

BRENAU

SPRING 2009

Window

Pioneers in Physician Assistant Program

Paris Ballet, Southern Style

Brenau Works through National Crisis



Belt-tightening doesn't mean constrained vision

I have to confess that the national financial crisis has reached a point at which university presidents are tempted to wander around their campuses switching off lights to cut utility costs.

Don't scoff: one of our neighboring institutions recently almost had to shut its doors because it could not pay its water bill. In today's environment, belt-tightening is the order of the day for individuals, families, businesses and universities. Although Brenau University remains in very stable fiscal health, the critical illness of the global economy demands our attention daily. It is our responsibility against the backdrop of this seemingly incessant volatility and uncertainty to measure constantly what we can do against what we should do.

What should Brenau do to retain its financial stability and to help the community recover? Should we scale back our goals to transform the university in the next decade by doubling enrollment and becoming a top doctoral degree-granting institution? Should we in these tough times re-evaluate a list of some \$40 to \$50 million in improvements that will be required to make that happen within the 2025 time frame?

Certainly not. One thing we will not scale back is our vision. One thing we will not sacrifice is the future greatness that is Brenau University. In fact, along with finding ways to reduce day-to-day expenses to stay within budget, we must not simply stay the course on our vision, but move toward it, if possible, at flank speed.

For example, those improvements I mentioned previously include plans to construct new classrooms, laboratories and a student center along with renovating or replacing worn-out residence halls. If we could find a fiscally prudent way to do so, we should start building now rather than wait until the economy improves because that is precisely the kind of activity that will help the economy improve. New

construction and renovation would generate a significant number of jobs in a state where the unemployment rate at the end of last year topped eight percent, the second highest in the nation. Plus, candidly, we are in a "buyer's market" for such projects today, which means that dollars we spend today on campus improvements will go much farther. Finally, as the economy improves and competition intensifies, adding more modern, state-of-the-art facilities on campus would make the university more attractive to prospective students, whose tuition dollars year in and year out will continue to be the major source of annual operating revenues at Brenau.

We approach these prospects realistically. It is not likely that Brenau University will be a recipient of any of the billions of dollars Washington has allocated for economic recovery. Nor have we received any notification that tens of millions of dollars in private donations are in the pipeline for Brenau during the current downturn. And, our fiscally prudent and experienced Board of Trustees is not likely to throw the institution into debt to finance such growth – even if the funds were available from lending institutions.

President Obama talked in his inaugural address about greatness that must be earned without taking shortcuts or settling for less. For Brenau University, as for the rest of the nation, this is not a time for retrenching and altering our course. We must continue to earn our greatness. It is alumni, friends and colleagues like you who support Brenau as we commit our learning experience to extraordinary outcomes. We must now dust off any distractions and doubts and move ahead to build the even greater institution into which it is Brenau's destiny to grow.

Ed Schrader, Ph.D.
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Tom Askew

WHEN LORA BAILEY WAS GROWING UP in Russell County in southeast Alabama, the farthest thing from her mind was that she would become a teacher. Even her parents joined the chorus of naysayers with their own variation of “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach.”

With a business and finance degree, she initiated a promising career in the lending arm of General Motors. But after complaining to her husband, Maurice, about the job for about four of the next five years, she took his advice about building a career around something she enjoyed, teaching Sunday School. So, aided substantially

New education dean’s “doing something I like” aligns with Brenau growth plans

by a tuition assistance program from her employer and a timely personnel-reducing financial buyout during one of GMAC’s earlier financial crises, Bailey completed a

master’s degree in early childhood education and landed a job teaching in Montgomery, Ala., schools. Since then she not only has taught in public schools for seven years, she’s laid down a pretty good track record of teaching teachers, too.

“It really does not matter so much what you get your degree in,” says Bailey, whose husband (a basketball coach at a college in Alabama) and children Lauren, 14, and Maurice Jr., 12, will join her in Gainesville soon. “You have to do something you like to do. When you are done with your degree, if it doesn’t work out, move on to something you like.”

In January she became Brenau University’s dean of education – a role in which she is charged with, among other things, evangelizing her born-again belief that teachers can be, and often are, very smart and accomplished individuals. “Brenau is just right for me at this stage of my career,” says Bailey, who was the administrator and chair of the early childhood program at Auburn University, where she also earned her Ph.D. in 2001. “I can see myself growing with Brenau and being a catalyst for Brenau’s growth.” In addition to teaching and administrative roles, Bailey has been the editor of a research-oriented peer review journal and has published extensively works from her own research. She has been responsible for attracting to her institutions some \$1 million in research grants, including a National Institutes of Health grant for work with children for whom English is a second language and other grants for improving mathematics teaching in early childhood education.

After teaching at much larger schools, including Louisville University and the University of South Carolina before returning to her alma mater, Bailey says emphatically that what brought her to Brenau was its ambitious plan to double the size of its enrollment by 2025 primarily by expanding graduate programs and offering doctoral degrees, many of which will have heavy research and publishing components.

“I think I can help,” she says. “I mean, this is the kind of thing I like to do.”

LEAVING HARD TIMES

BY DON O'BRIANT

Brenau University has embarked on a 16-year plan to double enrollment, add doctoral degree programs and spend between \$40 million and \$55 million on faculty, facilities and scholarships. The expansion will result in an annual budget of \$80 million in 2025 and a \$160 million impact on the community.

It is an ambitious undertaking even in the best of times, but these are not the best of times. The shock waves resulting from the economic downturn have been felt not only on Main Street, but on Centennial Circle in Gainesville. Private institutions like Brenau that depend primarily on tuition and fees for year-to-year operations look with trepidation at the recent turbulence in the economy and the impact that it will have on the current and future students that will call Brenau home.

Equally important, as they turn to their donor communities for help in funding things like that ambitious program above, these institutions worry not only about benefactors' willingness to help provide more funding for the future but also about donors' abilities to keep year-to-year commitments they have already made.

Higher education institutions are also watching what is happening to enrollments with the likelihood that many families may have trouble keeping kids in school because of the impact the downturn has had on family finances. For example, many families no longer have the flexibility to borrow from retirement accounts that have lost value or tap into home equities that have declined.

Scott Briell, senior vice president of enrollment management and student services, says economic bad news, like rising unemployment rates, occasionally portends enrollment good news, particularly in programs for nontraditional students who may see the university as a pathway to improved job skills or a career change. He confesses, however, that his statistical tea leaves this year are sending some mixed signals. While applications for prospective students have increased, there is a lag in the numbers of admitted

applicants who have paid deposits for fall enrollment.

BIGGER NEED

Rae Goldsmith, vice president of communications and marketing at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), says the "all of the above" factors we're experiencing in the economic decline – potential cuts in state and federal student aid, reductions in investment income, belt-tightening on day-

to-day operations and the unfavorable climate for growth and expansion – "create additional pressures on the need for private resources to fill the gap."

Indeed, as universities like Brenau struggle to control costs and maintain optimum operational efficiency, they also feel even more pressure to come up with additional cash for scholarships and other immediate financial aid for students and prospects.

Brenau always has relied on annual giving and earnings from long-term endowments and other invested assets to help make up the perennial deficit between what tuition and fees bring in and what it actually costs to run the university and provide assistance to deserving students. These days, however, that is easier said than done.

Higher education ranks just behind churches and religious organizations as the most popular target for charitable dollars, but charitable giving generally tracks closely with the leading indicators for the nation's overall economic health. For example, according to philanthropy experts, for every 100-point swing in the S&P 500 index, the country's philanthropic giving rises or falls approximately \$1.7 billion. The index lost close to 800 points – about half its value – in 2008.

Also, charity rises and falls with personal incomes, which dropped sharply in 2008, even before the year-end job report that showed Brenau's home state, Georgia, ranked second in job-loss data behind only unemployment rate poster child Michigan.

"That makes it more important for us to step up, tell the Brenau story and do everything we can to help fund both continuing

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operations and the growth that must take place for the university to thrive in coming decades," says Matt Thomas, vice president for external relations at the university. "We can't step back and wait for the climate to improve."

Experts predict that giving to higher education will decline in 2009 and possibly erode more in 2010, but few are willing to speculate on how much. The Council for Aid to Education reports that the \$31.6 billion in giving reported by 1,052 institutions in 2008 was actually the highest ever reported since the organization began its annual survey and marked a 6.2 percent increase over 2007 and the fifth straight year of increases. A separate survey by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education predicted a 5 percent growth in giving in 2008 and a 1.7 percent decline this year. Although that may prompt some fund-raisers and donors to think that things are not as bad as we have been led to believe, statisticians have a way of raining on parades: take away the top 20 schools like Stanford, Harvard, Yale and Columbia that contributed 26.6 percent of the total captured in the CASE study and the other 1,032 institutions actually lost ground by 4.2 percent.

Not all universities will be affected the same way by the current financial crisis because not all donors will be affected the same, says CASE's Rae Goldsmith. When CASE surveyed U.S. members in July, they were already predicting a rate of growth below the 20-year average. In the last quarter century, giving to education has only declined twice. In both instances the decline was small – 1 percent and 3.5 percent – and in both instances the rebound was quick.

"Historically donations to universities are fairly resilient during tough economic times," she says. "However, we may be in the midst of a downturn for which the historical models don't apply, so any predictions are risky."

HELP IS ON THE WAY

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama usually ended discussion of the economic situation with the upbeat statement that "help is on the way." Indeed, during the first days of the new administration, with the approval of the \$850 billion stimulus package and President Obama's dramatic budget proposals affecting higher education, there were some positive signs for Brenau and other universities. These include a \$5 billion increase for Perkins Loans, making an estimated 2.7 million more students eligible for the aid; a permanent pair of tuition and research tax credits; a \$2.5-billion grant program to help states improve college-completion rates; and increases in Pell grants, an entitlement program for low income undergraduate students, from \$4,731 in 2008-09 to \$5,550 in 2010-11.

"Anything that affects students' abilities to finance their education will have an impact on Brenau," says Pam Barrett, associate vice president and director of financial aid. "We have not projected what that will mean in actual dollars, but we do know that more than 700 Brenau undergraduates now receive Pell Grants at varying levels."

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Providing new hands to handle aging problems



When Brenau University began looking at changing demographic data to plan for its future, one of the most eye-catching statistics it came upon was related to the overall aging of the world's population. Experts estimate that between 2010 and 2030 the number of people living in Georgia who are more than 65 years old will increase by 143 percent to 1.22 million and those 85 and older

will increase by 91 percent. The number of those in the older age group nationwide will grow from 5.3 million to 9.6 million by 2030 and to 21 million by 2050.

Why would such data interest Brenau? Because somebody will have to take care of this population segment, which is getting older every day—doctors,

Brenau will offer an interdisciplinary Master of Sciences degree in applied gerontology

nurses, nursing home administrators, assisted living caregivers, lawyers, accountants, research scientists, apparel makers, architects, interior designers and a host of other professionals who deal with myriad issues that confront older people.

Starting with the 2009-10 academic year Brenau will offer an interdisciplinary Master of Sciences degree in applied gerontology – the study of the social, psychological and biological aspects of aging. All coursework for the unique master's degree and its less-stringent certification counterpart will be delivered online.

Brenau's gerontology MS will be housed in the psychology department, and in addition to some basic psychology, the program will include studies in family health care, occupational therapy, law and ethics, conflict resolution, interior design and other disciplines that touch on the needs of older people.

Dr. Bonnie J. Kin, associate professor of psychology and director of the new program, explains that many gerontology graduate programs in U.S. universities, including that of Georgia State in Atlanta, are more research and sociology-based than Brenau's more hands-on approach – or they focus the science on one profession, like nursing. By using elective courses, she says, Brenau students can design a curriculum to fit their career needs. Plus, it is online. They can do it from anywhere in the world.

However, as Barrett pointed out, that, even with Pell grant increases, much of the government aid is in a slow pipeline. And it will not be enough to sustain institutions in the future. What that means, Matt Thomas explains, is that Brenau has to keep pressure on its fund-raising activities, do what it has always done, and make sure that the donors understand that they are active partners in efforts to ensure that Brenau continues to thrive. "Without the generosity of our donors, Brenau would be a much different institution. With their help, we will be able to do even more to prepare our students for life outside of the campus community."

And, says Jim Barco, senior vice president of institutional development, it means this is a perfect time to be creative in reaching new donor prospects, tapping into new revenue sources and restructuring financial relationships with existing donors.

RELATIONSHIP ENGINEERING

Each year Brenau needs to raise about \$1.4 million, even in flush times, to fund the budgeted operational expenses of the institution. The backbone of all fund raising for the university has been annual fund donations, major gifts and deferred giving. Central to those components is cultivating the relationship between the donor and the institution.

With alumni, it is important to start those relationships early, says Melissa Edge, alumni director. "If you can get them to give \$25 or \$50 or \$100 a year," she says, "they establish a habit."

Brenau alumni who are now fund-raisers at other institutions report similar philosophies for building lasting relationships with alumni and other donor prospects. When you know people, it is easier to work with them in exploring some of those creative approaches Barco mentioned.

"We contact potential donors in many ways – personal visits, phone, mail, e-mail, and, at group events and special activities," says **Gwen Reid, WC '66**, who is now assistant vice president of the Office of Development at Auburn University. Although Auburn fund-

raisers saw only a slight decline in money raised during its last fiscal year, Reid says she suspects the decline will continue this year, "especially if donors plan to use stock to pay their pledges and gifts for this year." However, with strong personal relationships, "If we begin to see a large default on pledge payments, we may help our large donors work out a longer payment schedule to avoid defaulting on their pledges."

Spencer Sealy, EWC '93, director of planned giving/major gifts at Brenau University from 1991 to 1997, is now assistant dean for development at Florida State University Business School. Although the universities are quite different, fund-raising issues are the same, Sealy says.

"The heart of the matter is that you're cultivating prospects for donations. The volume is greater at FSU, and that makes it a little easier," he says. "We're really trying to get people in the habit of giving a little now and more later. During this downturn in the economy, a gift, no matter how small, is significant."

Sealy's wife, **Susan, EWC '95**, director of the grants program for Tallahassee Community College, previously worked in FSU fund raising. Her best success she recalls, among alumni came from discovering graduates' bonding affinity with a specific program at the university. "Maybe they love their Greek organization, maybe they were close to a particular professor, or maybe they belonged to a club," she says. "Try to find out what excited them and match it to what's going on."

Another important constituency during hard times is the university's home town. Says CASE's Rae Goldsmith, "Anything that impacts an institution's ability to provide aid, attract and retain faculty and staff, and provide adequate classrooms, laboratories and meet other needs will impact the community as well."

"We do need to make the case that without Brenau, Gainesville and the surrounding region would be a much different place," says Matt Thomas. "It is important that the donors remember that, when they provide a gift, they're really investing in the future of the community."

Some rational approaches to philanthropy in today's economy

For years **Margaret May Franklin, WC '41**, has made regular, substantial contributions to her alma mater, and she is a long-term Distinguished Member of the President's Club, a designation for those who contribute between \$5,000 and \$10,000 annually to the university. Last year, the university named the theater arts building on the Gainesville campus in her honor. According to Jim Barco, senior vice president for institutional development, that was just as much in gratitude for what she planned to give in the future as for what she has contributed in the past.

"Margaret and her husband, Stu, each have had life-long loves outside their marriage," Barco explains. "For Stu, it is his beloved Virginia Tech. For Margaret, it has been Brenau." As a result, the Franklins, who live in Roanoke, Va., have added irrevocable provisions in their wills to split portions of their estate equally between the two institutions.

Theirs is a classic example of planned giving, which Barco says will become an increasingly important tool in today's economic environment and as the U.S. population ages. Simply put, planned giving is making arrangements to donate to a charity in the future. Most often it's associated with estate planning – arranging for how you want your assets disposed



Because of planned giving generosity, Brenau named its theater arts building in Margaret May Franklin's honor.

of when you die. (See one example of how this works on page 31.) "But planned giving also has some benefit to the giver and the recipient while the donor is still alive," says Barco, Brenau's planned giving expert. "Different strategies can affect your tax situation, your income, your family, and your philanthropy. You probably can do more now than you think you can."

In addition to helping the university make more concrete long-term plans, the strategy enables the university to acknowledge generosity while the donors are still alive. The H. J. Pearce Society honors alumni and friends who have made bequests in their wills or other planned documents in support of the university. "We are not financial advisers," says Barco, "but we do have financial relationships with donors and prospective donors, and perhaps we can steer them and their financial advisers in directions that are mutually beneficial."

Irrevocable provisions are just one way to help out Brenau through a planned giving vehicle. Here are two other popular examples of giving strategies for hard times:

Annuities

Unlike some planned giving vehicles that pay a variable rate of return on donations, charitable gift annuities provide guaranteed payouts for the life of the agreement while providing additional tax benefits to the donor. Here's how it works: Say you have \$100,000 in a CD that's maturing at a very low interest rate and you certainly don't want to put it in today's volatile stock market. Other investments just will not provide the income you need. Give the money to Brenau as part of an annuity contract that pays you a fixed rate of return for life based on your age, which most likely will be a more advantageous rate than those found at financial institutions.

"Terms are negotiable, based on your situation and the needs of the institution," says Barco. "A 60-year-old is not going to receive as high a rate of annual return as an octogenarian."

Paced Giving

You planned to use stock options in your company to fund a scholarship in honor of your mother, but you hit the hold button when the value of your stock dropped substantially last year. However, maybe you can provide an initial gift to endow the scholarship with the expectation that you will provide additional funds to increase the level of the endowment to your personal goal once the value of your stock recovers.

"Look, we know there is uncertainty for the future," says Barco. "If you cannot give the large gift that you wanted to give, that's OK. Let's defer your giving on a schedule that makes you comfortable."

For more information contact Barco at (770) 534-6161.

Brenau, Barbecue & Banjos

One of the creative new tools in Brenau's mix of fund raising activities is the nationally sanctioned barbecue championship cook-off scheduled on the Gainesville campus May 28-30.

With profits earmarked to benefit scholarships for students from Hall County and environs, from which Brenau gets about 40 percent of its enrollment, the event seeks to raise money from corporate sponsorships, entry fees,

admission, and food and beverage sales. The Memphis Barbecue Network-sanctioned contest is intended to become an annual family-oriented community event. Jim Barco, senior vice president for institutional development, says that conforms to Brenau's mission for community outreach.

In addition to the cooking competition for both professionals and amateurs, Brenau, Barbecue & Banjos features bluegrass music,

a cooking "school," and a host of vendors ranging from sellers of sauces, rubs and state-of-the-art outdoor cooking devices to Southern Proper, the company started by **Emmie Howard, WC '01**, and her partner, Regan Hardy, that sells designer neckties.

Barco says the event already is producing some relationships with local individual and corporate prospects that did not exist. The event itself is likely to draw traffic



from people in the community that heretofore had only passing knowledge about Brenau, its academic programs and its economic benefit to the area.

For more information, see www.brenau.edu/bbq.

Responding to tough times with action, initiative

Brenau honors its benefactors

Brenau University in December presented its top non-academic awards to Gainesville businessman James A. "Jim" Walters and Brenau



Jim Walters top, and Eloise Gilmer were honored at the annual President's Club dinner in December.

benefactor Eloise Gilmer, a long-time Gainesville city employee and aviation entrepreneur. And, the university also conferred an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Helen Ray, who retired at year's end as provost and vice president for academic affairs after 15 years with the university. Brenau University

President Ed Schrader presented the three awards at the annual President's Club dinner, which honors financial supporters who contribute at least \$1,000 a year to the university.

Gilmer received the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award, which was named for a 19th century southern humanitarian. She was a pilot who with her husband, Lee, built a successful aviation business. The Gainesville airport is named for Lee Gilmer. Although she is well past retirement age, she has spent the past 30 years, following her husband's death, as a city employee. Throughout her career, however, she has been a regular financial supporter and tireless cheerleader for Brenau. She endowed a scholarship fund that will help train nurses in the community for years to come.

Walters, former chairman of the university's board of trustees and one of the longest-serving members of that group, received the Distinguished Service to Brenau award. In addition to his role as one of the university's top benefactors, the president of Walters Management Co. in Gainesville has "supported Brenau over the years in too many ways to count" through regular attendance at Brenau events, evangelism and other service, said Schrader. He has also been a member of the Georgia Board of Natural Resources (including a term as chairman) and the North Georgia Mountain Authority.

Walters' largess has significantly affected Brenau and other institutions in the community, including the hospital, the Boys and Girls Club and the Hall County YMCA. However, it was not so much for his financial support that Walters was honored; it was because "he has always been selfless with his time and personal energy," said Schrader. "Institutions love having him on their boards because he works at it."

Conferring the honorary degree on Ray, Schrader said, "is an extremely appropriate send-off for a woman who has meant so much to this institution and to its academic integrity."

WBCX receives grant

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has presented Brenau's WBCX-FM (89.1) with a \$65,000 community service grant, bringing the total to \$145,964 which the station has received from the national organization in the past two academic years. The grants have enabled the university to upgrade its production and on-air facilities at a time when equipment was getting old and in need of frequent repair. The grant has been used for upgrading the station's existing analog signal to digital, which will enable WBCX to operate fully at its licensed power rating.

A portion of the grant has also been used to produce local shows for national distribution. Scott and Ray White's *Poets and Troubadours* has already been offered and Dr. Evelyn Higgins' show, *Your Body Is a Wonderland*, is in production.



Helping people cope

Maintaining healthy, happy relationships and personal equanimity is not easy in the best of times. It is even more difficult when the going gets tough. That's why in this current atmosphere of financial turmoil and rising joblessness, Brenau's Center for Counseling and Psychological Services in Gainesville takes on increased importance. The counseling center, which is open to the public, is associated with the Brenau clinical psychology master's degree program. Second-year graduate students see clients under the supervision of licensed professional clinical psychologists. Fees are \$5 per 50-minute session for Brenau students, \$15 for alumni, \$20 for individuals and \$25 for families. Sessions also are offered in Spanish. For more information, call 770-297-5939.



Dean Breest

South Atlanta campus

As other academic institutions remain static to combat the economic downturn, Brenau University this fall will expand, opening an additional campus in the Atlanta suburbs. The university signed a seven-year lease on a 18,400-square-foot academic building on the new four-acre education complex in historic Fairburn, Ga., which is about a 25-minute drive from downtown Atlanta. Brenau will join the two-year, state-supported Georgia Military College in the Fairburn Education Complex, a \$10 million facility built by the city government to attract branch campuses to the area that is underserved by higher education.

GMC occupies the first of two academic buildings completed in the first phase of the development. There is also a three-story, colonial-style administration building, two outbuildings for retail or food service operations and plans for construction of two additional academic buildings at Highway 29/West Broad Street and Barton Drive, about half a mile from downtown Fairburn.

David Barnett, Brenau's associate vice president who oversees all the university's remote operations, says the Fairburn campus is quite different from Brenau operations in other Georgia cities – Kings Bay, Augusta and the north Atlanta suburb, Norcross. The white administration building with its distinctive cupola anchors the complex, which is built around an open quadrangle with the ambiance of a college campus. Barnett says he is optimistic that Brenau will attract enough students to fill up the leased space quickly. GMC planned to open in the fall with an enrollment of 400, but now has about 550.

Brenau is not waiting until the economy improves to build toward fulfilling is strategic mission

Regions Bank grant

The Brenau University School of Business and Mass Communication is moving ahead with several expansions that were funded by a \$200,000 grant from Regions Bank. The expansions include a Quantitative Skill Development Lab to help students improve skills in subjects such as accounting, finance, economics and statistics and to prepare for and take the Graduate Management Admission Test, which is required for M.B.A. candidates. The grant also is paying for CampusLink, a program aimed at developing technologies, such as two-way video transmissions, for linking Brenau's

campuses for academic and community purposes. CampusLink uses video conferencing capability to link campuses for live, interactive broadcasting of faculty and guest speakers to different locations at the same time. Meetings between faculty and staff at different locations can take place in real time and events can be broadcast to a wider community of Brenau stakeholders throughout Georgia.

The grant provided for the launch of an Idea Development Center to help entrepreneurs develop and execute their ideas.

Brenau Academy's early college option

Katie Dugan, 16, will graduate from Brenau Academy with enough credits under her belt to skip two years of college. Likewise, last year's academy valedictorian Joan Coles matriculated at Marlboro College in Vermont as a second-semester sophomore. Both took advantage of an attractive by-product of a prep school located on a college campus.

A central part of Brenau University's strategic plan is to reduce the time it takes students to complete their educations. "So, we decided why not take a feature and incorporate it into the strategy," says Academy Headmaster Tim Daniel. Starting next year, Academy students will now be able to finish with both a high school diploma and a two-year A. A. degree.

The early college initiative jibes with an evolving national trend for providing high school students with broader educational options. Judging from experience, they will be able to handle the more challenging courses as well as their high school schedules. As a sophomore, Dugan scored a B in chemistry and an A in psychology in her first college courses.

"I'm not brilliant," she says. "I'm just time efficient."



Katie Dugan

New lab opens way for genetics study, cancer research

Thanks to a gift from long-term benefactor Anne Thomas, Brenau University opened a new \$200,000 microbiology laboratory on the Gainesville campus this spring, paving the way to new fields of study and research at the university, including launching a new master's degree program in 2010. Faculty and administrators believe ideas and initiatives born in the lab will also create opportunities for spinning off business opportunities in the fast-growing field, which has helped the Atlanta area become the 7th-ranked biotech center in the nation.

First concentrations in the new lab will be on genetics and cancer research because of the expertise of two Brenau faculty members, Drs. Randy May and Thomas Gaddy. Undergraduate students this spring already are ensuring Brenau's place in the biotech record books – they are mapping and publishing the genetic make-up for angel's trumpet, a medicinal plant that produces atropine, which is used to treat various gastric disorders and symptoms of Parkinson's disease.



Ogletree's Educational Ailments

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED
BY RUDI KIEFER

Mr. Ogletree is having a rough day. He's been in this hospital bed since summer, suffering from a slew of ailments that would keep a whole team of medical professionals busy. The Brenau nursing students crowding around him are busy indeed. Senior Aungela Wright takes charge: "On count. One, two, three!" Four nurses maneuver the heavy-set patient to a more upright position. "...belly hurts...", he squawks. "Where does it hurt, Mr. Ogletree?" Wright inquires. "High? Low? Near your umbilicus?" Ogletree has no clue. "YOUR NAVEL!" junior Beth Chapman intones loudly because Ogletree also has hearing problems. With some coaxing, the epicenter of his pain gets identified, just next to his colostomy bag. But now he's getting nauseated. Uh-oh. "Hold his head up so he doesn't aspirate," Wright instructs the others as they turn the patient on his side, and move a pan into position, just in time. After this brief event, Ogletree settles back again but now he needs morphine for his pain. As senior Jennifer O'Brian gets on the phone to call his physician about the narcotics, Dr. Cathy Dyches steps out of a concealed cubicle. "Welcome to iStan!" she says. That is Mr. Ogletree's real name. He is a highly sophisticated human patient simulator, capable of producing an incredible range of realistic symptoms. The unit has a heartbeat, a pulse, blood pressure, bowel sounds and many other functions that are almost disturbingly real. It bleeds, cries, and communicates through a hidden speaker that's operated

by a supervisor in the cubicle. Computer software controls the situations with which the simulator surprises the students. “We even take it a step farther,” Dyches says. “When there’s a medication question involved, the students have to make a simulated call to the doctor’s office. There’s actually a person on the other end, and the calls don’t always go smoothly. They are, well, they’re close to reality.” At the foot of Ogletree’s hospital bed, O’Brian is trying to communicate over the phone, patient chart and drug listing in front of her. “They hung up on me!” she suddenly exclaims. Dyches chuckles and disappears back into her control cubicle.

“It can be tough at times,” says Nancy Morris, R.N., a graduate student in nursing. “Part of the learning experience is that even simple things like a phone call to the doctor’s office don’t always work out. It can get just as hectic there on the other end. I’ve been hung up on more times than I care to remember, even when a patient was coding.” On a hospital floor, however, a “coding” patient makes a scene of tranquility explode into rapid action. It means that the patient’s life is in immediate danger and emergency measures are in order. Sure enough, Mr. Ogletree codes. His breathing and heartbeat come to a complete halt. All the colorful curves on the bedside monitor flatten out into a set of straight lines dreaded by nurses. But Brenau’s nursing students know what to do. Junior Michelle Conner jumps on the bed, begins chest compressions. “One! Two! Three! Four!” Wright counts loudly, keeping the tempo steady. “Fourteen! Fifteen! Two breaths!” Chapman administers the respirator. Several cycles of cardiopulmonary resuscitation later, a loud cheer breaks the rhythm of Wright’s compression counts. The colored lines on the monitor turn jagged again. Blood pressure, pulse and respiration are returning.

Mr. Ogletree will live to train students

Brenau nursing students like Michelle Naylor, right, get real-life experience working with a \$125,000 simulator that was a gift of university benefactor Anne Thomas. Just about anything that a human can throw at them – or throw up on them – Mr. Ogletree can duplicate.





Professor Cathy Dyches, left, oversees work by Michelle Conner, right, and other students on the iStan simulator and from the control room often puts nurses in situations during which they must make life-and-death decisions. Also, with a few modifications of the mannequin and adjustments to the computer program, Mr. Ogletree can become Mrs. Ogletree.

another day.

“This really came as a surprise,” says Wright. “We didn’t expect him to suddenly let go. But those are the things that happen in a real hospital situation. What’s so great about iStan is that you get to practice emergency measures in a controlled environment. If you make mistakes, you can learn from them without endangering a patient. When things go right, it feels good to know that you could have just saved a life.” Since they are never quite sure what’s going to happen, students depart from mechanical, routine textbook procedures. “In medical situations, they have to expect the unexpected, and here’s where they can do it without risk,” Morris says. What makes the unit more real is that it has no tether or other connecting cords. Communication with the master computer is wireless, unnoticeable by the student nurses. “They get really involved,” says Dyches. “You’re heaving this robot around who weighs just as much as the average male human. You’re going through

all sorts of procedures to make him more comfortable. You give him medication, watch his reaction, watch him spit up, and even pass away. We’ve had students who cried when Mr. Ogletree coded and flatlined on them.” Dr. Keeta Wilborn, chair of the nursing department, points out that there’s no research data on the results yet. “But feedback we’ve been getting from the students has been overwhelmingly positive. One student said he was surprised by the many things that were going on at the same time, and worried about how he’d react to it. Then he realized that he was getting exposure and training for medical situations that don’t come around often, but require immediate decisions and action. So he, too, left with a good opinion about the iStan experience.” Meanwhile, at the top end of the hospital bed, Chapman is wiping tears from Ogletree’s face. “Awww, he’s crying,” says Conner and reaches for a tissue also. Wright has the most practical solution. “Mr. Ogletree? CAN YOU HEAR ME? We’re giving you some more pain medicine now. You’ll feel better in a minute.” The training morphine starts flowing through the IV, and Ogletree settles down, ready for the next group of Brenau nursing students to make him better. You can almost see him smiling. See the video at <http://alum.brenau.edu/bonusfeature>

Brenau physician assistant candidates move up ahead of schedule

Lindsey Brown, Caleb Henson and Sara Diosdado all will get to their career goals of working with patients much quicker because of the Brenau-PCOM program.

Shortly after commencement in 2008, Brenau University and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine created an accelerated five-year track that would lead to a joint Bachelor of Sciences/Master of Sciences degree in physician assistant studies at the two institutions. This year, just a few days after commencement, three new graduates will journey to the Pennsylvania city as the first Brenau students to enter the year-long portion of the program there.

The three are Sara Diosdado and Lindsey Brown, both completing degrees in biology in the Women's College, and John Caleb Henson, who will be the first to complete the pre-PA course requirements through the Evening and Weekend College.

Henson, 30, whose father, Mark, and uncle, Taylor, are physicians, is a "career changer." He entered the University of Georgia as a pre-med student, wound up with a business degree and launched a career as a stock broker and financial adviser. "It just didn't fit with me," the Gainesville, Ga., native says.

"I would give people advice and whether they made money or lost money I would profit from it. I didn't like that." He quit the business slightly ahead of the collapse in the world's financial markets that now has thousands of people re-evaluating their career choices and picked the physician assistant track rather than taking up that earlier plan to go to medical school because he sees it as a way to make a difference in people's lives quicker through patient interaction.

"My father and uncle prove the point," he says. "They're so busy with other stuff that they don't get to spend as much time

with the patients as the PAs do."

The youngest of the three is Brown, a 21-year-old Cumming, Ga., resident who came to Brenau four years ago and maintained a 3.9 average. Although she says she had not considered entering a PA program before Brenau announced its partnership with PCOM, that announcement sparked her interest and the coursework she already had completed met the program admission requirements. "After the year in Philadelphia, we will come back to Gainesville for the clinical portion of our training and I'm excited about that," she says. She says she plans eventually to live and work in north Georgia.

Diosdado already has been involved as a health care professional during her student days at Brenau, working almost full time as a medical assistant in doctor's offices and clinics in Gainesville while she completed her degree. A single mom, she plans to live about a block from the PCOM campus in the Philadelphia suburbs. Her own mother will move with her temporarily from Washington state to help take care of Sara's 5-year-old daughter, Faith.

Like Henson, Diosdado initially wanted to pursue an M.D. degree, but one factor that changed her mind was being able to get back into patient interaction quicker. "A PA these days does many of the same things that only a physician used to do," she says. "It is treating patients, and that is all I ever wanted to do."

In announcing the agreement with PCOM last year, Brenau President Ed Schrader said a goal was to shorten the time required for people who want to help others to complete their educations and get



Tom Askew

into the field. The program was designed to enable students to complete the undergraduate portion of the program in three years, completing requirements at Brenau for a Bachelor of Science degree. That would be followed by the year in Philadelphia and a final year of focused clinical studies in Gainesville under the supervision of both PCOM faculty and doctors affiliated with The Longstreet Clinic and Northeast Georgia Medical Center. Initially, the first Brenau students were not to have entered the 26-month professional phase until the 2011-12 academic year. This year, however, five students qualified to apply: three were accepted and a fourth was "wait-listed," says Dr. Gail Starich, Brenau dean of health and science.

Brown also applied to PA programs in other institutions – but those are not scheduled to begin until January 2010, so she jumped at the PCOM opportunity. "Brenau has meant so much to me in helping me focus on my goals and getting me interested in things like women's health issues," she says. "So I'm pretty pleased that I can continue my education in a Brenau program."

– David Morrison



Teaching right on the

BROOKE DESNOËS' husband, the photographer Vincent Desnoës, sometimes plays a game with their – how shall we say – snooty Parisian friends. He will show one of his photos of the rural countryside and then entice them to guess where the photograph was taken. Invariably the incorrect response is France's chateau-pocked Loire valley, where Vincent's parents

have a summer home. The real answer is near Cullman, Ala., where his wife grew up and her parents still live.

What perhaps may be more galling to that celebrated, stereotypical Gallic hubris is that in Paris, the birthplace of ballet, the largest private school for aspiring dancers operates under the direction of the Alabama native, a 1990 Brenau

Women's College graduate. Moreover, the one consistent requirement that Brooke Kent Desnoës has for her 13 instructors at *Académie Américaine de Danse de Paris* is that they have to have taught or performed in the United States. That is because she opened the academy in 1998 specifically for instruction in the "American School" of classical and jazz ballet as a counterpoint to



By DAVID MORRISON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY VINCENT DESNOËS

Left Bank

the sour experience she had during her short tenure as an instructor in a Paris conservatory that employed *école Française*, the French style of dance that emphasizes mechanical precision, studied elegance and rigid sobriety.

“It was like being in the military – very cold. Nobody talked or smiled,” says Desnoës of her two weeks’ working in the Paris conser-

vatory. Her American-style school, however, grew quickly from a handful of students to now more than 600 in both amateur and professional instruction regimes. Students at the American school come from 17 different countries and a variety of religions. But, Desnoës adds, “Everybody says hello and goodbye. There is a nice feel to the school. Saturday morning the school is full

of dads and has the feel of a coffee shop rather than a studio.” In her school there are no auditions for kids who want to dance in the after-school programs, and her students come in all sizes and shapes. The professional-oriented program is a bit more rigorous with auditions and proficiency levels that must be attained before students advance, but she says, “we’re not going to kick



out a 14-year-old because she is a centimeter too tall or if she has a second toe that's too long." Although the school could accommodate more than 700 students at the current 10,400-square-foot location on Rue du Cherche-Midi in the St Germain des Prés district on the left bank, Desnoës says she probably will cap enrollments at about 630. "At this point, I still know every child. It's a personalized experience without becoming a factory."

Classes are taught in both English and French, and about half the students are Americans. Although there is discipline and a decided aversion to the expression "I can't do it," the methods Desnoës and her staff employ do not involve yelling, screaming, berating students or anything of that ilk. Students, too, learn things other than dancing – like giving back to the community when they perform in hospitals before children with serious illnesses.

Desnoës, the dancer, talks with expressive eyes, nimble fingers, busy hands and swaying shoulders moving together in their own choreography. She set out on her road to Paris quite literally in north Alabama when she was about 7 years old and an uncle drove her the 50 miles down I-65 for a performance of *The Nutcracker* in Birmingham. She began studying there seriously a few years later, but credits her Brenau experience with laying the foundations for what really would become her legacy in the art.

After her Brenau graduation, she says she was set up to live in Atlanta, where she had an apartment and a job with the Atlanta Ballet. But she had one last "summer job" commitment at a camp in Maine, and there she met a young photography instructor, Vincent Desnoës.

In the next few years they married, continued studying and working – including three years she spent at the Washington Ballet under the mentorship of the venerable creative director Mary Day. However, it was pretty much a given that they would wind up in Vincent's home town. "It's a big deal for him to buy a newspaper at any hour," she says as a way of explaining. Their two-bedroom, fifth-floor apartment on Rue Littré, which they share with their daughters Eglantin, 7, and Sidonie, 4, has a view of the gilded dome of *Les Invalides* ("The view of the Eiffel Tower is one building over," she quips with some self-deprecation). It is about a four-minute walk to the school in the artsy area of cafes, bistros, galleries and shops that once was stalked by "Lost Generation" American expatriates in the 1920s.

By the time the Desnoës family arrived in Paris, the young dancer's credentials were impressive enough to land her a job teaching at the selective and prestigious

Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, an almost unheard of accomplishment for an American because of, among other things, rigid governmental controls over just about everything in the ballet world. It was doubly unheard of a few weeks later when the American not only decided that French dance education methods were not for her, but also thought she could do a better job teaching students on her own with methods from back home.

Her notion languished for about a year as it worked its way through the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Culture, but finally, in February 1998, she opened her doors with about a dozen students. In one year, the school grew to about 150, primarily by word of mouth. Its growth was

Paris has been the center of the ballet universe for the past 500 years, but it took a Brenau graduate just a couple of weeks to begin instituting some revolutionary changes in the way dance will be taught there in the future.

forcing it to seek larger accommodations just about every 18 months, no easy task in expensive Paris. And, in a classic "Man Bites Dog" story, her success was so solid that even the Ministry of Culture took notice and offered to underwrite future growth of the American ballet school in Paris.

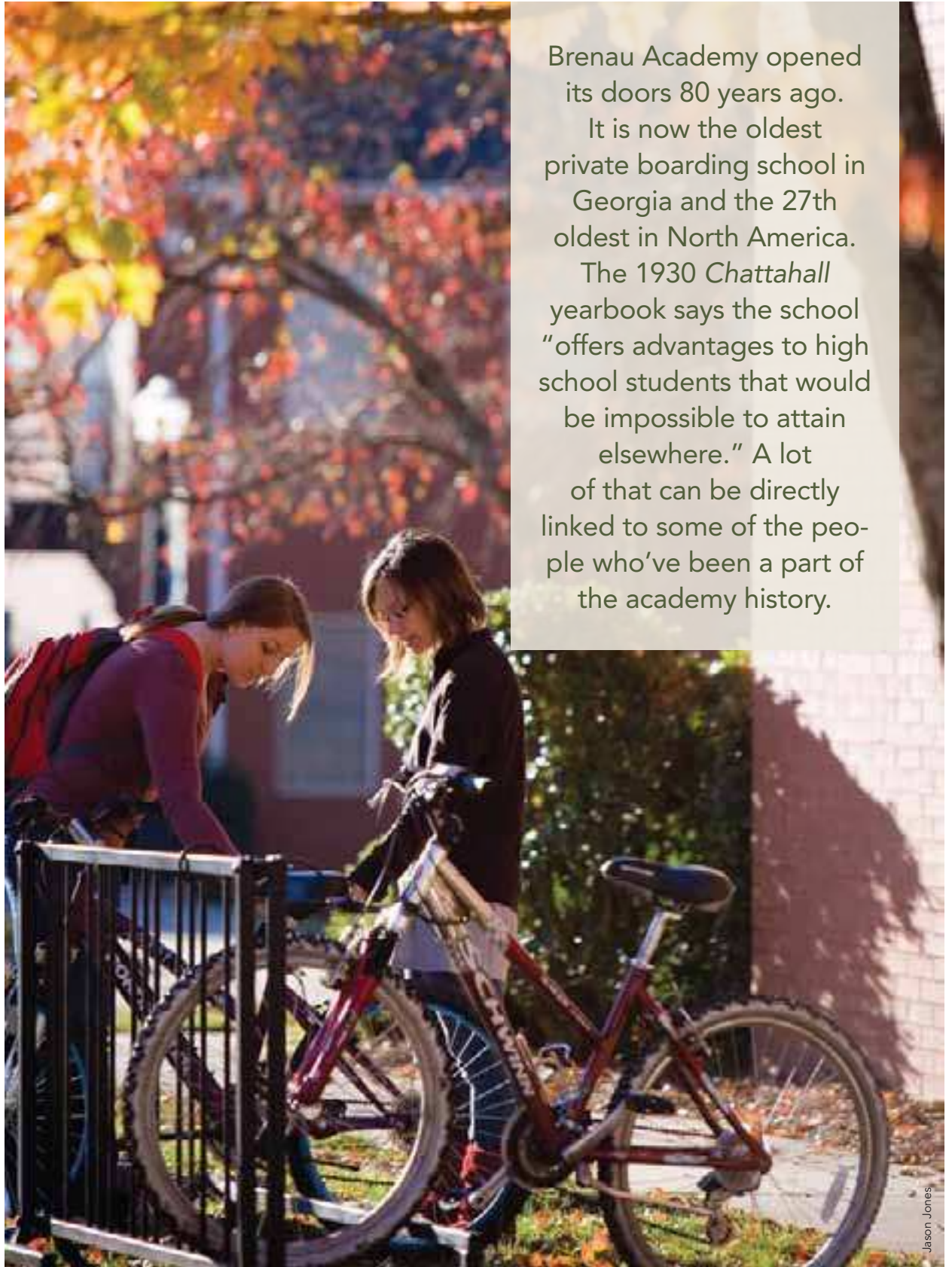
Knowing that would mean giving up control, Desnoës politely refused. Since 2003 she's had the support of a \$1 million grant from the U.S.-based Annenberg Foundation.

In addition to ballet, the school offers contemporary dance. Growth plans include perhaps study abroad programs with U.S. institutions – an idea that has piqued the interest of Brenau's dance program director Vincas Greene.

Although her graduates now are being placed as pre-professional dancers in prestigious programs in the United States and elsewhere, Desnoës concedes she also gets a lot of satisfaction from keeping love for the art alive in those students who might have been discouraged or excluded from the stoic French method programs.

"Not everyone is going to be a great dancer," she says. "You cannot change bone structure and you cannot give a child charisma. But ballet is attainable, if it is taught correctly."

Brenau Academy: Characters welcome



Brenau Academy opened its doors 80 years ago.

It is now the oldest private boarding school in Georgia and the 27th oldest in North America.

The 1930 *Chattahall* yearbook says the school “offers advantages to high school students that would be impossible to attain elsewhere.” A lot of that can be directly linked to some of the people who’ve been a part of the academy history.

Former Brenau Academy headmaster Frank Booth and successor, Tim Daniel, recently mused over a peculiar private prep school phenomenon: all seem to have produced some unusual quirks and characters. In its 80-year-history, Brenau Academy has produced its share of both.

“Boarding schools allow for and foster some eccentric personalities,” says Daniel. “People come here because they don’t fit the mold, and they would not function well or survive the rigid bureaucracy of public schools.”

Booth agrees: “There are ‘characters’ in public schools, too,” he says. “They’re different; they’re regarded as troublemakers. Schools just don’t want to fool with them. But, there is something about the boarding environment that turns these quirks and personalities into something good.”

There’s no record on what kind of “character” the late **Beverly Louise “Barrie” Neill** was for the two years she was on campus in the mid 1940s, but she certainly became one later. As the story goes, when she returned to campus after blossoming into the famous star Amanda Blake, “Miss Kitty” on the long-running TV series *Gunsmoke*, her handlers took pains to visit various watering holes between the Atlanta airport and then-dry Hall County. But there are also a number of stories about her willingness to mentor and nurture academy girls who tried to follow in her footsteps.

One of Booth’s favorite “characters” among the students he got to know during almost three decades as headmaster is **Angie Duffield Harrell, A ’84**, daughter of a university employee who started at the academy in 9th grade and, because she was “so smart, creative and funny,” Booth says, “managed to stay in trouble just about the whole time.” However, the academy environment enabled the mischievous Harrell to get her footing, come back from expulsion, go on to college and a career and, about 10 years later, return as drama teacher and director of admissions.

The “character” Harrell generally ran afoul of was Charles Burel, who retired in 2004 after 28 years at the academy. Booth recalls that the part-time science teacher and assistant dean’s most enthusiastic pursuit was trying “to keep boys away and girls in their dorms.” After curfew Burel sometimes dressed in black, like a ninja, and hid in the shrubbery until he could spring out on some poor miscreant and put her name in a little black book similar to Santa’s naughty list.

He created such an impression that there is now a Facebook page entitled “I Got Busted by Burel.” At last count, 89 alums had linked to the page – one of them a university trustee.

Burel now lives at Tybee Island, Ga. He laughed uproariously when he first learned of the Facebook page and says he probably could add some names to the list.

The transgression that most often got girls on Burel’s list was smoking. That’s ironic, considering a preceding long-time dean and

campus disciplinarian, C.B. Branham, often rewarded her pet students by inviting them to her apartment to play cards and smoke – a fact verified by one who admits to having been among the pets, **Julie Meyer Weiss, A ’47**, of Stockbridge, Mass.

Frances Turpen Ellington, A ’35, WC’39, was one of the first Branham students. Branham would still be around when daughter, **Sarah Ellington Smith, A ’62**, graduated. As they spoke jointly at a recent assembly of today’s academy students, neither claimed to be among the Branham pets, but regaled the giggling high schoolers with yarn after yarn about academy students’ high jinks. Ellington insisted to current academy students that it was her sister, Hicky, a.k.a. **Viola Turpen, WC ’41**, who was always afoul of the authorities with the cold cream-on-the-toilet-seat and Exlax-in-the-fudge pranks in retaliation for Branham’s keeping her from going to a dance.



Charles Burel channels Inspector Jacques Clouseau in a Chatthall spoof of Academy “police” work.

Branham was apparently particularly vigilant at dances. She carried a whistle and blew it loudly when boys and girls got too close together. She was a husky-voiced, chain smoker, who favored unfiltered cigarettes. During the assembly, Smith imitated her picking flecks of tobacco off the tip of her tongue as she dressed down students in her office – an image that’s a stark contrast to her repeated admonitions for girls to “be ladylike at all times.”

Branham required her charges to wear hats and gloves when they attended mandatory “high tea” on Sunday afternoons – after their required appearance in a “church of their choice,” of course. (That led to something of a “black market” in church bulletins; enterprising students would grab extra copies and sell them to girls who’d slept in.)

Street Cred: Brenau prepares interior designers for the world outside

Two years after Jamie Kern graduated from the Evening and Weekend College at Brenau with a degree in interior design, she had to endure the grueling 16-hour, two-day NCIDQ exam. Administered by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification, that's the test you have to pass before you can be a licensed interior designer. Kern and several of her Brenau classmates took the test together for moral support because they had encountered many graduates from other schools who were on their third and fourth attempts. "We all passed the first time," Kern says, regarding that as a testament to how well the Brenau program prepares students for the real world.

Kern currently operates Design Theory Interiors, primarily focused on upscale residential, clubhouse, restaurant and boutique hotel interiors. She had a degree in finance and business law from Marshall University, but decided to launch a second career. The first school she tried "wasn't giving me what I needed, but when I started at Brenau, I loved it." In addition to stepping into a professionally accredited program, she encountered faculty who not only engaged students on a personal level but also were plugged into the profession. All, for example, had endured – and passed – that 16-hour test for their own NCIDQ certifications. As a result, Kern walked into her first job with "a little status" that recent grads of other institutions didn't seem to enjoy.

That is exactly what the Brenau interior design program is intended to do, says its chair, Professor Lynn M. Jones. "We want our students to leave us with the ability to practice effectively as a professional interior designer when they start their first job," she says.

The Brenau program combines an undergraduate track leading to a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Women's College in Gainesville and through the coeducational Evening and Weekend College in Atlanta. This year, the program expanded to a combination undergraduate/graduate degree that adds to the BFA the Masters of Interior Design after students complete a one-year

sequence offered only at the Atlanta campus.

"The undergraduate programs have always been good at providing students with technical skills and the broad liberal arts education that a good interior designer needs to succeed," says Jones. "The fifth year gives them professional polish, which includes some MBA classes, and that will be a distinct edge for students who compete in the job market with those who only possess a BFA or a technical degree."

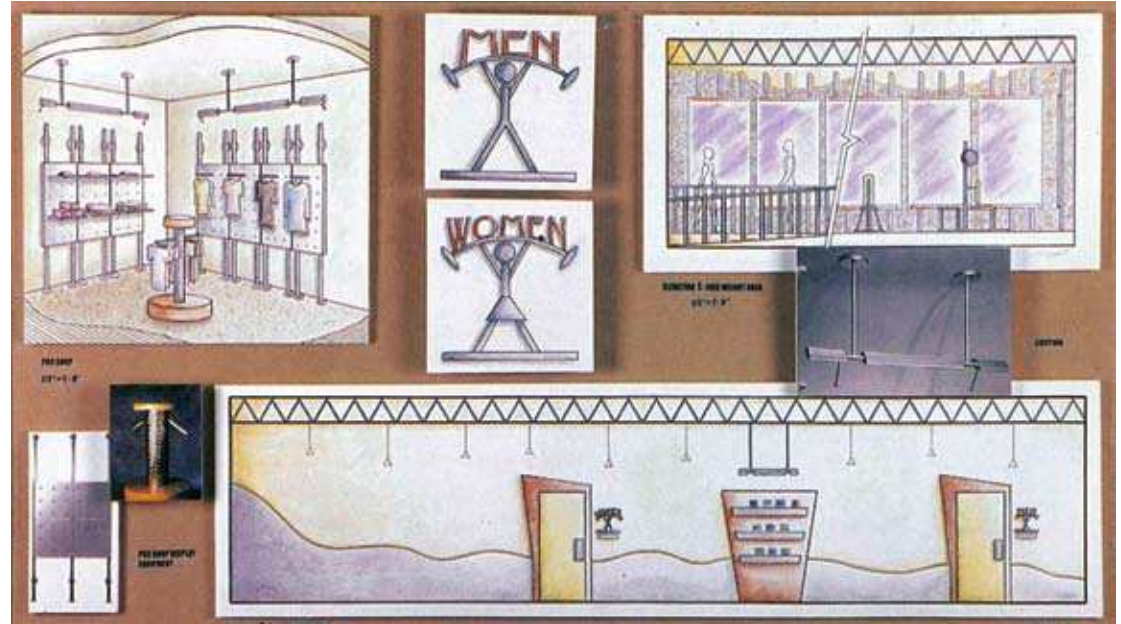
It's a good degree for career changers, too, Jones says – one they can complete in less than five years if, like Kern, they have an undergraduate degree in another field from Brenau or another college or university, some with as few as 60 credits. In fact, experience in another profession, like nursing, hospital administration or human resources, might be beneficial because of the specialization in the interior design profession. For example, in the 2010-11 academic year, interior design courses will be added to Brenau's new Master of Science degree in applied gerontology because of special needs the elderly have in their living spaces. (See story on page 7)

Brenau is only one of six institutions in the United States that offer graduate-level interior design programs accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation, formerly known as the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER). Kansas State University and the University of Oregon have Master of Interior Architecture degrees; George Washington University and Marymount University offer MFAs; and New England School of Art & Design has an MA.

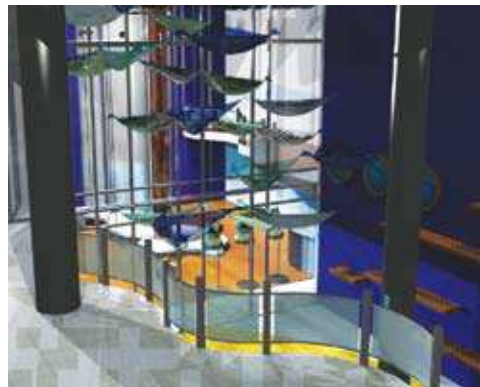
The master's degree program wasn't available when Kern was a student, but she stresses that, as a professional, she pays closer attention to Brenau graduates than those of other schools because of the accreditation.

"That is so very important," she says. "This profession is all about credibility, and when you come from a school that has the FIDER stamp on it, you have a little more credibility."

– David Morrison



Jamie Kern today runs an interior design business in Atlanta that specializes in work with clients in the hospitality industry and in upscale residential projects. Part of her senior portfolio work at Brenau appears above. But, Kern says, more than just technical skills Brenau equipped her with practical knowledge for getting along in the real world because, unlike other competing schools in the Atlanta area, Brenau prepares graduates for professional accreditation.



Brenau's first MID grads show their stuff

The first six graduates of Brenau's new fifth-year Master of Interior Design program will exhibit their design portfolios on Thursday, June 11, at the studio of tvsdesign, at 1230 Peachtree St. NE in Atlanta. The show runs from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The students who will show their work are Sarah Neal, Amy O'Dell, Amanda Hill Ready, Brenda H. Regan, Kristen A. Rudolph and Katie Simms.

tvsdesign arguably is Atlanta's hottest interior design firm with such high-visibility projects as Georgia Aquarium, Woodruff Arts Center and Hyatt McCormick Place in Chicago in its portfolio. The firm's professionals include two members of Brenau's Interior Design Advisory Council, **Margaret Serrato, WC '77**, associate principal, and Steven Clem, principal/director of interior design.

H. Sandy Sanders Lee, WC '53



Love Story

Normally in this space Brenau Window profiles people who have found unusual ways to support the university. Not long ago, however, we received a letter from Dr. Stephen Lee of Savannah, Ga., a Christian psychologist. We thought there was very little to add.

On my first visit to what was then Brenau College, I was impressed not only by its beautiful surroundings but also by all the lovely young ladies that graced the campus. One day, a friend of mine from Georgia Tech asked me if I would go with him to the Brenau campus to pick up his date. I agreed, but we not only met his date, but also a girl I had never seen before. I said to myself, “that’s the girl I’m going to marry.”

On May Day 1953, during the celebration which was held in the sunken garden of sorority row, I asked the young lady, who was wearing a yellow dress, to go back with me to her “ZETA” house. When you entered the house then, to the right there was a window bench seat, which she sat on. There I dropped to my knees and asked her to marry me.

Sandy Sanders graduated that June and, a year later, on June 18, 1954, we were married. We lived on campus at Georgia Tech until I completed my studies. Later, we moved to Melbourne Beach, Fla., while I was part of the team that placed the first man on the moon.

Sandy received her degree in speech and psychology and, in addition to membership in the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, she was a member of the honorary speech fraternity, Zeta Phi Eta. She was a director of the Savannah Community Theatre, an officer in the American Association of University Women and a member of Aglow, the national inter-denominational Christian women’s organization.

During our lives together we visited Brenau and the ZETA girls many times, including the 25th homecoming for the Class of 1953. The women of Brenau are very special. When they travel the world, as Sandy did, they reflect the best of Brenau – lady-like qualities, southern manners and traditions. Though the years, Sandy shared the story of her life at Brenau – with all its love, its joy and its life-changing experiences – over and over again with her ZETA sisters, friends and family. She loved Brenau, and she could never forget her college and sorority days.

For more than 54 years, both in the good times and hard times we shared, we never allowed the love to go out of our marriage, either. Nor did we forget the gift we received from Brenau and Georgia Tech or the love we have for those institutions because of it.

I’m sure our love story is one of many that started on campus at Brenau and lasted a lifetime. But it is because of that story that I have made provisions that, upon my death, a gift be given to Brenau for a scholarship fund in honor of my beloved wife: H. Sandy Sanders Lee, who was called home to the Lord on April 18, 2008.