Are you a Friend of Education?
(see page 7)
Exercise Science in the 21st Century

Michael Mangum, Acting Chair, Department of Health, Physical Education & Exercise Science

Science fiction writers during the 1900s used the 21st century as a platform to discuss contemporary social issues cloaked in a futuristic setting. By doing so they could examine relevant and sometimes contentious issues of the day in a less threatening setting. Unfortunately for science fiction writers, the 21st century is here. Armageddon, pestilence, earthquakes, environmental disaster, and foreign invasion will need to find a new literary home. For the rest of us, the 21st century is a time of hope and anticipation. Seemingly limitless opportunities and technologies abound that only science fiction writers (and a few people smarter than the rest of us) envisioned as recently as 25 years ago.

So what will the 21st century hold for the exercise science major?

In this century, exercise science professionals can use hand-held devices to access occupational, medical, health, and fitness information that was virtually unavailable to most in the 20th century. That information will be carried over many thousands of miles of copper wire, or—far more likely—be plucked out of the air from electromagnetic energy relayed by towers on land and/or satellites floating in the cold recesses of space. Future exercise science professionals will investigate the requirements for individuals who want to work in the fitness industry whether in private, corporate, or medical settings. They will be able to examine prerequisites for medical schools around the nation, and they will inform themselves about physical therapy, occupational therapy, and physician’s assistant programs. Armed with that information, they will be able to plan their academic program of study to meet their needs, abilities, and motivation, rather than be forced into a one-size-fits-all curriculum.

In the coming decade, exercise science professionals will examine in real time the metabolic consequences of exercise on human physiology. Instantaneously, they will have information that would have required months of time and effort to acquire as recently as 1980. They will examine the caloric expenditure of many types of exercise or other human endeavors, investigate fat and carbohydrate utilization during both daily living and during exercise on exotic ergometry. They will be able to demonstrate empirically the imbalance between caloric intake and energy expenditure that contributes to childhood and adult obesity. The 21st century—already in its second decade—will be a time for showing all of us, students and non-students, the effects of diet, exercise, sedentary behavior, and stress on human function. At CSU, exercise science majors will no longer be merely reading about these things in a textbook.

Before we know it, evaluation of cardiovascular and respiratory function through graded exercise testing, electrocardiography, and modern turbine-based spirometry apparatus will be routine. Relevant skills will be learned by our undergraduates that are applicable in fitness, wellness, and medical environments. What can be learned will be limited only by the individual.

In the 21st century, exercise science students and professionals will be contributing citizens in a rapidly changing world. They will learn for today and develop the capacity to respond to future needs. The 21st century is now.

About the Stack

The photos on the left, the Stack, capture part of what is going on at Columbus State University and in the College of Education & Health Professions. They depict (from top to bottom) Dawn Frazier (foundations and research) and Eddie Obleton (teacher education), new faculty members; Sandy Little (early childhood) and grad assistant Julie Hardcastle hanging a piece of children’s art; former dean David Rock and Brenda Gross at his going-away luncheon in June (center); Evelyn Blalock (special education) and daughter Ella at the 2009 Chispa holiday party; and (bottom) nursing students checking each other’s vital signs. Chispa is the Columbus State Hispanic Association.
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and more . . .

About the Cover
Depicted on our cover is Jack's Story Time, a sculpture by artist Gregory Johnson. Like good readers everywhere, Jack visualizes as he reads: Mother Goose, one of the three little pigs, and other characters from children’s literature. The statue may be viewed up close and personal on the northwest corner of Broadway and 11th Street in Uptown Columbus.
Faculty in the College of Education & Health Professions had a surprise waiting for them as fall classes began. On August 11, Interim Dean Ellen Roberts announced that professors would be provided with a new iPad for instruction and research. More than sixty faculty and others received one of the devices.

Technology professor Larry Moore points out that the iPad has much potential for teaching, learning, and student engagement. “Being an advocate of digital media,” he comments, “I see that the iPad is a great tool for accessing content through iTunes and especially podcasts on iTunes University.

Describing a supervisory meeting in a space with no computer, Lenoir Gillam (Counseling) said, “Thanks to the iPad and CSU’s wireless environment, I am able to show content on CougarVIEW that is specific to our discussion right in that moment. Even if there had been a computer and screen in the conference room, the use of the iPad was much more efficient. In less than one minute, I had the relevant material at my fingertips.”

Amanda Hawkins (Nursing) will use her iPad in a clinical setting. “I will allow my students (with my supervision) to research information on the Internet regarding a diagnosis, new drug, or questions they may have regarding the care of their assigned patient(s).” Other nursing faculty are likely to follow suit.

COEHP.TV Makes a Splash on Apple iTunes

Perhaps in anticipation of the iPad windfall, Michael Baltimore, Executive Director of COEHP.TV, recorded and then broadcast a series of seven podcasts titled “iPad Fundamentals.” In the first segment, Baltimore deals with a very basic task, taking the iPad out of the box and turning it on. Other segments walk viewers through various apps and other features of the iPad.

Baltimore’s series caught the eye of Apple iTunes, which featured “iPad Fundamentals” on their web site during the week of July 5. Baltimore reports that there were more than 75,000 visits to the program during that week. As of late August, about 2,500 visits to “iPad Fundamentals” each week are typical.

Readers may choose to see for themselves at http://coehp.tv/on_demand.php.

Surprise! iPads Are Newest Tool for Teaching and Research

Camille Lawrence, assistant professor of research and foundations since August, gets to know her new iPad. Lawrence holds degrees from William & Mary and the University of Virginia. She is a veteran of Teach for America.

Other professors noted ways they intend to improve their teaching using the iPad. Several, for example Jeanine Wert (Health/PE), anticipate downloading teaching evaluations of student teachers and practicum students.

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Three senior professors—Rhonda Hollis (Nursing), Rochelle (Ricky) Ripple, and James Brewbaker—retired prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year. Ripple and Brewbaker were members of the Teacher Education Department.

Hollis joined the Columbus State faculty in 1988 after 12 years as a public health nurse in Fulton County. She was recruited by Dr. Marlene Mitchell Tibbs, who was then the head of the nursing program. During recent years, she was credentialed by Indiana University in web-based teaching, and she developed several instructional modules used in the nursing program. Her professional focus is in psychiatric/mental health.

Ripple came to Columbus State in 1990 after serving in an array of positions—both as teacher and school administrator—in New York and Wyoming. Most recently, she developed and coordinated the on-line M.Ed. in Accomplished Teaching. A recipient of the CSU Faculty Service Award in 1994, she also worked closely with the Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). She remains faculty advisor to Hillel, the Jewish student organization in its first year on campus.

Brewbaker, English education professor since 1971, served 12 years as department chair for Curriculum & Instruction. During the 1980s and 1990s, he directed campus-based enrichment programs for middle- and high-school students. More recently, he was poetry editor of English Journal (2003-2008). He retires as senior professor on campus.

Ripple and Brewbaker will work part-time at CSU in 2010-2011—Ripple on a course-by-course basis, Brewbaker at approximately half of his former teaching load. He will remain editor of the Education & Health Quarterly. Hollis says she wants to do volunteer work, purchase an e-reader, and “download lots of books to quench my longtime thirst for reading.”

Changes, Changes, and More Changes at Columbus State

With more than 75 years of combined service at CSU, Hollis, Brewbaker, and Ripple observed or took part in many changes at Columbus State.

Hollis recalls the transition from having two phone lines for the entire faculty of the nursing program to acquiring individual phone lines. “In addition, there were no individual computers for nursing faculty or email,” she recalls. “Gone forever are those days!!!”

Brewbaker cites growth as a primary development at what was, in 1971, Columbus College. “I was the eleventh faculty member hired in the education division. There were no graduate programs, no dean, and no departments. Things had a family feel.” Today there are approximately 40 faculty in education, counseling, leadership and health/PE/exercise science.

When asked about changes she had observed, Ripple put it simply. “Everything [has changed]! If it remains the same, it is going backwards.”

The Rest of the Story? . . .

There are four restrooms on the first floor of CSU’s Jordan Hall, two designated for faculty members. There is more to the story than this, however. Which explanation that follows is “the rest of the story”?

(a) restrooms were remodeled in the 1980s to better accommodate those with disabilities.
(b) two of the restrooms were originally set aside for use by children visiting the building.
(c) when the ROTC program was housed in Jordan Hall, regulations required separate restrooms for officers and enlisted personnel.
(d) none of the above—these restrooms have always been as they are, two for faculty and two for everyone else.

Answers on p. 13
COEHP Proposes Graduate Programs in Nursing and Special Education

The College of Education & Health Professions (COEHP) is moving forward with proposals to offer new graduate programs. At a September meeting of the CSU Graduate Council, two programs—the Master of Science in Nursing and the Education Specialist in Special Education—were submitted for implementation as early as the 2011-2012 academic year.

On campus, each has been approved by the Curriculum Committee.

The MS in Nursing has been in the planning stage for some time. Its design calls for a partnership with Clayton State University in south metro Atlanta. The EdS in special education will have two strands: (1) administration of special education services and (2) provision of adaptive and assistive technology services.

Program proposals are subject to review and approval by CSU Interim Provost/VPAA Tom Hackett. Given favorable action by the provost, proposals go to the Board of Regents. The two graduate programs from the COEHP are among five from Columbus State University recommended by the Graduate Council for speedy implementation.

Over Labor Day weekend, the Altrusa Club of Columbus sold thousands of books to fund its projects and scholarships.

Active in the community for nearly 60 years, the Altrusa Club of Columbus supports an array of projects benefiting children, teachers, and libraries. At its most recent book sale (September 3-6), the group raised significant amounts of cash that it awards strategically to benefit literacy activities, the arts, and education.

Altrusa awards scholarships to Columbus State students in music, theatre (including theatre education), and teacher education. Its newest scholarship is named in honor of Anne Dougherty Pergl, who taught in Muscogee County schools for nearly 30 years prior to her untimely death in 2007.

Ms. Pergl was a past president of Altrusa. A book she authored (along with illustrator Mary Lewis Dougherty), The Adventures of Wally the Water Drop, is distributed free to area third graders, including Fort Benning children.

Tameka Hensley, an English and Secondary Education major from Phenix City, received the 2010 Pergl Scholarship. She completed student teaching at Northside High School.

Tameka Hensley, a 2010 CSU graduate and Pergl Scholarship recipient, now teaches at Russell County Middle School.

Over the past 40 years, Salter estimates that Altrusa of Columbus has donated over $170,000 in the form of grants, awards, and contributions to local recipients.

The organization’s book sale began as a biennial event in 1976 but, due to its popularity, became an annual affair 30 years ago. Persons interested in the Altrusa Club of Columbus—and those who wish to contribute books for the 2011 sale—should contact Ms. Salter at 706/327-0249.

Got Books? Altrusa Does!

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Founded locally in 1953, the Columbus group takes on numerous good causes. In 1970, for example, it collected 1,000 books and established a library at the Muscogee County Jail. More recently, it has provided significant support to Ronald McDonald House.

Lesser known benefactors of Altrusa’s generosity are low-income adults who cannot afford the cost ($95) to register for the GED examination. “If your work is bagging up french fries,” explains chapter president Marnie Salter, “that $95 is a whole lot of money.”

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Owen Ditchfield, inducted into the Education Hall of Fame in 2008, served many years as a media specialist in Fort Benning Dependent Schools. Now retired, he is a mainstay at Broadway’s Saturday Market, where he sells everything from tomatoes and dried pears to a dozen varieties of peppers. His digs—both his dwelling and garden—are in South Columbus.

This past July Ditchfield swapped his farmer duds for travel attire. He and wife Mabel spent two weeks visiting children and grandchildren in China.

The Saturday Market—between 10th and 11th Street on Broadway—continues through the end of October.
Busy Times at Oxbow Meadows Environmental Education Center and the Coca-Cola Space Science Center

Anna Rodriguez

Between the nature programs at Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center and the space and astronomy programs at the Coca-Cola Space Science Center (CCSSC), the greater Columbus community didn’t have much time to be lazy this past summer. As fall semester began, both centers were in the midst of new projects and expansions that promise even more dynamic educational experiences.

Space Science Center—Astronomy on the Go, Teacher Training, and Vodcasts

Popular outreach activities from the summer months involved the CCSSC’s StarLab portable planetarium. Space Science Center staff Zach Coker and Matt Bartow took StarLab on the road to Phenix City, where they introduced children to the solar system and major constellations.

StarLab is a dome-shaped inflatable tent resembling an overgrown igloo in which up to 60 may observe the night skies projected onto the inside of the dome. The smaller StarLab planetarium holds about 30 people.

“We start by explaining how many planets there are, where they are at different times, and we show them some of the constellations and big stars. It was kind of a crash-course in astronomy,” says Coker, a 2010 graduate of the Savannah Colleges of Art & Design. “They loved it.”

Coker and Bartow, a CSU business major, continue to make presentations to school groups this fall.

Teachers Learn How to Teach Astronomy

The Space Science Center also hosted a two-week program in June designed to train teachers in astronomy education. GEARS (Georgians Experience Astronomy Research in Schools), funded by NASA, was led by CSU physics professor Zodiac Webster. During the program, 20 area teachers learned about resources and materials to use when teaching astronomy at the high school level.

Among key resources they worked with were the Mead Observatory’s Remote Imaging Solar Observatory (RISO), spectroscopic tubes, online data repositories and analysis tools, and more. The Mead Observatory is on-site at the Center.

Staff astronomer Rosa Williams explained that workshop participants used the Mead Observatory to engage in solar research.

“The looked at solar activity and analyzed it,” explains Williams. “This seminar leads teachers, allowing them to lead their students.”

GEARS was developed and proposed in 2009 by Webster, Williams, and Juan Carlos Aguilar, a science program manager at the Georgia Department of Education. They anticipate offering more workshops in the future.

Also in June, the Space Science Center introduced teachers to state-of-the-art technology was through a vodcast project. In this three-day workshop, 12 Muscogee County teachers learned how to create educational vodcasts, brainstormed methods of incorporating them into classroom instruction, and explored techniques for properly shooting video. (For the digital immigrant, a vodcast is a video file created for download to a computer, MP3 player, or other device.)

The vodcast project was the result of a partnership between Muscogee County Schools and the DoDEA (Department of Defense Educational Activity). CCSSC staff provided technical assistance.
“The main uses [for these vodcasts] are for military/civilian transfer students to catch up to current instruction in the classroom,” says Michael Johnson, CCSSC’s coordinator of external programming. “Teachers also use them for original instruction in the classroom and for after-school remediation.”

The vodcasts will be available this fall at www.mcsdpodcast.net and through iTunes University.

Environmental Summer Fun, New Facility for Oxbow

During a trip to Oxbow Meadows in the summer, a visitor could learn about anything from how to care properly for a pet reptile, to how to get honey from a bee hive.

After his lecture on pollination, Jim Harris, of the Chattahoochee Valley Beekeepers Association, extracted honey from the outdoor hives at Oxbow Meadows and allowed people to taste the honey directly from the source.

Children especially had lots to do at Oxbow this summer. In July, Oxbow hosted Wild Wednesdays, where children made craft projects like butterfly puppets, bird feeders, and cloth grocery bags.

Members of the community visited Oxbow for the children’s story time. Special guest readers included middle-grades coordinator and foundations professor Spencer Garrard, Amy Kowatch of Ft. Benning’s Parent to Parent program, local author/musician Rusty Taylor, and Johanna Cabatingan, volunteer coordinator at the Springer Opera House.

“I helped with a unit they were doing on butterflies. The kids went outside for an art project. They made butterflies with paper plates and crayons,” says Cabatingan. “Then I read a book called, My, Oh My – A Butterfly!”

“That book had a lot of facts about butterflies that even I didn’t know.”

Sweet! At Oxbow, beekeeper Jim Harris extracts honey from a hive while children look on.

After story time, children took a nature hike to see if they could find and identify any of the butterflies they’d learned about.

Oxbow Is Growing

Opportunities for environmental education at Oxbow are about to expand in major ways. Construction of a two-million-dollar facility is well underway.

Program Coordinator Jennifer Collins explains how the renovations will help Oxbow broaden its range of programs. “Right now, we just have the main exhibit room, but with the additional space we’ll be able to have summer camps with multiple classes going on simultaneously.”

Groundbreaking for the 8,000-square-foot building was on May 3. When finished, it will showcase native fish, turtles, and snakes. Outdoor animal enclosures will display larger creatures like alligators and tortoises. Students of science and science education, in elementary grades all the way up to graduate levels, will be able to use the facility’s classrooms, laboratories, and 92-seat theater for learning and teaching.

“There will be classrooms where environmental biology majors at CSU can come teach, and they’ll have the wetlands there to use on site,” says Collins. She estimates that the new facility will be open to the public when the school year starts in August 2011.
Emma, age 4½, is a writer. Like many young children, she has been immersed in print and non-print texts as long as she can remember. Letters, words, and symbols like the McDonald’s arch mean something to her. She reads exit signs and mile markers on the interstate, and she knows that the grocery store is Publix with a P and not “the milk store,” which she called it when she was learning to talk.

Emma is on her way.

She puts it this way: “I know my letters—all of them.”

Yesterday, following a visit to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Emma wrote a postcard to her parents about the experience. Her grandparents, Rinda and I, bought the card. Emma, we thought, would dictate her message as we transcribed her words. Then we would mail it to her parents in Newnan. We even brought a stamp with us.

Emma, though, would have none of that. From her car seat, she made it quite clear that she would write her own postcard or she would write none at all.

“No! I want to write it!” (I am tempted to use multiple exclamation points here.)

We relented. Rinda passed a hardback book arranged (landscape view) on top. Emma, ballpoint in hand, got to work.

In the next ten minutes, Emma recalled her favorite moments of the afternoon—the playground in the children’s garden, the sculptured cow on which she sat briefly, the beehive. With guidance, she wrote out each word—PLAYGROUND, COW, and BEES—in turn, well spaced, in big boxy letters. The P in playground was backwards, as were the Es in bees, but these were real words which, that evening or a week later, she might read aloud.

Emma’s emerging literacy is representative. To be sure, she is a smart little girl, but what one may observe in her writing development has been well-documented by Marie Clay and other researchers. Like other children in Western societies, she’s learned that print goes from left to right. (Were her first language Japanese, she would write from top to bottom. Were it Arabic, she would write from right to left.)

In addition, Emma has learned that a finite set of letter symbols have sounds associated with them, and that these are combined in patterned ways.

At home and in nursery school, Emma has been in a print-rich, language-rich environment. One can hope that, in her kindergarten and beyond, writing will be both routine and meaningful. Perhaps Emma’s teachers will know of the work of Donald Graves, who in the 1980s made a strong case for writing being a more natural endeavor for young children than reading. “The child’s marks,” Graves wrote, “say ‘I am’” (Graves, 3).

Yesterday it was three well-crafted words from a vivid, immediate experience. Tomorrow, who knows? J. K. Rowling and Pearl Cleage had to start somewhere.

James Brewbaker

Suggested Reading


Dell W. McMullen

Dell W. McMullen has been appointed superintendent of Department of Defense schools in Kaiserslautern, Germany. A 1973 graduate in elementary education from (then) Columbus College, McMullen worked more than 35 years in Muscogee County and Fort Benning schools. She was inducted into the College of Education’s Hall of Fame in 2005.

McMullen began her career teaching grades 4-6 in Muscogee County. After a stint as assistant principal at Blanchard School, she moved south to Ft. Benning’s Loyd School as principal. In time, McMullen assumed the position of superintendent of Fort Benning schools and, in 2002, became superintendent of the Department of Defense’s Georgia/Alabama District.

“I have been at Fort Benning for the past 22 years and have loved my time with the Georgia/Alabama District,” McMullen commented. “Georgia/Alabama will always hold a special place in my heart.

“I now look forward to working with the Kaiserslautern District. I hear many great things about the excellent work being done there.”
In 1970, Rosa S. Stanback made a major professional and personal move: she left her position as chair of the social studies department at Carver High School to become Columbus College’s first African American faculty member.

Forty years later, Stanback’s long record of service to her profession and the community was recognized by One Columbus at its August Community Prayer Breakfast at the Government Center. Among the guests were Mayor Jim Wetherington and CSU faculty who had worked closely with Stanback during the 1970s and 1980s.

Due to the illness of her husband Oscar, Professor Stanback called on her daughter, Cassandra (Stanback) Reynolds, to accept the award. Reynolds, herself a long-time teacher and administrator in Muscogee County schools, graduated from CSU in 1971.

Rosa Stanback with long-time Cougars basketball coach Sonny Clements at a 2008 reunion

Stanback achieved an admirable record following graduation from Tuskegee University in 1951. She taught in Muscogee County schools both before and after the monumental Brown vs. Board of Education decision (1954) as well as during the fifteen years prior to the court-ordered desegregation of Columbus schools in 1970.

At CSU, her specialty was social science education at both the elementary and secondary levels. A member of the teacher education faculty, Stanback guided the development of more than a generation of history and social studies teachers in area schools.

A tireless worker and leader for local civic groups and the American Cancer Society, Stanback presented research both nationally at meetings of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and internationally. She was among 200 black women leaders invited to the White House in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter.

Retired Columbus State faculty joining in the recognition were Harold and Anita Whitman, James Brewbaker, Dutchie Riggsby, and Carolyn Cartledge.

The Community Prayer Breakfast extends back to the 1950s. It was revitalized during the 1990s by mayors Frank Martin, Bobby Peters, and Bob Poydasheff. Its interdenominational emphasis was reflected in its August program, when prayers were offered by representatives from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu faiths.

One Columbus, led by Ken Crooks, is dedicated to building and strengthening ties across racial, religious, and economic barriers. For information about One Columbus and its activities, visit its website (www.onecolumbus.org).
Each semester faculty who teach NURS 4175: Nursing Research perform a skit for nursing students focusing on evidence-based practice. In this fall’s enactment, “CSI: Examining Levels of Evidence in a Murder Case,” Sherlock Holmes (Cheryl Smith) and Dr. Watson (Sheri Noviello) discover a dead body and proceed to investigate the scene for evidence pointing to the cause of death and the murderer.

Through the course, nurse candidates first become informed consumers of research as they learn to apply evidence, professional experience, and patient preferences in their practice. Finally, they develop and present practice guidelines to staff nurses at local hospitals.

The drama-based class session sparks interest among senior nursing students in evaluating medical research and using its findings to improve the way they serve their patients. “A nurse should be able to look at a study in a journal and decide if the research is good enough to change one’s practice, based on the evidence,” says Smith.

Too often, college students find research boring. Smith points out that she and Noviello seek to counter this tendency. “We want them to have a little fun in taking this class. This way, they learn new concepts, not just dry facts.”

In the nursing profession, getting it almost right isn’t good enough. That is why, prior to working with real patients, CSU’s junior nursing students enrolled in NURS 3275: Professional Clinical Nursing work with mannequins in a simulation lab on campus.

Once they master a prescribed series of procedures, student nurses move into a hospital environment for the real thing. In the above photo, for example, the task is to insert a catheter into a most cooperative “patient.”

For these juniors, the emphasis is on the National Patient Safety Goals, which enumerate correct and incorrect procedures of patient care. Updated each July, The Goals provide exhaustive protocols for virtually all areas in which healthcare professionals must “get it right.” These skills include everything from critical access hospital care to office based surgery.

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Answer to the Rest of the Story (from p. 5)

Answer (b) is correct. When Jordan Hall was designed in the early 1970s, plans called for establishing a micro-teaching center, a facility in which teacher candidates practice instructional skills with small groups of children. The micro-teaching center, however, never went beyond the planning stage.

Those on main campus know that Jordan Hall houses the Dean’s Office of the College of Education & Health Professions as well as classrooms, faculty offices, and COEHP.TV studios.

Columbus State is growing rapidly and changing rapidly as well. Below are nine photos taken on campus . . . or are they? As a matter of fact, three were taken on CSU’s main campus, three were taken at a CSU site in Uptown Columbus, and three are not CSU scenes at all.

See if you can tell which photo goes with which location, either (a) main campus, (b) CSU in Uptown, or (c) somewhere else. Answers appear on page 15.
It is our custom to ask recent inductees to our Education Hall of Fame to contribute to the Quarterly. We asked Ronie (rhymes with Connie) Collins and Tina Jones to describe a memorable learning experience they had as students and to comment on how that experience affected their teaching practice. Here are their responses.

Thanks, No Tattoo for Me . . .
But If There Were . . .

Veronica (Ronie) Collins

I was the fourth of five children, so my home life was always a whirlwind of . . . well, let’s just say excitement. As I have heard frequently in professional training sessions, many times the speaker asks, “Who was the teacher that had the biggest impact on your life?” I would go blank.

Other workshop leaders say, “Now close your eyes, walk down the hall of your elementary school, your junior high school, your high school. Bring to mind the teacher who gave you your direction, helped with your goals, gave you motivation.” Again blank.

Once I realized that—for this essay—I needed to think outside the box of the school building itself, a rush of gratitude and simple but profound memories came flowing like wine into my glass. (Since I am Catholic, this is ok!)

My first and foremost memory was of my very first teacher, my mom. What a teacher she was! She taught me faith, trust, love, hope, and the desire for peace. She was a college graduate, and—having been born in 1919—that was a huge accomplishment for women, actually for anyone. She was intelligent, hardworking, and dedicated to her family and to education. She started teaching at a Catholic school which fit her like a silk glove.

If Mother had sported a tattoo, I just know it would have said, “God, Family, Education.” Next to it I am sure there would have been a heart with “Ronie is my favorite child!” inscribed in it.

My high school counselor told my mom that I was “just an average student” and that maybe college was not the best fit for me. Saying that to her was like saying that the Pope wasn’t fit to lead the Church. Mom never used profanity except the occasional spelling of H-E-L-L. Chances are that she thought that was a fitting place for my high school counselor.

So off to college I went. Remember, I was number four of five children, and there was no money for tuition. But my mom’s elementary curriculum included self-sufficiency and hard work, so student loans and working full time would make it happen for me.

At Columbus College, outstanding teachers stepped into my education—Dr. Steve Halverson and Dr. Harold Whitman. Now these men, two gentlemen and scholars, treated me as if I was smart, and I believed them. After all, they treated me this way—and I don’t mean just knowledgeable, I mean downright smart.

I had left high school with two senior superlatives: Wittiest and Best Dressed. That was my claim to fame for 14 years, but Dr. Halverson and Dr. Whitman possessed the same high expectations that I had been taught by my first teacher, my mother. They looked at me, an average child, with above-average, even superior, expectations. They valued my work ethic and used their passion for educating children and mentoring others to ignite the same passion in me.

In passing their torch on, I realize that they enabled me to pay it forward. Now with my own two precious children, Klaire and Collins, and my 540 “stinkin’ cute” and smart children at Britt David
Magnet Academy, I strive to do just that. There will never be a child that crosses my path that will not be valued, appreciated, and pushed to their fullest potential.

Now, if you see me with a fresh tattoo, you know what it will say: “God, Family, Education.” Do you think Dr. Halverson and Dr. Whitman’s names could fit right next to it—in a heart?

The Rhinestone Cowgirl

Tina Jones

It seems like yesterday that I sat in fearful anticipation awaiting the arrival of the new third grade teacher assigned to Western Heights Elementary School in Eufaula, Alabama, to whose classroom I had been assigned. After all, I wondered, what could one expect from a female teacher named Jimmie who is married to a man named Leslie? As soon as Mrs. Jackson entered the room, however, all of my fears were put to rest, and I knew that it would be a wonderful school year. She was a petite, beautiful woman with perfectly manicured nails who had a smile as bright as the morning sun.

Of all the wonderful teachers that I have been privileged to be taught by, Mrs. Jackson quickly became—and remains—a favorite. Although her primary responsibility was to teach the basic academic subjects, she taught us so much more about life. She wanted us to be smart, curious, productive citizens who appreciated all that life had to offer. She modeled respect and empathy on a daily basis, and I can still recall how special and comforted she made me feel one Sunday evening when I had to call her at home to inform her that I would not be in school the following day due to a family car accident.

On numerous occasions when we were out of school, I stayed with my grandmother who lived just around the corner from Mrs. Jackson. My sister and I often walked past her home. Although students were probably the last thing she wanted to see on her day off, she never failed to come outside and invite us in. I was always amazed looking around her house at the photos and pieces of art that said so much about who she was.

Mrs. Jackson was a large part of the school and readily volunteered our class when she was asked to put on the school play. I don’t remember the basic plot, but I do recall that it was a western. Part of the job of play sponsor was to teach very vivacious eight-years-olds to square dance, a challenge that would make most teachers run. Though not really one of my passions, I’m happy to report that even today I still remember how to “Allemande Left,” “Promenade,” and “Dosido” with the best of them!

I was cast as a cowgirl. I borrowed a beautiful rhinestone cowgirl suit from a friend. My mother sent it to the cleaners to make sure I was perfectly costumed. Who would ever guess that the cleaners would burn to the ground that night?!

You can imagine how upset I was when I had to call Mrs. Jackson and tell her of my plight. She instantly calmed me down, assisted me in locating another suit, and told me how proud she was of me when I emerged to the front of the stage for my group’s rendition of “Don’t Fence Me In.”

As I reflect on what made Mrs. Jackson so special, it comes down to one thing. She understood the importance of teaching the whole child. She cared about me, my family, my interests, my struggles, and everything else that made up my being. The lessons that she taught me about life and teaching have been invaluable and have served me well throughout both my life and my career.

Tina Jones, on right, works closely with interns such as Christie Oates, a provisionally certified science teacher.
Wynter Nelson has a Plan

Our EHQ reporter roamed the main campus during the week before classes began on August 16. Outside the Schwob Library he met and photographed Wynter Nelson, who entered CSU after completing a cosmetology program at Columbus Tech in June.

She commented, “I went to Wayne County High School in Jesup, Ga. and graduated in 2008. I heard about CSU through some friends and decided that’s where I wanted to attend.”

The history education major explained, “I went to Columbus Technical College first because I wanted to have a backup plan/career and knew that I could get it fast. Now I’m a master cosmetologist, and I can pursue what I want to do most and that is teaching.

“I’m the first person in my family to ever go to college,” Nelson added, “but my younger sister is following in my footsteps.”

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesday, November 2 is election day, 2010. Important races include those for governor in both Alabama and Georgia, all 435 Congressional seats, and the mayor of Columbus. Check with your local community for polling places and open/close times.