GRADUATES LEAVE STARR KING AS NEW RELIGIOUS LEADERS

On a brilliant evening in late May, 11 new Starr King graduates walked down the aisle of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley to receive their crimson and gold hoods. They were Marilee Gregory-Bacchic, John Fahey, Megan Fitzgerald, Erika Hewitt, Jan Johnson, Julie Kain, John McNally, Sarah Moldenhauer-Salazar, Julia Older, Barbara Threet, and Dana Worsnop.

The Rev. Zsuzsanna Bartha, this year’s Baláz Scholar, was also draped in graduation colors, along with the Rev. Jim Mitulski and the Rev. Glenda Hope, who received honorary Doctorates of Sacred Theology from Starr King (see “SKSM Honors Notable Religious Leaders” below).

Like so many alumni from years past, Starr King’s 2002 graduates will step into the world well prepared for their roles as progressive religious leaders.

Julie Kain stayed on as summer minister of the Berkeley church where she took part in graduation ceremonies and will spend fall preparing for a December meeting with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

continued on page 4

SKSM HONORS NOTABLE RELIGIOUS LEADERS
SERVING THE MARGINALIZED

Two San Francisco religious leaders whose work serves the ill, the poor and the marginalized received Starr King honorary doctorates in May at the 2002 commencement ceremonies at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley.

The Rev. Jim Mitulski was awarded a Sacrae Theologiae Doctor in recognition of his pastoral care through the difficult years of the AIDS pandemic. From 1986 to 2001, he served as minister of the Metropolitan Community Church in San Francisco’s Castro District, one of the nation’s HIV epicenters. He now works as the executive director of Rainbow Adult Community Housing, the nation’s first nonprofit agency that builds housing for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Since retiring from full-time ministry in 2001, Mitulski also has served as program director for the Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center of the San Francisco Public Library.

“I hold Starr King School in such high esteem,” said Mitulski, a Pacific School of Religion graduate. “The Unitarian Universalist church is the model for every mainline denomination in regards to inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, as well as people with HIV.”

The Rev. Glenda Hope’s Sacrae Theologiae

continued on page 4
STARR KING LEADS MOVE TO ESTABLISH GTU ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, the Graduate Theological Union called on Starr King School and the dean of our faculty, Dr. Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajajé, Professor of Cultural Studies and Islamic Studies, for leadership.

Farajajé now serves as chair of a task force to establish a new GTU program focused on Islam, a 1,400-year-old religion with a billion adherents worldwide, including an estimated 6 million in the U.S. That committee includes GTU President James Donahue, GTU deans and scholars as well as representatives of UC Berkeley and local Muslim community leaders.

"We're now identifying the needs of the GTU and the broader Muslim community, and how they can best interact," Farajajé said.

He said the task force's immediate goal is to help the GTU faculty understand how the study of Islam is a vital part of the study of religion on "Holy Hill," as the GTU neighborhood is known. A second goal is a GTU-sponsored national symposium on Islam in spring of 2003.

This fall Starr King is offering two courses in Islamic studies—"Understanding Islam" and "History of Islam in the African American Experience," with two more scheduled for spring—"Mediating Islam" and "Introduction to Sufism."

"Starr King's commitment to the study of Islam is an ongoing tradition that started long before Sept. 11," Farajajé said. "That helps us provide leadership in this area at the GTU."

He'll teach two of the Islamic studies classes offered at SKSM this year, building on 10 years of experience teaching the subject at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

The GTU will offer "Islamic Theology" in the spring semester and plans to expand available courses in the 2003-2004 academic year as part of the two-to-three-year process of establishing the program.

"SKSM courses," Farajajé said, "reflect a commitment to look at the diversities within Islam."

continued on page 4

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM AND ISLAM

Openness to wisdom arising from the world's religions is a fundamental value in Unitarian Universalism, and it's reflected in Starr King's curricular offerings. We strive to assure that Unitarian Universalist ministerial students are well-grounded in knowledge of the world's religions. Achieving competency in interfaith engagement is a graduation requirement.

The study of Islam has special importance for Unitarian Universalists. Beyond our concern for hate crimes and civil liberty violations experienced by Muslims, we have historic ties with Islam.

New research by Dr. Alicia Forsey, SKSM Professor of Church History, is exploring the relationship between 16th century Unitarians in Transylvania and Sultan Sulejman, the Ottoman leader who expanded his empire into Hungary.

Starr King's first course to consider "Mohammedanism" was offered in 1904, the year the school was established. Regular in-depth courses have been taught at SKSM since the 1970s.

"Recent events," said the 1989 school catalog, "underscore the appalling lack of understanding in Western nations of Islam."

SKSM COLLOQUIUM TO FEATURE NOT

Liberal religious traditions, especially comparatively small traditions, are rarely given adequate or unbiased coverage in texts relating to the study of Western Christianity. The fifth Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium, Jan. 23-25, 2003 at Starr King School, will address the need for better understanding of the important role played by dissenting traditions in Western culture from the time of Jesus through the Reformation.

Colloquium speakers will represent a variety of those traditions. Among them will be John Dominic Crossan, bestselling author of more than a dozen books on the historical Jesus, who will give the keynote address, "The Historical Jesus and Divine Dissent."

Also scheduled to present are Mark Belletini, minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, Ohio, and a Starr King graduate; Sandor Kovacs, a former SKSM Balázs Scholar who
Amanda Aikman (‘93) left full-time parish ministry two years ago to pursue her dream of creating a drama ministry in Puget Sound Unitarian Universalist churches. Her one-act play, “Her Last Dispatch,” was produced this summer as part of Seattle’s Mae West Fest fringe festival, and her upcoming production, “Unheard Voices of UIUsism, I: Young Adults,” will debut this fall. Aikman serves the Port Angeles, Wash., fellowship as a quarter-time minister and is a member of the MFC’s Western Regional Subcommittee for Candidacy. She said she’s enjoying herself trying to start the BLUUBIRD Theater Company and welcomes art grant ideas for Unitarian Universalist projects.

Since graduating from SKSM, Harold Beu (‘82) served as a part-time minister in various Southern California congregations and as a full-time minister in New Hampshire, Michigan and Idaho, where he said he met “common people with uncommon wisdom and compassion.” In 1997 he married writer Julie Mack. Beu has gone back to teaching math and history to 8th and 9th graders, as well as psychology to adults, but said he misses the ministry and his colleagues.

Sean Parker Dennison (’00) has been called to serve as minister for the South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society in Salt Lake City, Utah. He’s the first settled transgendered minister in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Steve Landale (‘97) reported he was settling in well at Bell Street Chapel in Providence, R.I., where he was installed as minister in 2001, with Starr King President Rebecca Parker giving the charge. The congregation, he said, is about half gay and lesbian and appreciated his Mick Jagger lip-sync for the talent show. “It’s a fun group,” said Landale. “I’m especially enjoying pastoral care and doing religious education work with committees. I preached a sermon series on the Torah and lived to tell about it.”

Paul L’Herrou (’73) is serving a second year of interim ministry at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Kennebunk, Maine.

Kathleen McTigue (’87) has started her 11th year at the Unitarian Society of New Haven. “I’m still learning about both the gifts and the challenges of a long tenure in ministry,” she said. Her congregation broke ground this past spring for a new sanctuary. She’s also helping to organize Connecticut Clergy of all faiths to raise their voices against American militarism and putting together a meeting called “Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice.” She remains happily married and busy raising their children, ages 15, 9, and 7.

Fred Rutledge (‘58) and his wife Ann celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last Christmas Eve after he finished playing Santa at a Maryland mall. At 70 he still performs wedding ceremonies. He said he has collected over 35,000 names in a computer database as a genealogy project and published two books on the Watts and Gibbs families. He advises young ministers to fund their futures while they’re young.

Bob Senghas (’63) retired in 1989. Next year he’ll complete his term on the UIUA Board of Trustees, representing the New Hampshire-Vermont District. He serves on the UIUA board’s Finance Committee and Administrative Organization and Personnel Committee. Bob still plays chamber music on his viola. His wife Dorrie has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and Senghas reports their spirits are good. They have three grown sons and four grandchildren, most of whom live nearby, so they enjoy seeing them regularly.

This spring Norm Stewart (’99) was called as the minister of the First Unitarian Church in Louisville, Ky. For the past three years, he has directed the Program for International Partnerships, a joint venture of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the International Association of Unitarians and Universalists (ICUU) and the Partner Church Council (PCC). “We’ve been expanding congregation-to-congregation partnership opportunities beyond Central and Eastern Europe to the Philippines and the Khasi Hills of India,” he said.

Ann Tyn dall (’79) and Barbara Pescan (’81) are celebrating their seventh year of co-ministry at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Ill., and their 24th year of being together. Occasionally, they say, they’re amazed by both.

Grad Association President:
Tom Disrud
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D SCHOLAR JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN

Noted scholar and author John Dominic Crossan and the Rev. Mark Belletti, an SKSM graduate, will participate in the colloquium presented at the colloquium and will follow the theme of dissent from the Reformation to the present at its sixth Earl Morse Wilbur Colloquium, scheduled for January 2005.

The cost to register for the fifth colloquium is $325, and rooms are available at Berkeley’s nearby Hotel Durant ($115/night if booked by Dec. 23). Contact Kathleen Young, Assistant to the Dean of Continuing Education, at 510/845-6232 x 119 or cyoung@sksm.edu. Or, visit www.online.sksm.edu and click “Events” for more information.

Starr King School plans to publish papers now teaches church history in Transylvania; Rebecca Lyman, a Church Divinity School of the Pacific history professor, and Starr King professors Clare Benedicks Fisher, Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajajé and Alicia McNary Forsey, organizer of the event.

not alone from the number of objects with which we are in communion, but from depth. — THOMAS STARR KING

Rita Nakashima Brock is with Starr King this year as a visiting scholar. A former SKSM trustee, Brock is a leading Asian American feminist theologian. She’s the author of “Journeys by Heart” and co-author with Rebecca Parker of “Proverbs of Ashes.” She and Parker are working on their next book. Starr King visiting scholars are those whose work is in accordance with the school’s mission. They serve without compensation.
Dana Worsnop, who passed the MFC in February, will move to Canada, a country she regards as "maybe the most successful social democracy in the world," to serve as interim minister of the Unitarian Church of Calgary.

Julia Older, who worked as a Napa State Hospital chaplain, has begun the candidate process to find a home church, saying she's "open to the full adventure."

Jan Johnson and Marilee Gregory-Baccich have founded the Interfaith Institute for Spiritual Studies in Berkeley, where they plan to offer classes and retreats. Their certificate program will cover spiritual practice, care of the soul, counseling skills and spiritual direction, using a Sufi paradigm of consciousness development.

"The institute," Gregory-Baccich said, "will put into action a vision of world peace through people developing their deep spiritual core, one person at a time."

Barbara Threet spent this summer as a Napa State Hospital chaplain and hopes to start Ph.D. work in fall 2003.

John Fahey returned to the corporate world and said that after graduation he's "wondering where the road leads."

Erika Hewitt's internship in Chapel Hill, N.C., confirmed her calling to parish ministry. She's the new consulting minister for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Los Gatos, Calif. She'll start her new job about the same time she launches a new business, the Inner Heat Yoga Studio in downtown Berkeley.

Megan Fitzgerald is pursuing her love of youth ministry.

Sarah Moldenhauer-Salazar is preparing for her September MFC meeting and anticipating the joyful balance of two careers — ministry and parenting her young son Jonah.

John McNally is working as a half-time chaplain with Mission Hospice in San Mateo, Calif. After Starr King, he said he feels "clearer, wiser, more loving and more open to whatever else life has in store."

Doctor honored her ministry in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood.

"San Francisco Ministries is being recognized for thirty years of work with poor and marginalized people," she said, noting she regarded the award as an honor for her organization and the people it serves rather than for herself. "Starr King recognizes that we are all God's children."

A graduate of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, Hope has taught for eight years at the Pacific School of Religion. Since 1972, she has served as director of San Francisco Network Ministries Housing, in 1998 adding the directorship of SafeHouse for Women Leaving Prostitution.

Her Starr King degree joins a growing list of honors. In 1991, she was the first U.S. citizen to win the E.H. Johnson Mission's Award of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 2000, KQED, San Francisco's public television station, elected Hope as one of its "Women Making History."

The next year she was named as one of the Dalai Lama's "Unsung Heroes of Compassion."

Students entering SKSM's new M.A. program can now specialize in Islamic studies, and M.Div. students can make Islamic studies an area of focus.

All Starr King students can sign up for related UC Berkeley courses under the cross-registration system.

Historically, Farajaje said, there's a clear link between Christianity, the most populous religion in the U.S., and Islam, expected to become the nation's second largest faith by 2010.

"Certain western Christian doctrines developed in response to Islam," he said. "Since the seventh century, Islam has played an important role in influencing the development of Christianities."

That includes, Farajaje said, the relationship between Transylvanian Unitarianism and Islam now being investigated by Alicia McNary Forsey, Starr King's Professor of Church History.

For a full listing of SKSM 2002-2003 courses, visit www.sksm.edu.
A GIFT OF LOVE
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The Reverend Charlotte Shivvers ('83) and Bob Baker

Q: What does a husband do to honor the wife he loves?
A: He establishes a fund at Starr King to support, for years to come, the work she believes in.

The Rev. Charlotte Shivvers graduated from Starr King in 1983. To celebrate her nearly 20 years of ministry, her husband Bob Baker established the "Charlotte Shivvers Fund for Ministries for Social Change." His $200,000 donation of investment property, one of the most generous planned gifts to the school to date, will help support student interns from Starr King's Master of Divinity program and the new Master of Arts in Religious Leadership for Social Change (MASC), expected to start in fall 2003.

“Our M.Div. and MASC interns,” said Rebecca Ann Parker, president of Starr King, “will work in public settings, taking Unitarian Universalist leadership beyond the walls of our congregations. Bob’s gift is an important piece of that work.” Shivvers and Baker met in the early 1970s while serving in the leadership of the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek, Calif. Shivvers came to Starr King in 1980 after years of work as a teacher and community activist.

“I was looking,” she said, “for a life-changing experience that would help me be of more use.”

What she found at the school was a “well nigh overwhelming experience of self affirmation.” What Bob found was the “awesome power of a caring community.”

“For me,” he said, “it was the deepest experience I’ve had with Charlotte in terms of watching her grow and expand. I felt a part of that then and have felt it ever since. I love Charlotte and so appreciated how much her Starr King experience meant to her. For me, the school has long been a spiritual beacon.”

Shivvers was ordained in 1983 at the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley. She went on to a 10-year ministry in Los Angeles (she is Minister Emerita of the Sepulveda congregation there), followed by interim ministries in Omaha and Kansas City, Mo., where she became known for her competent, caring leadership.

She and Baker, a retired high school teacher and counselor, now live in Knoxville, Iowa, in the farmhouse where Shivvers was born. She’s involved in an informal farm and ecology ministry and serves on the state Democratic Party platform committee. The two are members of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines.

Baker wanted his gift to recognize Shivvers’s accomplishments.

“I was aiming,” he said, “to have Charlotte remembered in terms of what she lived her religious life for – social justice and spiritual knowledge. I’ve always thought she has been a terrific minister and that Starr King was a high point in both of our lives.”

If you would like to support Starr King’s life-changing work through a planned gift and receive significant tax advantages or an income for life, contact Pam Allen-Thompson, SKSM’s Centennial Campaign Director and planned giving officer, at panallenthompson@sksm.edu.

INDONESIAN ART
SALE AND RECEPTION

Lovely arts, crafts and textiles collected by Clare Benedicks Fischer, Starr King’s Professor of Religion and Culture, and Joe Fischer, a nationally known expert in Indonesian art who will discuss the artisans and the rich cultural context of their work.

2-5 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 6
Starr King School

Sale proceeds will support the Roz Reynolds Endowed Scholarship Fund at Starr King.

TIL EVANS PROFESSORSHIP
FUNDING GAINS MOMENTUM

So far, Starr King graduates and friends have contributed more than $300,000 in support of the new Til Evans Professorship in Religion and Education.

Over $20,000 of that total, said the Rev. Kelly Flood, Starr King’s Advancement Director, came from graduates and supporters of the school who contributed the offerings from their ordination and installation ceremonies.

Named in honor of Evans, a Unitarian Universalist minister, longtime teacher and former president of the school, the professorship reflects Starr King’s enduring commitment to liberal religious education.

“This professorship,” Flood said, “will promote Til’s encompassing approach to the practice of religion and education – one emphasizing that the Unitarian Universalist church teaches and learns by what it does.”

If you would like to support the Til Evans Professorship and the future of theological education, please contact Flood at klflood@sksm.edu or phone Starr King at 510/845-6232, x107.

A fire in the soul. A revolution of the spirit.
SCHOOL LAUNCHES
STARR KING ONLINE DIRECTORY

At home, on the road or sipping lattés in a cyber café, our graduates can now access each other anytime and anywhere through Starr King’s new online directory.

Loaded with the most up-to-date information, this directory also lists our trustees, faculty, staff and students. SKSM community members can search for each other by name, state of residence or year of graduation.

The system restricts access to the Starr King community only – a personal password is required to gain entry. A click of “Update this record” within each grad’s personal contact page and he or she can instantly change everything from a phone number to an e-mail address or personal password.

With each change, the system will automatically notify Starr King so we can keep current with your busy lives and make sure you continue to receive SKSM publications.

There’s also a space where grads can post information about job changes, family events or other news to share.

Our Starr King Online Directory address is easy to remember: www.sksm.edu/dir. If you haven’t received your personal password and want to visit this new electronic address book, contact Sara Schwartz Kendall, Starr King’s Annual Funds Director, at SaraSK@sksm.edu or call 510/845-6232 x107.

NEW SKSM E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Another SKSM “cyber change” is our new, easy-to-remember e-mail address. We’ve switched to a system that incorporates the Starr King acronym. In most cases, you can easily write a staff or faculty member by using a first initial, a last name and then “@sksm.edu.”

To reach school departments:

- General mailbox
  starrking@sksm.edu
- Admissions
  admissions@sksm.edu
- Communications
  communications@sksm.edu
- President’s office
  president@sksm.edu
- Advancement
  advancement@sksm.edu
- Continuing Education
  continuingeducation@sksm.edu

Thomas Starr King believed that God’s spirit was in every person and every thing.