Campaign for Til Evans Professorship Announced

Starr King School for the Ministry will raise $500,000 to endow a professorship in religion and education in honor of Til Evans, who taught at the school for three decades.

President Rebecca Parker publicly announced this fund-raising campaign in February at a gathering of Unitarian Universalists from the Palo Alto congregation, where Evans just completed service as the interim minister of religious education.

“This professorship,” said Eliyahou Farajaje, dean of SKSM’s faculty, “reflects the school’s foundational commitment to liberal religious education – a commitment we embody in our educational practices and that we prepare our graduates to embody in the world.”

An initial challenge gift of $100,000 from Dr. Lee Lawrence, a lifelong Unitarian Universalist committed to progressive education and social activism, started the endowment campaign. Gifts of $10,000 or more to match Dr. Lawrence’s challenge have already been offered by Arliss and Art Ungar, Pam and Di Allen-Thompson, Jean Gillet and Kay Pauling.

At Darcey Laine’s (’98) February installation as Palo Alto’s newly settled minister of religious education, the offering was dedicated to this new professorship. Forrest Gilmore (’99), who made the appeal, personally pledged $1,000, inspiring the congregation to give an additional $4,000.

In June, Til Evans will travel to General Assembly in Cleveland to appear with Parker as an honored guest at the Starr King President’s lecture. Parker will give the address this year to note her 10 years of Starr King leadership.

“At General Assembly,” said Parker, “we’ll celebrate our launching of this endeavor with graduates and friends of the school. Our long-term goal is to raise $1.5 million to fully endow the Til Evans chair. We plan to make this effort part of Starr King’s Centennial Campaign, scheduled for 2004. When that money is raised, we’ll fill the position, bringing our core faculty to eight members.”

Parker encouraged anyone interested in helping the school raise funds for the Til Evans endowment to contact her at the school or Kelly Flood, SKSM’s development director, at RevFlood@aol.com.

New SKSM Website Pulls Universalism from the Shadows

Forty years ago American Unitarians and Universalists consolidated their movements, agreeing on a merger of facilities and philosophies. Yet, over the past decades, Universalism slipped into the shadow of its theological partner. Now a new Starr King Website will shed light on the movement’s history and scope of influence in today’s Unitarian Universalist world.

Led by second-generation Unitarian Alicia McNary Forsey, SKSM’s professor of Church History and dean of Continuing and Extension Education, the Website (http://online.sksm.edu/universalism.htm) will incorporate a Universalism timeline, biographies of historical figures, events, hymns and other worship materials from long-gone churches, writings, resource links and religious education materials.

It’s a project to help fill in the blanks of a movement that included a tradition of itinerant preachers, showman P.T. Barnum and America’s first female ordained minister, Olympia Brown. “The Universalist side of me was saying, remember to be fair,” said Forsey, who conceived of the site. “Lots of ministers graduate from seminary never having learned about the Universalists. The St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education supported Starr King’s desire to strike a better balance.”

This New York-based foundation, which administers resources left from the former Universalist St. Lawrence Theological School, is funding the project.

Please turn to UNIVERSALISM on back page.

Yet this life, though broad as we have interpreted it, may be superficial. The true abundance comes not from intensity, and not alone from the...
Research Prompts Global Travel

Politics and religion on opposite sides of the world proved to be central concerns for Clare Benedicks Fischer, Starr King’s Aurelia Reinhardt Professor of Religion and Culture, during her fall 2000 sabbatical leave.

Starting her travel last summer, she led a tour group to Indonesia, where she also taught and conducted research. In November she visited Transylvania to lecture at the Protestant Theological Seminary in Kolozsvar. Both regions of the globe provided material for Fischer’s research focus—civil society and the role of religion, especially liberal religion, in the promotion of democratic engagement.

Over the past two decades, Fischer has spent a great deal of time in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim nation spread over about 14,000 islands. During her most recent visit she took part in a major research project, funded by a University of California Pacific Rim grant, that studied the role of one interfaith organization in central Java.

This small group has been working to diminish misunderstanding and violence between Christians and Muslims in a country wrecked by political and religious upheaval. Fischer’s preliminary analysis of the group’s interfaith activities will be published later this year.

In Bali, she turned her attention to tourism and the role of privately owned museums. Later, in October, she presented her findings at Sociology of Religion meetings in Texas.

From Bali, Fischer went on to Java and Sulawesi, where she taught courses in religion and politics as well as feminism and theology to Indonesian ministers. Please turn to FISCHER on back page.

Spring Brings Another Visiting Minister to SKSM

Birds are chirping, flowers are blooming and David Pettee has come to Starr King to serve as the school’s visiting minister for spring.

Through his half-semester stay, Pettee, a 1988 graduate of the school, will offer guidance to students and teach “This Grand and Holy Revolution,” a history of Unitarian Universalist community ministry.

He also plans to continue his research on the life of John Turner Sargent, a 19th century Unitarian minister from Boston, famous for his stand on freedom of the pulpit.

“He was way ahead of his time,” said Pettee of Sargent, who was also active in the abolition, temperance and women’s suffrage movements.

At Starr King, Pettee is taking a break from full-time hospice ministry. Other usual responsibilities include a community minister affiliation with the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, presidency of the local Pacific Central District UUMA chapter and service on the Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy.

“I’m looking forward,” he said, “to passing on some of the wisdom about the ministry I’ve accumulated over the years.”

VP Joins SKSM Admin Team

From the office cubicles of San Francisco, by way of Canada’s vast inland prairie, comes Thomas Smith, the latest addition to Starr King’s administrative team.

In January, Smith started his new job as the school’s vice president. He’s now responsible for administrative coordination; accounting and other financial oversight; personnel matters; building maintenance, equipment and supplies; purchasing and daily operations at SKSM.

Born and raised on a farm in Alberta, Smith, 32, has worked in administration and operations management for the past 12 years. Before that he spent three years as a paramedic for an ambulance company, where he learned how to extract victims from collapsed vehicles and survive Alberta’s harshest winter storms, sometimes simultaneously.

Smith’s resume includes non-profit experience both in Canada and the U.S. He served as director of administrative services for a San Francisco church and as a supervisor for the Alberta Government Department of Health. Before coming to Starr King, he worked as an office administrator for the Pacific Business Group on Health in San Francisco.

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed the time I’ve been here and look forward to the coming year,” said Smith. “Starr King strikes me as a warm, caring environment rooted in diverse views that bring interesting ideas to the school.”

Date for Dinner at G.A.

Plans are underway for the Starr King Graduates Dinner, one of the best opportunities all year to connect with old friends, said Michelle Tonozzi (‘89), Grad Association president.

This special event will take place Friday evening, June 22 at General Assembly in Cleveland. SKSM graduates, she said, should watch the mail in May for an invitation that includes dinner details.

Please send address changes to make sure this letter arrives on time and in the right place. For more information, contact Michelle at tonozzi@tcfreenet.org.
Great News
The Shelter Rock congregation in New York voted in February to give SKSM $500,000 for student financial aid over the next five years. This gift triples available funds for Starr King students. Thank you, Shelter Rock! A February fund-raiser in San Francisco boosted the Balazs scholarship fund by $8,400.

Summer Session
Starr King will offer six classes at the Graduate Theological Union's 2001 Summer Session. Those include:

- Poetry as Prayer
  Marcia Falk
  July 2-6

- Exploring Our Spiritual Selves Through Dreamwork
  Jeremy Taylor
  July 16-20

- Transforming Ritual Garments
  Jenny Johnston
  July 16-20

- The Heart of the Mind: Spiritual Philosophy and the Work of Love
  Jacob Needleman
  July 18-20

- Song of the Soul: Singing Our Praise, Power and Prayers
  Betsy Rose
  July 23-27

In the Beginning: The Creative Arts of Worship
Lynn Ungar
Aug. 6-10

For details: www.gtusummersession.org

Accommodations are available through the GTU.

George McDonough ('50) describes himself as "actively retired" in Seattle. After receiving his M.Div., he served Unitarian churches in San Francisco and Eugene, Ore., then became a professor at Chicago State University, University of Maryland, University of Washington, Hamline University and Seattle Pacific University. In his last academic position, he was a graduate seminar professor of Theological Bibliography at George Fox University, a Quaker institution in Oregon. George became a widower in May 2000 when his wife of 52 years, Roxy Elizabeth, passed away.

Martha Frederick ('97) says she has "finally found the place I'm supposed to be." That's Albuquerque, N.M., where she works part-time as a hospice chaplain in a 360-bed nursing home and is a lay leader at the First Unitarian Church. Martha bought her first house last year. "I love being a homeowner," she said. She has a huge backyard for her dogs and three lilac bushes, plus work is just a five-minute drive away. She'll travel to Berkeley in November for her second MFC interview.

The great northland has been good to Karen Gustafson ('85) who recently finished her 15th year at the First Unitarian Church of Duluth, Minn. Her congregation numbers about 200, and odds are they'll break ground for a new church about the first of May, after a successful capital campaign. "We can go backwards now," said Karen. In addition to church duties, she's serving on the Midwest Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy and enjoying her home in the woods, about 300 yards from the shore of Lake Superior. Karen also reports she spent her sabbatical at Meadville/Lombard and visited Cape Cod for a UUA ministerial leadership seminar, where she enjoyed spending time with six other SKSM grads.

Bill Haney ('89) is enjoying his second sabbatical since settlement nearly 12 years ago at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Columbia, Mo. This year the church is celebrating its 50th anniversary. SKSM associate faculty member Jeremy Taylor will partake in the celebration. Bill is serving as winter quarter minister in residence at Meadville/Lombard. "I'm taking the time to look at my ministry, since we're moving into a shared ministry church program," he said. He started a worship associates pilot program based on the Oakland, Calif., First Unitarian Church model. In the next few years, he plans to establish the Columbia church as a teaching congregation with an endowed ministerial internship program.

Catherine Harris ('66) is still feeling "blessed and amazed" after seven years to be serving a congregation in her home city of Boulder, Colo. In September she completed her first sabbatical, which included trips to South Africa where she said she was inspired by "multiracial nation building," and to Transylvania for the Project Harvest Hope pilgrimage. Transylvania, she said, touched her interests in the global economy, sustainable agriculture as well as the Unitarian heritage and its connections to Judaism.

Last year Mark Harris ('78) published an anthology, "Celebrating Easter and Spring," he edited with the late Carl Seaburg, information director at the UUA for many years. He's now serving his fifth year at the First Parish of Watertown, Mass., and looking forward to a 2002 sabbatical. That's when he hopes to finish a "Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism," to be published by Scarecrow Press. "I've been working on it forever," said Mark. On the homefront, he said his four sons, ages 2 to 21, keep him "somewhat occupied."

Paul L'Herrou ('73) is in the midst of his second year of an interim ministry in Harvard, Mass. He says he's enjoying his grandkids in Virginia and flew down over the holidays to see his 13-year-old grandson perform on stage in "Amal and the Night Visitors."

In Connecticut, Kathleen McTigue ('87) has celebrated a decade at the Unitarian Society of New Haven. In January she welcomed Danita Nolans ('00) as associate minister. This multiple ministry, said Kathleen, is a first for the congregation and all are pleased. Other church news includes a groundbreaking this spring for a new 400-seat sanctuary and adapting the old building for disabled accessibility. Karen also has started volunteer work in a new prison hospice program.

Jim Norman ('86) has spent the last six years as executive of the New Hampshire/Vermont UUA district. "I learned my skills working at the feet of Robbie Cranch," he said of the 1980 SKSM graduate who serves as a Pacific Central District consultant. Thanks to the beauty of the region and a couple of grandchildren in New York, Norman, a native Californian, has decided to stay put in New England. He has taken to hiking and snowshoeing in a part of the country famed for its pastoral views.

In January, Marion B. Visel ('98) was ordained by The Unitarian Church in Westport, Conn. UUA Moderator Denny Davidoff asked for the offering, which went to Starr King School and the Connecticut Hospice, where Marion works as a chaplain.

Earl Holt ('72) reports that after 27 years at First Unitarian Church in St. Louis, he has been called to King's Chapel in Boston. He'll preach for the last time in the St. Louis church on Easter Sunday, April 15, then start his new position May 1. His St. Louis congregation will host a farewell gala April 20. Holt's King's Chapel installation service is scheduled for 4 p.m., June 10 with Peter Gomes, minister of The Memorial Church at Harvard University, preaching for the occasion. "Leaving a church and city after such a long association is not easy," said Holt. "As my wife, Marilyn, and I depart, construction has begun on a more than $2 million building addition and renovation program. We've requested that any farewell gifts be directed to the capital campaign." Holt added that his older daughter, Alicia, recently moved from Chicago to Phoenix, where she's working as a learning disabilities specialist. His younger daughter, Julia, lives and works in the Washington, D.C., area and is considering business school.

To the extent that the moral and spiritual sentiments are active and healthy, this is no mere pulpit talk. This is solidly and scientifically true.
"This teaching is particularly gratifying," Fischer said, "because the students’ commitment comes with great personal risk in a country that has been continuously ruptured by conflict."

Her students, she said, represented a triple minority status; they were dark-skinned Christians from eastern Indonesian islands, who also felt dissatisfaction with the central government.

"This work augments the kind of teaching I do at Starr King," said Fischer, "and gives me a palpable sense of why religion is a pivotal institution in relation to governance and political order. These ministry students, many of them already ministers who were participating in an advanced program, are dealing with life and death issues."

Fischer sees some parallels between the Indonesian ministers and students at the Protestant Seminary in Koloszar. Through the Rev. Kinga-Reka Szigmond, SKSM’s 1999/2000 Balazs Scholar, she arranged to speak to the Transylvanian seminarians on civil society and religion, especially in regards to democratic aspirations.

"It was a great time to be there," said Fischer, "because of the U.S. national elections going on and the Romanian elections only two weeks away. I was able to discuss with the students issues surrounding the question of church and state."

While in Transylvania, Fischer also spent time in two Hungarian-speaking Unitarian villages and at a youth conference.

"Transylvania is poor in its resources but not in its people," she said. "Their religious traditions remain sturdy and substantial."

Now home, Fischer has resumed teaching at Starr King and has stepped back into the directorship of the Graduate Theological Union’s Center for Ethics and Social Policy.

Universalism continued from page 1

SKSM graduate Nada Velimirovic (’97), a fourth-generation Universalist whose grandmother was an active member of Boston’s Charles Street Meeting House, serves as project leader.

Starr King students Barbara Threett, Lyn Cox and Jeff Gould are also involved. Barbara, who was raised in upstate New York, once a stronghold of Universalism, is researching the movement’s history. Lyn is electronically scanning sermons, journals, pamphlets and books, some long out of print, to post on the Website. Jeff is designing and constructing the site, which includes historic prints and photographs.

The team has unearthed a wealth of material dating from 1701 to the present. Meeting minutes of the Southhold (New York) Sisterhood, dating from 1845 to 1945, record a long line of rummage sales, chicken pot pie dinners, cleaning parties and sewing circles that helped keep the church in operation. Oral histories tell the consolidation story from the perspective of Universalists who participated in the process, among them Gordon McKeeman, SKSM president from 1983 to 1988.

Via the Web, these historical records and others will be made available to anyone in the world. Eventually, said Velimirovic,” another section will explore Universalism’s threads of influence some scholars say date back to the Fourth Century.

"We plan to put out a call for papers on Universalism topics," she said. "It’s going to be a significant Website free to visitors. And it will never be finished because we’ll constantly update."

The site’s first phase went online mid-March, and an expanded version will hit the Web in May.

"This is a project we hope will address an imbalance that has existed in our movement since 1961," said Forsey.