was very much about managing the seeming paradox between safety and discomfort. As teachers and learners, we must at once create safe and sacred environments that allow participants to embrace the vulnerability and risk that accompany leaving one's comfort zone.

## Graduate Seminar to Feature Dr. Gordon Mitchell as Summer Visiting Scholar

This summer, Dr. Gordon Mitchell of the University of Pittsburgh will be offering a graduate seminar as the Summer Visiting Scholar. Dr. Mitchell is the recipient of the NCA's Winans-Wichelns Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Rhetoric and Public Address for his book *Strategic Deception: Rhetoric, Science and Politics in Missile Defense* and numerous other awards. One of the most innovative argumentation scholars in the world, Dr. Mitchell will bring his trademark blend of insight and wit to Lincoln this June with a course that will focus on how the rhetorical tradition can inform contemporary controversies about intellectual property rights and digital

publishing. The collapse of financial models for publishing and distributing academic research, systematic erosion of authors' intellectual property rights, and sheer information overload are all factors prompting universities to develop new approaches to dissemination of scholarly research. This seminar will explore how such trends implicate professional knowledge production in the field of rhetoric, and conversely, how conceptual tools from the rhetorical tradition might help elucidate ways in which the onrush of digital scholarship promises to reshape the intellectual landscape in higher education more generally.

## Communication makes a difference: Reflections from Gere McGaffey

### **1) During which years were you a student at UNL? Which degree(s) did you earn at UNL? When did you graduate?**

I graduated in 1957 with a B.Sc. in Business Administration with high distinction and a B.A. from Arts and Science with distinction. (It was reported that I was the first person to graduate with two degrees with distinction at the same time after four years at the University.)

### **2) Why did you choose to participate in forensics at UNL?**

My experience in forensics was almost entirely in debate, and therefore my comments will relate to debate, although I did some extemporaneous speaking. I had debated in high school, had attended "All-State" (a summer program at the University for high school students in speech, music and art) and knew I want to continue to debate. At the time I wanted to be a high school debate coach.

### **3) What did your forensics experience mean to you at the time? As you look back?**

Debate was the dominant and most important experience of my university years. I sometimes said that the major purpose of a university should be to sponsor a debate team.

When I came to the University, I had a great deal of energy, but it was unharnessed and not focused. Don Olson, the debate coach, emphasized that his debaters had to do well academically and talked about the success of past debaters. One of the senior debaters explained to me the importance of making Phi Beta Kappa (hence my Arts and Science degree). All this had its effect. The student with the highest grade point average upon graduation in the University two years senior to me was a debater, I had the highest average my year and the year after me a debater had the highest men's average. (In those days the University was on a 9-point scale and no one had straight 9s). I attribute my academic success at the



University and in law school to debate.

Debate gave me a group of friends, focus on academics, and, most importantly, my wife, who was the graduate assistant in debate my sophomore year. Debaters convinced me to major in accounting (I passed the CPA exam my senior year) and to go to law school.

As I look back, debate taught the fundamentals of an education: research and analysis. In addition it taught presentation skills and outlining (a valuable study tool).

### **4) What have you been doing since leaving UNL?**

After college and six months in the army and about six months with Arthur Andersen & Co., I went to Harvard Law School (four other Nebraska debaters were attending). I graduated in 1961 magna cum laude and a member of the Board of Editors of the Harvard Law Review (at that time it represented the top 5% of the class).

Upon graduation I joined the law firm of Foley & Lardner, the largest firm in Milwaukee, which then had fifty lawyers; it has now grown to over a thousand with multiple locations. My practice was primarily in tax law consisting mainly of counseling on corporate acquisitions and estate planning. In the early years, I also did public offerings,

corporate work and some utility rate work. I am limited by professional ethics in discussing much of my work for clients but some indication of its breadth can be seen from my being on the board of directors of the local gas distribution corporation, Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co.'s trust company, the board of a company controlling a Fortune 500 manufacturing concern as well as several closely-held corporations.

I had various other aspects to my life with my firm, the profession and my community. I was involved in the management of the firm, serving a term on its management committee, chairing the finance committee and chairing the tax department. Tax law, since it is constantly changing, provided me an opportunity to use my speaking skills in giving continuing legal education talks across the country. I spoke from New York to Miami, from Texas to Chicago, from Los Angeles to Seattle and, of course, at the Great Plains Tax Institute in Nebraska. There are various tax journals in which I submitted articles and I authored a nine volume treatise containing tax forms and analysis, supplemented it semiannually and wrote a single volume on corporate acquisitions.

Nationally I was active in the American Bar Association's Tax Section (an organization with over 20,000 members), chair of the Section and received its highest honor the "Distinguished Service Award." I also chaired the American College of Tax Counsel (an organization of approximately 600 tax lawyers picked for their reputation in the field) and a member of the Board of Regents of the American College of Estate and Trust Counsel. I was selected for over twenty years for a book listing America's Best Lawyers and was the first attorney to receive an award as the outstanding tax professional in Wisconsin.

The firm had such sufficient prominence in Milwaukee that it was easy to become active in many civic and charitable organizations. I was a long time member of the board of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (similar to the

## Communication makes a difference, cont.

Chamber of Commerce in other cities) and served as a Vice-Chair for Governmental Relations. I was chair of the board of Aurora Health Care (a not for profit health system now having over 15 hospitals and over 1000 employed physicians). My wife had taught at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and I served on its foundation board and chaired the Dean's advisory board at its school of Nursing. I also was a member of the advisory board to the Dean of the medical school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I was appointed to various government commissions in Wisconsin in the tax and government finance area and served as Chair of Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (a nonpartisan government finance research organization).

I played golf poorly.

### **6) What is a favorite memory of your time with UNL forensics?**

Of course, it was meeting my future wife. She had had a strong record debating for St. Olaf. One interesting event occurred at a time when she and Phil Sorensen (later governor of Nebraska and the younger brother of Ted, who was a Nebraska debater) debated Al Overcash and myself. There was a Missouri Valley tournament, after the end of the season, on a different topic, participated in by universities in the states from South Dakota to Texas. The topic involved agricultural policy. Al and I had developed a novel (not really tricky) case, which I believed was unbeatable. Ruth and Phil were taking the graduate level course in debate and they worked on the same topic.

Donald Olson believed strongly in a sheet of speaker "duties." At that time there was no cross-examination. Each speaker had a constructive of 10 minutes and a rebuttal of 5 minutes with the affirmative opening and closing. This meant there was a crucial 10 minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> negative constructive followed by 5 minutes of 1st negative rebuttal. The duty sheet prescribed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> negative constructive should present disadvantages

relating to the affirmative plan and the 1st negative rebuttal would present direct refutation. My wife had not grown up in such a system and "violated" the duty sheet by engaging in devastating refutation in 2<sup>nd</sup> negative constructive. My jaw dropped. How could anyone violate the duty sheet? And do it so well? Of course, she did have the advantage of having heard our case from me. The case evidentially was not unbeatable!

### **7) You have been a significant supporter of the department and our forensics program. In what ways can alumni support our department and students?**

All of us who have participated in debate and forensics should think about how important these activities have been to our experience at the University and helpful in later life. How much do we owe to forensic participation? We should consider paying some of it back, so others can have such experiences, at a time when so many activities at universities are being cut-back because of financial pressures. If support does not come from the alumni, I fear that sooner or later the program will be eliminated. A contribution is not only helpful for the money involved but to show the administration support for the program. Thus it is important to have wide support of the forensic program, even if it consists of small amounts.

In addition to giving cash or appreciated assets, there are other alternatives. I went the route of establishing a charitable lead trust which provides a specified amount of money for a number of years to support the debate program and after that time the funds go to my children, as part of my estate plan. For those who are not in a position to give up income from their assets, if they have stock or land that has appreciated they might consider a charitable remainder trust that would pay them an amount each year and upon their death be left to the forensics program. If one has a 401(k) plan, consideration should be given to leaving some percentage, even as small as 5 or 10% to support forensics upon death. This is an asset that is taxed very heavily upon death and leaving it to charity

will not greatly decrease the amount left to children.

### **8) What advice do you have for current undergraduate and/or graduate students in our department?**

Oral presentations are increasingly being made. There are more and more consultants. Sales are less likely to be made over lunch or at the golf course and more likely after competitive presentations relating to the product. Not only can you bring talent to these presentations, but you can advise others. Most business speakers are terrible.

I would advise adapting oral communication to technological developments. Too often these presentations are made by the speaker reading off power point slides. Power point can be a helpful tool, but it should be supportive of the presentation not dominating it. One needs to develop communication skills that place the emphasis on what the speaker is saying, not the power point slides.

Video conferencing is increasing, as it saves time in transporting people. It is becoming less expensive and of higher quality. However, it is very difficult to obtain the same effect in video conferencing as being in the same room. Developing techniques that will work well in this medium is desirable.

I suspect that learning how to speak when your language is being translated or when the members of your audience do not have English as their first language will become increasingly important. All that may be necessary is eliminating certain subtleties, using simple words and phrases and delivering in a slower pace or with more pauses, but perhaps other techniques will prove advantageous. Research and technique development for this type of speaking is necessary.

Do not neglect your ability at written communication. I am afraid that my emphasis on oral communication has hurt my written communication as it allowed me to be sloppy, not only in style, but also in grammar.

## Alumni Updates: Details on personal and professional endeavors

**Dr. Juliann C. Scholl (BA, 1994):** Dr. Scholl is Associate Professor and Interim Associate Chair of the Department of Communication Studies at Texas Tech University.

**Tamara M. Schantell (BA, 2002):** Senior Account Manager at Aureus Group, a division of C & A Industries (Privately Held; Staffing and Recruiting industry, Kansas City, MO, August 2005-Present). I specialize in: Business Development, Recruitment, Account Development, Market Penetration. Results oriented business developer who cultivates long term relationships with Inc 500 and Fortune 500 companies, CFOs, VPs of Finance, Controllers, and Human Resources professionals. Successfully recruit and place quality accounting and finance professionals by identifying clients, accounting and finance needs and adeptly match candidates' skills and capabilities to open position.

**Sarah (Butler) Smith (BA, 2003):** Upon graduation I worked in Japan for over a year with the Navigators. Currently, I work in the UNL Office of Admissions recruiting students to attend this fabulous institution!

**Kylee Kvassay (BA, 2007):** I currently work at Farmers Mutual of Nebraska as an Auto Underwriter. I started at Farmers Mutual this past September. Previously, I was working as a District Trainer at Farmers Insurance Group.

**Mark Zmarzly (BA, 1998 & MA, 2005):** After receiving my BA in Communication Studies and English, I returned to UNL for an MA in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing. After graduating in 2005, I went to work for Haberfeld Associates in Lincoln, NE. Since 2005, I have been promoted from Copy Editor, to Creative Manager, to Vice President. Personally, I'll be celebrating eight years of blissful marriage to Angie (Link) Zmarzly in August of 2010. Our family includes a 2-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Margot, and a 5-month-old son, Jude.

**Loren Dickinson (MA, 1960):** Completed an MA in 1960 in rhetoric and public address. It was a good foundation for further work. That was followed by a similar degree (Ph.D.) at University of Denver in the late 60's. Since Nebraska days, we settled at Walla Walla University for nearly 50 years of speech teaching. They finally tossed me out a few years ago and am now mentoring freshmen men at the same university.

**Jeff Philpott (MA, 1983):** Following my time at UNL I taught at Gustavus Adolphus College in MN for three years before going to the Univ. of Washington for my PhD in Speech Comm (rhetorical theory and criticism). I've taught at Seattle University since 1992. I'm a tenured member of the Communication Department and currently serve as the director of the University Core Curriculum. I am still married

to Jeanne Donovan (we were married while we both attended UNL).

**Larry Theye (BA, MA, PhD, 1977):** After retiring from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2000, I taught organizational communication for two years at the University of Maine (filling in for faculty on leave). Since that time, I have taught one course each semester at the University of Maine Hutchinson Center in Belfast, where I live. Mostly, my wife Betty and I are enjoying retirement in our oceanfront home on the coast of Maine.

**C. Thomas Preston, Jr. (PhD, 1986):** C. Thomas Preston, Jr., Ph.D. 1986, is currently Professor of Communication at Gainesville State College in Oakwood, GA. He took his current position in 2005 after serving for 21 years as lecturer, assistant professor, and associate professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He has presented over 50 convention papers and has published over 40 journal articles and book chapters. Among the programs he established or co-established in St. Louis that have continued to this day include the Study Break Debate Tournament, St. Louis Internship Program Summer Mock Trial Institute (continued at Webster University), and the St. Louis Urban Debate League. Dr. Preston currently serves on the University System of Georgia Asia Council, and has been to China five teams in either teaching or international debate adjudicating capacities. He currently advises the Gainesville State College Debate Forensics Interpretation Club, whose members are the defending state parliamentary debate champions of Georgia, and who have won two first place sweepstakes honors during the 2009-2010 school year. His research interests include argumentation, intercultural and international communication, and sports communication.

**Cheri Niedzwiecki (BA, PhD, 1986):** I am currently an Associate Professor of Communication and Women's Studies at the Univ. of WI-- La Crosse.

**Richard Boyd (PhD, 1987):** Rick will retire after 40 years of university teaching and administrative appointments. His most recent appointment was professor of communications at Rogers State University, Claremore, OK. Prior to his eight-year involvement at Rogers State, Boyd was for ten years the Dean for Academic Affairs at Athens State University at Athens, Alabama.

**Jay VerLinden (PhD, 1990):** Currently chair of the Department of Communication at Humboldt State University (California).

**Dr. Daniel Cronn-Mills (PhD, 1995):** Professor in

*...continued on next page*



Former UNL students Jim Dittus, Dave Gaer, Dan Cronn-Mills

Communication Studies, has been selected as a 2010 recipient of the MSU, Mankato Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award. A maximum of three faculty from the university community may be selected each year. The award is based on outstanding professional scholarly achievements with emphasis on originality, imagination and innovation, impact on the discipline or field of study, a national or international scholarly reputation, contributions to undergraduate and/or graduate education, and contributions to the university, profession, and wider community.

**Melanie J. Reese (PhD, 1996):** After leaving UNL in 1996, I took a lecturer position with the Dept. of Communication at Boise State University. I stayed with the department for five years and then moved to a full faculty position with the BSU College of Applied Technology in 2000, where I designed and taught their communication core. In 2009, after voters approved a new community college, I transferred to the new College of Western Idaho located in Boise/Nampa. Those who left BSU with 15+ years of service were eligible for recommendation to Emeriti status, which I was awarded in 2009. Currently, I am teaching communication courses and am the Faculty Ombuds for the College of Western Idaho. Stu and I have two boys, Braden (14) and Taylor (10). Life is good!

**Loreen N. Olson (PhD, 2000):** I completed my second Chicago Marathon with friend and colleague, Jen Aubrey, this past October 2009. My husband, Mark Fine and I have made it through potty training 3 year old twins. I am writing my first book on the dark side of family communication.

**Karla Mason Bergen (MA, PhD, 2006):** Ava Rose Foster

(daughter of my daughter Ann Bergen Foster and her husband Mark of Gothenburg) was born Dec. 2008. Much to my surprise I am LOVING being grandma!!! I keep Interstate 80 hot, commuting between Henderson and Omaha, where I still teach at the College of Saint Mary, and Henderson and Gothenburg. I was pleased to have two major publications from my dissertation come out in January 2010 in Journal of Applied Communication Research and Southern Journal of Communication. Since I am the sole full-time Communication faculty at CSM, I appreciate having other UNL colleagues Chad McBride and Paige Toller in town.

**Meredith Harrigan (PhD, 2006):** Personal: Meredith and Michael welcomed a son, Samuel Joseph Aidan Harrigan, on December 25th. Professional: Article titled "The Contradictions of Identity-Work for Parents of Visibly Adopted Children" was published in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 26, 634-658. Article titled "Exploring the Narrative Process: An Analysis of the Adoption Stories Mothers Tell Their Internationally Adopted Children" was published in the Journal of Family Communication, 10, 24-39.

**Randa Garden (PhD, 2009):** Completed her PhD. Her dissertation is entitled, *Learning about serious illnesses: Implications for instructional communication*. Her advisor was Dr. William Seiler. She was recently informed that her tenure and promotion from Instructor to Assistant Professor at Wayne State College has been approved effective with 2010-2011 academic year.

**Michelle M. Maresh (PhD, 2009):** I am currently an Assistant Professor of Communication at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and am the advisor for both of our Communication organizations: Lambda Pi Eta and the Communication Organization for Majors and Minors, as well as a Mentor for the McNair Program. Recently, I co-authored (with David E. Williams) a book chapter titled "Oil industry crisis communication" in the Handbook of Crisis Communication, edited by W. Timothy Combs and Sherry J. Holladay.



UNL PhD Grads Paige Toller (left) and Karla Bergen (right) with their advisor Dawn O. Braithwaite on graduation day, 2006



## Department of Communication Studies

### Departmental Accomplishments

Academic Year 2008/2009

#### FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UNL Communication Studies Faculty published 3 books:

- ❑ Baxter, L. A., & Braithwaite, D. O. (Eds.). (2009). *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives*. Translated and published in China.
- ❑ Braithwaite, C.A., & Glasrud, B. (Eds.) (2009). *African Americans on the Great Plains: An anthology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- ❑ Seiler, W. J., & Beall, M. L. (2008) *Communication: Making Connections* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

They published 21 articles in journals, including:

- ❑ *Communication Monographs*
- ❑ *Communication Quarterly*
- ❑ *Communication Studies*
- ❑ *Journal of Applied Communication Research*
- ❑ *Journal of Marriage and Family*
- ❑ *Journal of Family Communication*
- ❑ *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*
- ❑ *Western Journal of Communication*
- ❑ *Women's Studies in Communication*

Additionally, they published 18 book chapters in volumes such as:

- ❑ *21st Century Communication*
- ❑ *Encyclopedia of Human Relationships*
- ❑ *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*
- ❑ *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*
- ❑ *Feeling Hurt in Close Relationships*
- ❑ *Handbook of Uncertainty and Information Regulation*
- ❑ *International Encyclopedia of Communication*
- ❑ *New Directions in Interpersonal Communication*
- ❑ *New Sage Handbook of Communication Science*
- ❑ *Parents and Children Communicating with Society*
- ❑ *The Destructive Side of Organizational Communication*
- ❑ *Uncertainty Information Management and Disclosure Decisions*

They have been recognized for their research and teaching excellence, including:

- ❑ Dawn O. Braithwaite, Top Paper Award (with P.



*Bill Seiler (Chair and Professor), Cheryl Kruid (Department Administrative Assistant), Donelle Moormeier (Department Administrative Assistant), & Dawn O. Braithwaite (Willa Cather Professor of Communication and NCA President) at the 2009 NCA Convention*

- ❑ Schrodtt), Family Communication Division, NCA
- ❑ Phyllis Japp, Distinguished Book Award for *Narratives, Health, and Healing* (with L. Harter), Applied Communication Division, NCA
- ❑ Jody Koenig Kellas, Distinguished Teaching Award, College of Arts and Sciences
- ❑ Jody Koenig Kellas and Dawn O. Braithwaite (with L. Baxter, C. LeClair-Underberg, T. Routsong, M. Thatcher, & E. Normand), Top Four Paper Award, Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Interest Group, CSCA
- ❑ Kristen Lucas, Federation Prize, CSCA
- ❑ Jordan Soliz, Bruce Kendall Award for teaching excellence (2009), Excellence in Graduate Education Award (UNL, 2008), Outstanding New Teacher Award (CSCA, 2008) and Certificate of Recognition for Contributions to Students, UNL Parents' Association and UNL Teaching Council; Top Three Paper, Communication and Aging Division, NCA

UNL Faculty serve in leadership roles in our professional associations, including:

- ❑ Dawn O. Braithwaite, First Vice President and Primary Program Planner, NCA
- ❑ Jody Koenig Kellas, Chair, Family Communication Division, NCA

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*Phyllis Japp  
being honored at  
the department  
reception at the  
2009 NCA  
Convention in  
recognition of her  
retirement*

- Kathy Krone, Forum Editor, *Management Communication Quarterly*
- Damien Pfister, Forum Advisory Board, NCA
- Jordan Soliz, Chair, Communication and Aging Division, NCA

### GRADUATE STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UNL Graduate students published 13 refereed articles in journals, including:

- Communication Education*
- Communication Reports*
- Communication Research Reports*
- Communication Studies*
- Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*
- Sex Roles*
- Western Journal of Communication*
- Women's Studies in Communication*

Additionally, they published 7 book chapters:

- Cinematic Scripture*
- Encyclopedia of Human Relationships*
- Handbook of Crisis Communication*
- Media and the Apocalypse*
- The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication*

UNL Graduate Students were recognized for their research excellence with **Top Paper Awards**:

- Colleen Colaner and Haley Kranstuber, Family Communication Division, NCA
- Sarah Dirks (with S. Metts), Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Group, CSCA
- Sarah Dirks (with B. Asbury), Great Ideas for Teaching Speech Group, CSCA
- Joshua Ewalt, Master's Education Division, NCA
- Joshua Ewalt, Rhetorical Theory and Criticism Group, CSCA
- Angela Hosek, Instructional Development Division, NCA
- Haley Kranstuber, Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Group, CSCA

UNL Graduates Students serve in leadership roles in our professional associations, including:

- Aaron Duncan, Executive Secretary, Nebraska Intercollegiate Forensics
- Angela M. Hosek, Student Representative, Training and Development Division of NCA and Nominating Committee Member, Basic Course Division of NCA
- Christine Rittenour, Secretary, Communication and Aging Division of NCA

### FORENSICS PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The UNL Forensics Team added many wins to its list of accomplishments, including:

- Won 12 regional tournaments
- Placed 1st in speech at the Nebraska State tournament
- Placed 1st in debate at the Nebraska State tournament
- Qualified 67 events for the national speech tournament (an all-time best!)
- At national tournament, 14 events broke to out-rounds, 7 UNL competitors advanced to semifinals, and 5 advanced to finals
- Individual winners include 2nd and 5th in the nation in prose, 3rd in impromptu speaking, 6th in extemporaneous speaking, and 6th in communication analysis

# Department of Communication Studies Faculty

Dr. William Seiler, Professor and Chair, Instructional Communication

Dr. Dawn O. Braithwaite, Willa Cather Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Interpersonal and Family Communication

Dr. Phyllis Japp, Associate Professor, Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, Critical Research Methods, Cultural Studies and Communication & Gender

Dr. Jody Koenig Kellas, Associate Professor, Interpersonal & Family Communication

Dr. Kathleen Krone, Professor, Organizational Communication

Dr. Ronald Lee, Professor, Rhetorical Theory, Political Communication, and Critical Study of Contemporary Public Discourse

Dr. Kristen Lucas, Assistant Professor, Organizational Communication

Dr. Damien Pfister, Assistant Professor, Public Deliberation, Digital Media, Network Culture, and Rhetorical Theory

Dr. Jordan Soliz, Assistant Professor, Interpersonal & Family Communication

Dr. Charles Braithwaite, Research Professor

Dr. Karen Lee, Professor of Practice

Dr. Dennis Bormann, Professor Emeritus, Rhetorical Theory, Historical-Critical Study of Public Discourse

Dr. Vince Di Salvo, Professor Emeritus, Organizational Consulting & Training

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Department of  
Communication Studies

