

BRENAU

SPRING 2010

Window

Grad School: The Next Generation

Cancer Researcher's Lasting Legacy

Brenau's 'Miss Hacksaw'



Graduate Education: A Contrarian View



Columbia University Professor Mark Taylor set the academic world atwitter with a *New York Times* essay last year in which he called graduate school “the Detroit of higher education” because, in his view, it produces a product for which there is no market, develops skills for which there is diminishing demand and costs more than we can afford. As Exhibit A in his indictment, he pointed to the pride one of his colleagues expressed over a student’s doctoral dissertation – research and expatiation about how medieval theologian Dun Scotus used footnotes in *his* work.

Dun Scotus, an important thinker and philosopher, appears to have been buried alive, which is apparently what they did in the 1300s when people lapsed into comas. Now academia seems bent on burying him even deeper under mounds of *facta obscura*.

No academic discipline holds exclusive copyright to such esoteric investigations. As a geologist, my rock-solid enthusiasm for scholarly research admittedly begins to fade in the face of studies like one I encountered in my library about the processes for identifying Pseudo-Pararammelsbergite. You see, Rammelsbergite is a crystalline form of nickel arsenide. Pararammelsbergite is similar, but has a smidgen of cobalt added and a slightly different crystal structure. Then Pseudo-Pararammelsbergite ...well, you get the drift here.

The examples above reinforce the misconception many people have about graduate education. They believe (falsely) that people seek advanced degrees for the sole purpose of preparing to be professors in colleges or universities or some other career in academia. Some academics themselves exacerbate the prejudice because they seem to disdain applied research as an impure, unworthy pursuit. I do not agree with Professor Taylor’s premise that there may be little value in esoteric graduate research, but I do understand it. Without the eventual practical application, fruits of research merely collect dust on shelves of university dissertation libraries.

Don’t get me wrong: Graduate-level research and writing contribute significantly to society. Classifying and identifying minerals is important work – commercially, environmentally and socially. For example, mineral knowledge helps us know whether substances are around that could contribute to or inhibit dangerous amounts of toxins in our soil or water, or if a relationship exists between certain minerals and workplace

hazards (e.g. asbestos). None of these types of investigations could occur without substantial amounts of foundational information from years of “esoteric” research. “Esoteric” research that seemingly had no direct application at the time, like that of Brenau alumna Roslyn Wallace highlighted in this issue, which paved the way for medical breakthroughs that have saved countless lives.

We need both applied and esoteric research in universities, putting the best minds in the world to the task of creating solutions for the great problems of the world. We must encourage studies relevant to enhancements in our quality of life while resisting the temptation to over-value those expensive, seemingly endless projects with little or no value.

Professor Taylor suggested in his essay a totally new model for graduate education, which has not changed much since Dun Scotus was adding footnotes to his own dissertation. Taylor’s interdisciplinary model would abolish all standing academic departments, increase collaboration among institutions, and focus studies on the real world.

Brenau has good news for the professor. We are doing all those things in expanding Brenau graduate programs, which will help us double our enrollment in the coming decade. As you will read later in these pages, Brenau has charted a path of career-oriented, demand-driven graduate programs. We combine the broad brush of liberal arts to the thin lines of focused, relevant professional studies. We have established our first terminal degree, a Master of Fine Arts in Interior Design, which blends academic theory with real-world need.

The future of Brenau University depends on graduate education. Rest assured, though, that Brenau programs also will be influential in the future of graduate education in the rest of the academic world. We plan to rewrite the understanding of what is good and valuable and desirable in graduate study, combining an application of the liberal arts to career-oriented and society-advancing professional degree programs. Be a part of these world-changing efforts. Stay in touch with Brenau.

Ed L. Schrader

Ed Schrader, Ph.D.
eschrader@brenau.edu

CONTENTS



4 Four! One Thousand

It is a big deal when any college basketball player breaks into the 1,000-point club, but this season four charter members of the fledgling Golden Tigers squad hit the mark – three of them in the same game.



6 Miss Hacksaw

There are honors, and then real honors. Brenau's Del Ward has both kinds. It all started when the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame member became "Del from Dixie," the first woman with her own national radio program.



10 Roslyn Wallace Was Here

Brenau is off to a good start in funding construction and long-term maintenance of a new education center, thanks to a bequest of alumna Roslyn Wallace. It will be a fitting legacy for a woman whose contributions in cancer research have global significance – and saved lives of hundreds of thousands.



12 Breaking the Mold

Graduate education programs will be the key to Brenau University's growth and stature in coming decades. Stories of recent graduate studies alumni and current students prove the concept.



29 The Dance Priestess

Lisa Michaels was among the first dance majors at Brenau Women's College. She thought she would be a performer, but in many ways, she practices in the 'healing arts.'



31 One for the Books

Brenau benefactors Dixie and Wilbur Ramsey died recently within six months of one another but left a lasting legacy. The only thing they loved more than people was being able to help people who needed it – that, and both telling and making great stories.

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At most schools, 1,000-point scorers are few and far between. Not at Brenau, where four basketball players reached that pinnacle this season – and three did it in the same game.

Sarah Ledford was first, which was only fitting because she scored the first basket in Golden Tigers basketball history when the program began in 2006. The senior post player from Ellijay, Ga., hit a layup early in the second half of Brenau's 75-64 win at Georgia Southwestern on Dec. 15. Later in that game, **Paige Cooper**, a senior forward from Sarasota, Fla., and **Vicky Wilson**, a senior forward from Buford, Ga., joined Ledford in the exclusive club.

Ashley Hagans got to 1,000 points even faster. The senior guard from Snellville, Ga., needed only two

years to reach the milestone on Jan. 25 in an 80-68 win over Reinhardt. Hagans led the Southern States Athletic Conference in scoring this season (546 points, 18.2 points per game). She finishes her career with 1,181 points, followed by Cooper with 1,172, Ledford with 1,160 and Wilson with 1,156.

"It's very rare," Brenau coach Gary Bays says of the high-scoring quartet.

Ledford, Cooper and Wilson were part of the first group of five players Bays recruited when the Brenau program got off the ground. "Sarah and Vicky were dead-set against coming here," he recalls. "I was very, very persistent with those kids." As a sophomore, Ledford became the first All-Conference player for Brenau. Wilson was the leading scorer her freshman season and was an All-Academic selection last year. Bays had



At left, Golden Tigers basketball coach Gary Bays in a serious locker-room discussion with the team. Above, the charter members of the Brenau 1,000-point club, l-r, are Ashley Hagans, Vicky Wilson, Paige Cooper and Sarah Ledford.

signed Cooper when he coached at Warner University before taking the job at Brenau. She transferred after a redshirt year at the Florida school, making the All-Freshman team. Last year Cooper was named All-Conference and finishes her career with 733 rebounds, another remarkable statistic.

"Those three original players are not what you would call gifted players by any means," Bays says. "Because they work really hard, they make up for that."

Hagans, who played her first two years at junior college Georgia Perimeter, still became the only two-time All-Conference player in Brenau history. She "is obviously a big-time player," the coach says. "In most cases, it has to be a four-year player (to reach 1,000). Ashley was the exception to that rule." She was a sure bet to reach 1,000 after scoring 635 points last season and leading the nation in scoring (21.2 points per game). Hagans was also the first NAIA All-American for Brenau as an honorable mention selection. This season, however, opposing teams had caught on to her. She was double-teamed from the start.

Now Bays has to refill the cupboard. Brenau loses seven seniors from a team that ended the season 17-14, matching last year's record for victories – including his four top guns. "This group of dedicated young women will be hard to replace," he says. "They have taken this program from its infancy to a point of competitiveness in the SSAC."

– Karen Rosen

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How disappointed I was to read in *Brenau Window* (Winter 2009) that the volleyball program began in 2003. This is in fact wrong. I attend Brenau on a volleyball and academic scholarship from fall of 1997 to May 1999 when I graduated with a B.B.A. in marketing. In fact, my first year at Brenau was the second year of the volleyball program. To have all of the mornings I woke up at 4:45 a.m. to attend practice in a gym with no heat or air conditioning dismissed as not having happened is hurtful. We had a different coach each year and no athletic director. We may very well have been the "conference doormat," but we played hard, practiced harder. We were proud to be a part of something new. I have no doubt that this mistake was unintentional, and I have even more confidence that you will have the article corrected.

Jaime Bledsoe Dearth, WC '99

Miss Hacksaw

Trody Trow!

by Candice Dyer



Maryann Bates

At first glance, the promotional photo of Del Ward looks like a curvy, vintage pinup from the 1950s.

In a checkered blouse with a Peter Pan collar, she crosses her arms behind her head and lifts up her strawberry curls – a fetching hybrid of Rita Hayworth and Lucille Ball. But look closer, and you see a game, determined-looking woman doing a warm-up stretch and pulling back her hair, ready to get down to serious business.

As the photo's wink-wink caption says, "There's more here than meets the eye!"

Much more.

That was when Ward, WC'47, was "Del from Dixie," the nation's first so-called "gal disk jockey" to spin platters all-night long, keeping up a witty and vivacious patter in a mixed format of artists such as Bill Haley, Glenn Miller, and Jimmie Rodgers for 50,000-watt powerhouse WGN in Chicago.

She grew up in Macon, where Southern accents run as thick and sweet as cane syrup, so her syntax has never included the hard "r" sound. When she introduced an Elvis song by purring, "Sashay 'round to the next numba," northern listeners would melt like, well, buttah.

"All-night factory workers, cross-country truck drivers, early rising milkmen, and stay-up-laters have flooded the WGN switchboard with calls when Del is on the air to voice their approval of this unusual treatment of an all-night disc show," reported *The Macon Telegraph*.

She stood a petite 5-feet-2, with twinkly features that old-school news copy always described as "pert," and in that unreconstructed "Mad Men" era, station managers were quick to circulate the peachy visuals behind the voice, inviting listeners to "Make a Double-Date with New Loveliness, Del Ward."

"I don't know what they were thinking," she says,

chuckling modestly. "But I was always very popular with prisoners." (With her accent, that line sounds like "populah with prisonahs.") "Lots of mail from jail."

In fact, the inmates of Indiana voted her "Miss Hacksaw of 1952."

"They said listening to me transported them out of their enclosed world, so I was like a hacksaw to them," she says.

The cheesecake promotions notwithstanding, her fan base clearly discerned the substance beneath the style.

A critic for *Variety* wrote, "Miss Ward, equipped

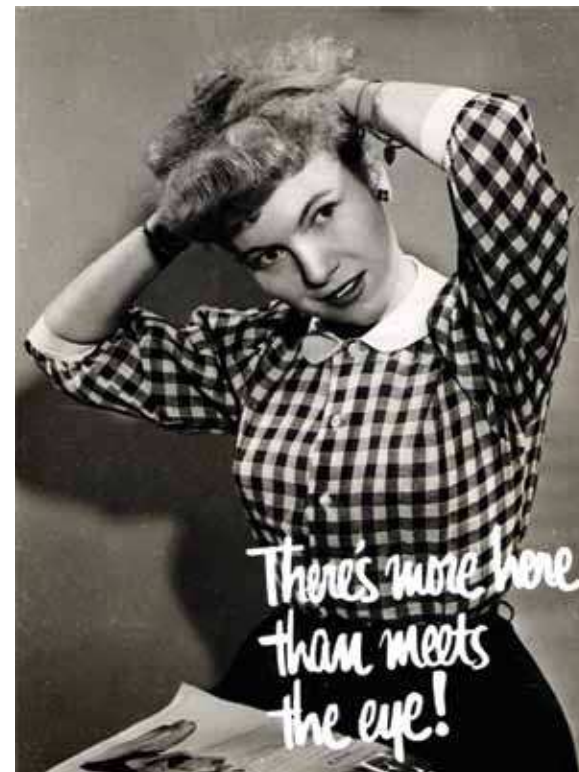
with a pleasant voice embroidered with a slight Southern accent, wisely keeps a check-rein on any temptations to groove her gab along 'Lonesome Gal' lines. She does, however, strive for a degree of intimacy that gives her sessions a note of individuality."

That sense of intimacy and individuality would become her trademark – along with her whimsical sign-off – in a lengthy and fulfilling career as a broadcasting pioneer in radio and television. She was the first woman to be inducted into the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame, and she was a founding member

of American Women in Radio and TV. In 1986 the Georgia Department of Industry and Trade voted her "Broadcaster of the Year."

She still works as the popular host of "Personal Profile," a television show on Macon's WMAZ. And she still turns heads with her Scottish red hair.

Born Dolores Ward, the daughter of a pressman for *The Macon News*, she would walk with her father on the paper route, peppering him with questions about the old buildings, odd characters and lively sounds along the way. In an early essay titled, "My Life Story as a Girl Disc Jockey," she wrote, "The familiar nursery rhymes didn't 'move me.' I wanted to learn all



“I’ll never tell what it means,” she says coyly. “Not even my husband knows.”

the popular grown-up songs.”

She earned her bachelor’s degree in history at Brenau. “I vividly recall the strict curfews and male visitation rules,” she says, “but there was no place I would rather have been.”

Like many of her girlfriends, she began working toward a teaching certificate. “Those were the only options for women back then: teaching, nursing and marriage.” But at her summer job at Macon’s WNEX, she quickly went from receptionist to “Miss Music” on the air, and she noticed the trade magazines were buzzing about an exciting new medium: television.

“I knew it would be big, really big,” she says. “And I knew I wanted to be part of it.”

After completing some broadcasting workshops at New York University, she boldly talked her way into a job at WHOT in South Bend, Ind., where she lived at the YWCA.

“I didn’t know a soul there,” she says. “The southern accent was a selling point because it was very unusual for a southern girl to be ‘in the biz,’ period, especially on the air, if she wasn’t Minnie Pearl. But I like to think I got those jobs on the strength of my audition tapes and hard work. And, of course, luck always has something to do with it.”



Early in her career, a boss suggested she adopt a catchier stage name. “He wanted to call me ‘Pat,’” she says. “I didn’t feel like Pat Ward, though, so we settled on Del, which I thought would only be temporary.”

“Del from Dixie” rose to radio gigs in Chicago and St. Louis and eventually alighted in New York City, where she began doing voiceovers and landing roles on television. “Every time they needed a southern girl for a detective drama or courtroom show, I got a call,” she says, pointing to a black-and-white photo of herself looking wide-eyed and startled in a *film noir* setting.

During that time, like other glamorous strivers, she lived at the Barbizon Hotel for Women, the proto-feminist stomping grounds of Sylvia Plath and Grace Kelly, and she wrote a column for *Downbeat* magazine called, naturally, “Sashayin’ ’Round.”

New York was cold, though, so she migrated home to spend the winter with plans to return in the spring. Back in Macon, she fell in love with attorney Hendley Napier, who was more progressive than most of the men who had filled her dance-card. His mother had been the first woman to serve in the Georgia legislature, so he happily supported Ward’s career choices, and did not mind that she had never learned to cook or sew. They got married in 1956 and started a family.

The following year, she went to work at WMAZ and launched “Date with Del,” a Barbara Walters-style interview show that became a staple of Georgia television. Broadcasters were expected to end each segment with a signature catchphrase, so Ward coined “Trody Trow!” It still mystifies her viewers.

“I’ll never tell what it means,” she says coyly. “Not even my husband knows.”

Maconites just call it “Delanese.”

The station’s affiliation with CBS afforded her “star junkets,” in which she interviewed Sophia Loren, Carol Burnett, Telly Savalas and President Carter, and she even trekked into the North Georgia woods during the filming of “Deliverance” for a sweaty conversation with Burt Reynolds and Jon Voight. However, she devoted the same curiosity and deference to a South Georgia homemaker with a prize-winning recipe for sweet corn.

“I was fortunate to interview a lot of famous people, but those were not necessarily the most interesting people I met,” she says.

Ward is nothing if not democratic.

“I recall Del being petite and always dressed to perfection – everything was always in order around her,” says Alice Babb, who was an advertising copywriter at WMAZ.

“Del was friendly and interested in everyone – even those of us who weren’t ‘stars.’ Especially those of us who weren’t stars.”

To some, “Date with Del” had the jasmine whiff of a garden party tea – and she does belong to the Garden Club, among other civic groups – but Ward, by dint of her inclusiveness and free-range curiosity, long ago transcended that demographic, earning wildly diverse constituencies in her fan base.

“I think she is one of the most intelligent, gracious southern ladies I have ever met, even though she breaks every mold and stereotype about a southern lady,” says Jodi Palmer, publisher of *Macon Magazine*. “She knew what she wanted from a very young age and she didn’t let much get in her way, and yet, when you meet her, she does not come across as the truly hard charger she has always been. She is a polite, loving and caring human being who went well beyond what was acceptable and the norm for a

woman of her age. She has always been ahead of her time.”

Ward once insisted on telecasting from the Tubman Museum of African-American History because “not enough people know who Harriet Tubman was, and they should.”

In 1997 the museum presented her with a special award. “She is one of the few true icons I have known,” says Carey Pickard, the museum’s director at the time. “Del had done a great deal for the black community over the years through highlighting events of importance to them when other news outlets would not. Everyone agreed that she always promoted things in



Already a member of the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame, Ward has moved into another medium as host of an interview program on WMAZ-TV in Macon.

a manner that was never condescending, but always genuine and interested and professional.”

Adds Newton Collier, a Macon native who was a trumpet player for the R&B duo Sam & Dave, “Del Ward never lets anybody down, and she knows the score. She was always supportive of the African-American community, even back in those dark days when nobody else was. We won’t forget that.”

As the pinup poster says, there is more here than meets the eye.

Dyer, WC ’91, is author of *Street Singers, Soul Shakers, Rebels with a Cause: Music from Macon*.

Roslyn Wallace was here.

There is only one question concerning the life of Roslyn E. Wallace: Did she or did she not climb that water tower in Rutledge, Ga., when she was in the sixth grade?

by Mary Welch

Her niece, Teresa Wallace, says she did, and, apocryphal or not, that is perhaps how the brilliant scientist who paved the way for women in cancer research will probably best be remembered in her northeast Georgia hometown of about 700 souls. In Rutledge, says the niece, Roslyn will always be “the girl who climbed the water tower.” However, she leaves a legacy far beyond the vista from the silver-painted edifice of the tiny Morgan County town that is just off I-20 about 50 miles east of Atlanta.

Wallace died July 18 in Pearl River, N.Y., following an extended illness, just a couple of weeks before her 85th birthday. She was born July 30, 1924, and graduated from Rutledge High School in 1940 and from Brenau Women’s College in 1944. In her passing she provided handsomely for her alma mater, a bequest

that will be used in part to set up permanent funding for student research projects and for operations and maintenance of a proposed \$6 million academic complex on the Brenau Gainesville campus.

“She went to Brenau wanting to study English and maybe be a journalist,” says Teresa. “She loved words and reading. But then she had a biology professor who just got her so excited about biology and science that she switched majors. He instilled that magic, that love of science. She fell in love with biology. That’s what made it all happen.”

Indeed it did.

According to her niece, Brenau gave Wallace a belief that being a woman should not – and would not – stop her from pursuing her dreams. “There were very few women in science back then. Very few women went to college much less got a doctoral degree in biology. But when she went to Brenau, the confidence came,” Teresa says.

Better than anything spray-painted on the side of a water tower, on any list that begins something like “first graduate of a women’s college to ever...” you will invariably see the name of Roslyn Wallace as the first woman to head a major cancer research laboratory. She began her career in the late 1940s at Lederle Laboratories (now Wyeth) working on a vaccine for polio, and there she stayed until her retirement in 1984. She switched to cancer research, and some of the work she and her colleagues did resulted in life-saving cancer-treating therapies and research practices that still are used today. From her Lederle work, she shared a patent on a method of accelerating growth of bone marrow stem cells, and her name is attached to other breakthrough cancer research. In 1979 she became the first woman to receive the prestigious Cyanamid Scientific Achievement Award for chemotherapy research because she had developed an ingenious two-stage *in vivo-in vitro* test system capable of determining the effects of cytotoxic agents on bone marrow cells. She used this system to assess the tumor-reducing capability of lead compounds and other anticancer drugs.

“She was very collaborative and helpful to young investigators,” Dr. Jay Gibbons, assistant vice president of oncology research at Wyeth, said in an interview with LoHud.com. Gibbons’ career in Pearl River overlapped with Wallace for a year or so. “She had a lot of experience with chemotherapeutic drugs. She was well-respected and well-liked.”

John S. Burd, president of Brenau from 1985 to 2005, remembers Wallace as “a kind and wonderful woman [who was] very, very bright.”

“She was always very clear about the role Brenau played in her life,” Burd recalls. “She said that Brenau was the major factor in helping her believe she could have a career in science. There were so few women in science leadership roles, and at Brenau, she developed the faith in herself to be able to say ‘I’ll do a career in science.’ And she really gave her life to research a cure for cancer.”

She also gave her life savings to the university to help students pursue math and science careers. “It was very important to her,” says Burd. “She was careful with her money. She worked well past retirement age, and when I was still at Brenau, we

met to discuss her estate. But she wanted to help young women like her who were interested in math and science.”

She received the Outstanding Alumnae Award for Professional Service from Brenau University. In 1988 she was awarded the Zeta Tau Alpha Professional Achievement Award; and in 2000 she received an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Brenau University.

“I never met a more gracious person or one more willing to help others achieve their fullest potential,” says Jim Barco, senior vice president for Institutional Advancement at Brenau. “Personally, she lived a simple life, but oh how she loved helping others and seeing them smile. That was her reward.”

One of four children born to James Paul and Bernice Elizabeth Davis Wallace, Roslyn Wallace graduated from Brenau shortly after the D-Day invasion of France in World War II. She went on to study at George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University before receiving her doctorate from in biology from Harvard University. She then earned a Fulbright Award and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Wallace was a charter member of The Tissue Culture Association, the New York Academy of Science, the American Society for Microbiology, the American Society for the Advancement of Science and the American Association for Cancer Research.

A lifelong cat lover, she also achieved notoriety for development of a special breed of “nude mice.” That facilitated the growth of human tissue and tumors for study and reduced use of other animals in research.

“She was so brilliant, always writing scientific papers,” says Teresa. “She would come home, especially when her mother was still alive, and tell us about her work. Of course, we didn’t understand anything she said. We just would nod and say it sure sounded great.”

Interestingly, later in life, she began denying the water tower incident.

“She was brilliant,” says her niece. “But she was a character.”

“...she really gave her life to research a cure for cancer.”



Roslyn Wallace in her class picture from 1941, top, found her true love in life, biology, after her encounter with Brenau’s “Spiderman.” That was Yale-educated Dr. Benjamin J. Kaston, one of the nation’s foremost arachnologists, who taught all Brenau College biology courses during his tenure from 1938 to 1945.

Breaking the Mold

Graduate school in the future.

By Mary Welch

Along with the Master of Business Administration degree that Don Cross will earn in May, he also should receive some meritorious medal for time management. The single father of two teen boys works full time aboard a nuclear submarine as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy. And still he finds time to train for and compete in half a dozen gruelling triathlons every year.

Recently Cross represented the Navy in the Iron Man World Championship while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. "There's a lot of planning that goes into each day," he says with understatement, "but one reason I've been able to do all of this is the flexibility of Brenau's program. There have been times when I've had to go out to sea, but my instructors are willing to work around my deployments."

Cross has spent most of his class time on the campus at Kings Bay, but completed about a quarter of his courses online. With almost 25 years of service in the Navy, he is planning to retire soon. "I went back to school because I wanted to be a more well-rounded person, and I thought an M.B.A., combined with my engineering background, would help me market myself or start a business of my own."



Don Cross

Cross is typical of the atypical students and alumni profiled on the following pages in this examination of Brenau University's approach to education options beyond the four-year baccalaureate degree.

The purpose of graduate school is to turn out students with the advanced knowledge and training that will assure the county's economic and social well-being and prosperity. But with new technology and changing skill sets, are today's graduate schools doing that? Educators, business leaders and government officials are taking a closer look at graduate school programs and asking whether the schools are following a model that is, at best, outdated or at worst, churning out students with obsolete or unmarketable skills.

It is a question of great urgency. Graduate school enrollments continue significant growth while experts predict that in the next several years undergraduate enrollments will fall flatter than a poorly-researched term paper. As if that is not enough to make graduate programs more attractive to universities – with or without great employment prospects for students – master’s- and doctorate-level education, especially programs that are offered online, have become cash cows for many financially troubled institutions.

Brenau University is equally bullish on the matter. Having been engaged in offering graduate degrees at the intermediate master’s degree level for more than two decades, the university currently enrolls about 1,400 graduate students – half Brenau’s total enrollment. By 2025, according to the strategic plan, that number will more than double with a majority of Brenau students’ seeking an advanced degree, including doctorates and other “terminal” degrees – academic parlance for the highest degree attainable in an

We’re seeing an economy that needs these extra credentials.

academic discipline. The stark reality of both intense competition and eyebrow-raising criticism of the long-term value of an over-educated, under-skilled population is that institutions like Brenau must become extra competitive and creative in developing graduate degrees and experiences that not only will attract students, but also will export alumni with attractive, desirable skills in the workplace.

From 1998 until 2009, first-time graduate school enrollment of domestic students increased on average almost 3.5 percent annually. Attributable in large measure to the depressed economy, enrollment jumped to nine percent from 2008 to 2009 as workers returned to college to “retool” their skills.

“You are seeing more career paths requiring additional education, certainly in the medical fields,” says Gale Starich, dean of the School of Health and Science who recently picked up a second title as graduate dean at Brenau. “If you want to be promoted in business, you need to get an M.B.A. or additional credentials. We’re seeing an economy that needs these extra credentials. And, it can’t be generically focused.”

Out with the old ways

Ah, “generically focused.” Generically focused is a graduate school experience in which a person studies a subject for a couple of years, writes a long paper about it, defends it before a jury of peers and professors, then attends a cap-and-gown ceremony. The process may or may not have anything to do with the person’s subsequent career – unless, of course, he or she planned to teach at the college or university level. That has been the graduate school model for at least a couple of centuries, and that is the major problem.

“There is inherent tension between the practical and the theoretical in education, and it hits tremendously in the graduate level,” says Steven Roy Goodman, author and college admissions expert. “How does a university want to position itself? And, what is it that the student wants – and needs – to get from his or her degree?”

Goodman believes graduate programs are simply a way to “help tangibly position yourself for a job or an academic position. Think of Thanksgiving dinner. If a relative asks you what you’re studying and they roll their eyes, then what you’re doing doesn’t make sense. There has to be a practical component. Reading poetry isn’t it.”

Shaking things up

Brenau’s philosophy for graduate education in the future is to take that old model and, if not break it completely, at least give it a good shaking.

First, the Brenau model presumes that every undergraduate who enrolls will not end his or her education at a traditional four-year degree. Even K-12 school teachers who got a job upon graduation with a bachelor’s degree and a state certificate are finding they need master’s degrees or doctorates.

Second, Brenau programs will not be tied to location. Although there still will be on-campus instruction at all levels, particularly in disciplines that require hands-on laboratory, or “clinical,” work, there will be plenty of online instruction, too. That includes courses and degree tracks taught totally online and some combining online and on-campus studies. The new Master of Science in Applied Gerontology, for example, is totally online. In a recent count, 1,058

Valerie Mac



Billy Howard

Brenau students, undergraduate and graduate, were taking at least part of their courses online.

Third, Brenau is breaking the mold of graduate education by applying its liberal arts philosophies across the board to undergraduate and graduate disciplines. Its long range plans include applying to graduate studies the “Four Portals of Learning,” designed to give even narrowly focused graduate students broader world understanding, scientific and analytic curiosity, appreciation for arts and creative imagination, and communication and language fluency.

“Liberal arts training and values will make you better practitioners at your job,” says Starich. “If you are in health care, you need the central values of being nonjudgmental, accepting. You need to understand ethics and have good language skills.”

Finally, Brenau believes the university experience, the traditional model of four years in college, two years in a master’s degree program and three years working on a doctorate, is just too long. The strategy calls for shortening the time between high school and a doctorate.

“We have to have more graduate programs that have resonance in the economy,” Starich says. “We are seeing a shift in more graduate degrees that are practical. It is all economy-driven.”



Valerie Mac says she always planned to become a Family Nurse Practitioner, but she was reluctant to sacrifice the “real world”

enrichment she was enjoying outside the classroom. “The challenge was going to be finding a program that would be flexible enough for me to continue to advance my clinical experience while pursuing graduate studies,” says Mac, 24, who earned her B.S. in nursing at Emory.

She since has worked as a women’s health nurse specialist at the Hall County Health Department and as a traveling home health nurse, before joining the Brenau staff as a full-time University Nurse. Now she is enrolled in Brenau’s MSN Family Nurse Practitioner program which meets monthly on the North Atlanta Campus, with about 80 percent of her studies

conducted online, and she also is working toward certification as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.

“Becoming a nurse practitioner will allow me, hopefully, to address the many aspects of health that will provide students with the support they need during the crucial growing period of the college years,” she says. “I want to empower young women to become skillful, self-confident and well-grounded advocates of their own health and safety.”

So Mac plans to keep practicing, and to continue hitting the books. “I was impressed that Brenau is developing a Doctor of Nursing Practice program, which will be one of only two programs in Georgia, that I could pursue after completing my master’s program.”

Liberal arts training and values will make you better practitioners at your job.

Margie Gill



Billy Howard

High-priced 'voc-tech'?

The crux of the issue, says Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Studies, is whether advanced degree programs are merely advanced – and expensive – job training. Universities must guard against that's being the case by making certain their graduate programs teach students three things: how to understand, develop and use methodologies of inquiry and research; how to synthesize complex information within a field and across related fields; and, how to routinely exercise critical and analytical judgment.

So, how does a university restructure its graduate programs? What does the future look like for graduate education?

First, says education consultant Goodman, "A university has to finely tune what its specialty is. What is it that you offer that will still be important in 2020? "Schools should look at programs in business, education, health care."

For Brenau, that is a big check mark. Schools should also play to their traditional

Margie Gill felt fulfilled running Alternative Life Inc., a residential facility for displaced boys, age 8 to 11, in Oakwood, but so many question marks lingered.

"I wanted to know exactly what caused the problems that got them into trouble," she says. "Was it biological, sociological, something out of their control?"

So she began researching area graduate programs for clinical psychology and concluded that Brenau's offered the kind of emphasis on psychopathology and critical counseling she needed for underserved children. "I was looking for a challenge, and I found it," she says, with the booming

laugh that puts her young clients at ease.

Gill also directs Project Life for Youth, Inc., a mentoring program for at-risk youth, and she coordinated a volunteer project pairing Brenau students with Good News at Noon, an advocacy group for the homeless. When she finishes up her work on the Gainesville campus, she will graduate in May with a 4.0 GPA. She plans to continue her outreach work. She has applied for a fellowship that would give her a voice on social policy at the White House.

"I'm crossing my fingers," she says, "but either way, I'll have plenty of work to do."

strengths. "Go back to your roots," Goodman says. "If you're a women's college, maybe offer a master's in women's health – something very tangible that you can claim. Listen, Emory University has a very

Another change will be a shorter period of study.

prestigious graduate business school. So, don't just offer an M.B.A. You won't compete with the prestige. But, you can offer a master's in hospital administration."

[For Brenau, another checkmark.] "And, it could be as prestigious as an M.B.A. from Emory. People around the world will know that you are the place to go if you want to run a hospital."

On the fast track

Another change will be a shorter period of study. Students are taking graduate courses while still undergraduates and more courses of study are combined so that a

After earning an economics degree from the University of Georgia, Neal Daniels flocked south to Nicaragua where he spent eight months working with children through a nonprofit organization. There he sparked his passion for teaching. Upon returning to the United States, the 25-year-old enrolled in Brenau University's Master of Arts in Teaching program where he could shift gears and jump-start his teaching career in two years.

Daniels says the Brenau career-changers graduate degree will fast-track his realizing a dream to become a middle school math or social studies teacher. The Flowery Branch resident takes courses at Brenau's Gainesville and North Atlanta campuses on weeknights while substitute teaching in public schools Hall and Forsyth counties. Daniels says he believes the career-changers master's degree program may help him to be a better teacher than if he had chosen to earn his bachelor's in education. "It might be the better option than spending your first four years in education because you get those four years of focus in math first," he says. "I am more focused now because I had that epiphany in Nicaragua. Now I'm focused on classroom management and activities that before I may not have been ready for."

Daniels also hopes to gain certification to teach English to native speakers of other languages; he also wants to coach middle school football or basketball. His twin brother and an older brother are also Georgia teachers. "I guess," he says, "I'm following in their footsteps."

Neal Daniels



Photo courtesy of Neal Daniels

student can graduate with both an undergraduate and master's degree in five years or so.

"Speed will win," says Goodman. "Really, does it take two years to get an M.B.A.?"

Another check for Brenau. It is already putting into play its shorten-the-span philosophy. Brenau Academy, the grade 9-12 prep school that resides on the Gainesville campus, last year created a program that enables a student to finish high school in four years with both a high school diploma and the equivalent of a two-year Associate of Arts degree from the university, saving both time and tuition. Through a partnership with Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, a student

can study biology for three years at Brenau, go through a little more than a year at PCOM, then do a clinical residency back in Gainesville at a local health care facility and graduate with both bachelor's and master's degrees ready to practice as a physician assistant in any medical field. The School of Business and Mass Communication last year graduated its first cohort and started a second that awards graduates not only an M.B.A. in 18 months, but also a specialization in proj-

ect management, which is applicable to many fields. Brenau is developing a fast-track Master in Nursing program aimed at registered nurses with two-year degrees. The program, which focuses on nursing education and nursing leadership and administration, could be available on multiple campuses, including Brenau's new South Atlanta/Fairburn campus.

Goodman possibly might withhold checkmarks for universities that are exploring multidiscipline graduate tracks or applying broader learning requirements, like Brenau's liberal arts portals, to some programs. He agrees that multiple disciplines are inherently good, "but, on the other hand," he cautions, "the world is increasingly getting specific."

Starich counters that Brenau's "portals" approach will not diminish learning in a specific field. On the contrary, she says, it makes learning more relevant. And, when crossing the party line between disciplines, what Goodman describes as "blended degrees," the "curriculums still should stay close to the mother ship," Starich says. "The blended tracks must make sense. But when they do make sense, they make a lot of sense. For instance, if you are in the health care field, force-fitting your degree in your health-related field with a standard M.B.A. will not be as good as getting an M.B.A. in health care administration."

continued on page 20

Michael Mazzotta



Chris Viola

Long before "CSI" turned the morgue into a hip workplace, Michael Mazzotta was looking at death from every angle as a Pathologist's Assistant, having supervised more than 3,000 autopsies in a highly specialized career with fewer than 1,500 practitioners in the world. "I have seen virtually all forms of death," he says, "from the garden variety heart attack to people buried alive and those struck by lightning."

Today he wields a scalpel over surgical dissection practices at SouthEastern Pathology Associates in Brunswick. "Here I make a difference in people's lives every day," he says. "A family doctor sees about 30 patients a day, while an ER doctor, maybe 35 a day. I see 200 or more each and every day."

Adding to his degrees in computer science, biology and chemistry, he is now enrolled at the Kings Bay campus, where he is pursuing an M.B.A. with an emphasis on health care management. "Ultimately, I would like to work my way up to the CEO position of a major university teaching hospital."

At age 9, Madison Sherrer already displays an unmistakable sense of style. "She loves cool clothes," says her occupational therapist Jennifer Allison. "She's quite the diva."

Allison has been teaching Maddie, who has Down syndrome, how to use fasteners and tie her shoes. "We use clothespins and coins, over and over to strengthen those little, little hands," Allison says, "and when she finally snapped her pants, she twirled around and said, 'Look at me, I look like Hannah Montana!' She has more confidence now that she can dress herself."

Allison earned both her bachelor's (WC'92) and master's degrees (2003) at Brenau, writing her thesis on the "role of structure in the lives of the mentally ill" and establishing herself as an expert



Billy Howard

Jennifer Allison

on ADL, or activities of daily living, the hands-on elementals that promote greater self-sufficiency. "Each person is a puzzle with different motivations," she says.

Allison works with people who have autism, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, Tourette syndrome, mental retardation, and various forms of EBD, or "emotional-behavioral disorders," in all age groups, shuttling between schools as an OT for the

Gwinnett County system; practicing on weekends at All About Kids Therapy Services; consulting for The Next Stop, a social program for young people; and, as a Brenau adjunct faculty member and clinical fieldwork educator, teaching and overseeing students' training at a residential facility for adults in Gainesville.

"I especially enjoy the Down syndrome kids because they have a reputation for stubbornness, which I try to channel into tenacity, and then there's no stopping them," says Allison, who is known for possessing a strong will herself.

"Jennifer truly cares, and she never gives up," says Maddie's mother, Carrie Sherrer.

Being an OT is a calling that requires both compassion and steeliness, as well as imagination and pragmatism.

"Jennifer has an honest, no-nonsense approach that kids respond to because they can always sense when they're being snowed," says Pat Young, her colleague at Gwinnett's Hooper Renwick School.

Allison hides small treasures as rewards for games that develop muscular coordination, and, in Maddie's case, refers to cursive as the more glamorous-sounding "pretty princess writing."

"One man was supposed to take his medicine every night at seven, but he didn't pay attention to the clock, so he would forget," Allison says. "I realized that he watched 'The Rifleman' religiously at 6:30, so I told him to take his meds when the credits rolled. Sometimes it's that simple."

Other times, not so easy.

"I spent all summer teaching someone how to use the Red Rabbit bus system in Gainesville – all the routes he would need to go to work and the store and home, we rode them over and over," she says. "As soon as he had it down, Red Rabbit changed the routes."

In Maddie's case, the efforts have paid off in a variety of ways, most noticeably in a crown and sash from the Special Young Miss Gwinnett pageant.

"She knows how to do the beauty-queen, parade wave," Allison says, pantomiming a stiff-wristed salute.

Ashley Paulk

Woodbine native Ashley Paulk enrolled in the Brenau M.B.A. program at the Kings Bay campus as soon as she wrapped up her undergraduate degree at Georgia Southern University. Although she enjoys her job as a budget analyst for a federal law enforcement training center, she says she believes it is crucial that she continues her education to stay competitive in the business world. The 26-year-old said Brenau's night program allows her to excel in her job while furthering her education.

"My job is very important to me and my family," says Paulk. "I'm not sacrificing one or the other; I can do both." The business administration major says she was not planning to earn an M.B.A. until the end of her undergraduate career. Paulk said she chose the Brenau program because its eight-week semesters enable her to complete the program in a year and a half, whereas many other programs in the area would require at least two years of courses.

She says she hopes the advanced degree will help her to better understand her job as a budget analyst. "It seems as I get older, I know more people getting their master's degrees," she says. "I'm hoping that it will give me more opportunities for bigger and better jobs."



continued from page 18

Online programs: problem or solution?

Goodman applies his standard checklist to online education as well, and Starich agrees that is a fair test.

"I think we always must adhere to the core values of the university in online education," Starich insists. "We are at the beginning of a real revolution in education with current and future education delivery technology. With online platforms, the subject matter should be very specific. Also, we have already discovered that online classes in which students have some personal interaction, such as a once-a-month skills-based training program for eight hours, are wildly popular."

Online programs can be more profitable for universities than residential programs. There are no classrooms to maintain, but information technology and infrastructure can be expensive, and – at least at

Brenau – some of the same professors that teach on campus teach online as well. The big question of their value, according to Goodman, is loyalty to the institution. Online education can become more of a commodity than an on-campus university experience.

"Colleges rely on alumni support and I'm not sure that a student feels a particular loyalty to a college when the experience is online," says Goodman. Starich disagrees. "I think some people feel safer online than in the classroom – more open," she says. "I still believe there is an emotional tie among the classmates and with the school."

Although there is bound to be considerable debate over methods, there looms on the horizon a perfect storm that collides increasing numbers of people seeking advanced degrees for myriad reasons, prospective employers seeking a better-educated workforce with relevant academic skills and an often intransigent

continued on page 24

Cindy Bertoia

Cindy Bertoia has been working in information technology for more than 20 years. But when the 47-year-old mother began scouting colleges for her daughter, she learned of Brenau University's dual-degree program that allowed her to tap her own passion for interior design that had lain dormant for years. "I have always enjoyed decorating and furniture placement, and that's the tip of the iceberg in the design field," she said. "Ultimately, I would like to start my own design firm."

Bertoia enrolled at Brenau's North Atlanta campus and began the five-year program. She takes courses on week nights and Saturdays while working full time at a financial services company. Bertoia is now in her senior year, and will soon graduate with Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and Master of Interior Design degrees. That, however, may not be the end of her academic ventures. Bertoia is considering continuing her education in Brenau's new M.F.A. in interior design so she can teach college- and university-level students the intricacies of design technology.

Outside of the classroom, Bertoia intends to use soft lighting as well as carefully chosen colors and fabrics to design health care facilities that spur recovery. Her senior project is to plan decor for an autism support center that is comforting to those on the autistic spectrum. "Interior design is so much more than 'Oh, this looks pretty,'" she says. "It's a profession that provides the opportunity to help people through improving their environments. We've all sat in those cold, empty waiting rooms. I think the opportunity for designers to influence someone's capacity to heal is underlooked."

A new academic function: graduate admissions

Christina White explains it clearly: "When you apply to law school at Vanderbilt, you don't apply to the university. You apply to the Vanderbilt School of Law." The point is that graduate school admissions is a real specialty, and starting this spring Brenau begins mirroring what we find at Vanderbilt and peer institutions. White, who has been the dean of admissions for the university, now heads the new office of graduate admissions. She will be assisted by admissions specialist Michelle Leavell, who had handled graduate school applicants at Brenau for more than a decade. The new office reports to Gale Starich, who serves as dean of all Brenau graduate programs as well as dean of the College of Health and Science.

"The graduate admissions process truly is an academic function," Starich says. The new office applies an academic-based strategic approach to recruiting

graduate students that will engage graduate faculty in the admissions process and develop recruiters for each of Brenau's four schools: Health and Science, Fine Arts and Humanities, Business and Mass Communication, and Education. Prospective graduate students, White says, want to communicate with faculty and others with expertise in their academic disciplines "so they can understand what it is really going to be like to be in that area."

"When we enroll undergraduates today," said senior vice president for enrollment and student services Scott Briell, "we presume that, at some point in their careers, they will each want to pursue an advanced degree. This new, more focused approach will help us attract students at all levels of their academic pursuits."

For more information, contact Christina White at 770.718.5320 or cwhite@brenau.edu



Adam Komich

Nancy and Antonio Arata

It would seem Nancy and Antonio Arata and their five children would be prime time candidates for their own reality show, the non-dysfunctional kind that celebrates educational achievement. After all, there was the time when Nancy was enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration in health care program at Brenau in the mid-2000s while four of the children were scattered in classes from the elementary school level to college and while she was carrying the couple's fifth child.

And there were the extracurricular activities for the kids, the drama club, football and band practice, carpools and careers to manage. What's a working mother seeking an M.B.A. to do? "You have to keep a positive attitude, but it's exciting if you're not too much into sleep," a laughing Nancy says. After investigating Brenau's hybrid program, she found the university's mix of classroom and online studies to be a perfect fit. "I liked the flexibility and I did like the idea of being in the classroom and taking courses online," she says. "And I was surprised at how interactive the online courses actually are. You do get to know people and get feedback online."

After watching Nancy receive her degree in 2004, husband Antonio quickly enrolled in Brenau's all online M.B.A. studies. "When I saw Nancy had such a great experience with Brenau, I followed suit," says Antonio, who received the advanced degree in 2008. For the Aratas, both of whom have nursing degrees, the multi-discipline credentials have led to quick climbs up their respective career ladders at Athens Regional Medical Center. "I just got a promotion tripling my responsibilities at the hospital based on having the M.B.A.," Antonio says. "I went from having responsibilities for about 45 people to managing about 135 people."

Meanwhile, Nancy's degree led to her move out of Athens Regional's quality support department to a brand new position at the hospital, magnet project manager for the facility's nursing administration. While both Aratas are enjoying career growth, there were other benefits to their studies, the unintended consequences kind. "While I was working on my M.B.A., I used writing

the papers and other homework to reinforce to the kids that education is a continual thing; you never stop learning," Antonio says. "I'd like to think they were impressed or inspired that I also had homework. I even let them have input in the papers I wrote, asking them, 'What do you think I should put in here,' and they would come up with some ideas."

The Aratas have become unabashed Brenau ambassadors. "I always share my Brenau experience with members of my staff who are looking to further their careers," says Antonio. "We have several now who are in the M.B.A. program at Brenau." Nancy has done her own recruiting. "I know of at least one other nurse who is enrolled at Brenau right now getting her own M.B.A."

Misty Mahan Chapman gave birth to a baby girl and, one week later, was back at her desk in the Brenau classroom where she is working toward a master's in clinical psychology on the Gainesville campus.

"I was determined not to get behind," says the mother of three. It had taken her a while to find her calling, after changing her major three times at as many colleges. "But once I took a psychology course, I knew that was it, and I came straight to Brenau for grad school partly because of the small student-to-teacher ratio, but also because it just felt right. The professors understood my goals."

Much of Chapman's work so far has focused on substance abuse; she is completing a practicum at New Hope Counseling. "I want to work with different populations of adults and children to see where I fit," she says, adding that she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. "How can I say this? I've been deeply influenced by people who have gone through very hard things. I want to understand why people are the way they are, and how to help them."



Billy Howard

Misty Chapman

Natalie Graves

Natalie Graves didn't want flowers or a fancy dinner for her milestone birthday. She wanted an education. So she gave herself a present by enrolling Brenau University's dual-degree interior design program. "I always wanted to go back to school," Graves says. "I always told myself, 'When I turn 40, I will go back.' And I did."

Although the former restaurateur now runs Georgia Wedding Directors, a successful Atlanta wedding and event-planning business, she hopes to decorate homes and businesses full time after earning a master's degree and a state interior design license. "On the side, I've done design work all these years," she says. "Hopefully, I'll be able to do that if the economy allows me. I postponed that career path when I had kids. Now that I'm older, I want to get back to what it is I really enjoy."

The mother of two and stepmother of three said the program at Brenau's North Atlanta campus provided the schedule flexibility she needed.

When Graves' husband died suddenly last year, she says her professors and classmates were very supportive. "Brenau has allowed the flexibility to continue in spite of what we had in front of us," she says. Although Graves had an associate's degree in interior design before beginning the Brenau graduate program, she says she felt compelled to complete a master's and learn new design technology. "It's opened up a new knowledge for me," she says. "So much has changed since I was in school. It will make a huge impact on my design work."

Stephanie Boyd, 23, found a home for her creative passions in Brenau's dual bachelor's and Master of Interior Design program. "I've always known I wanted to go into interior design ever since fifth grade," she says. "Brenau really stood out because it had the five-year MID program. I felt like that would be something to give me an edge and give me some business courses."

Boyd transferred to Brenau Women's College from Georgia Perimeter College during her sophomore year. Last year she began the master's program at the North Atlanta campus and served as the president of the American Society of Interior Designers. After years of honing her interior design craft, Boyd has found a niche in hospitality design and plans to decorate hotels and restaurants. The Hospitality Network recently awarded her a scholarship to pursue studies in hospitality.

Boyd's senior project is challenging her to fuse her knowledge of interior design and passion for sustainability. Her chosen task is to design a sustainable American food restaurant situated on the top two floors of an Atlanta high-rise. "Sustainability is really important in the industry right now – not just in the materials that are used to furnish the space, but also so that there's energy efficiency," she says.

Boyd says she aims to produce designs worthy of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. She is currently scouting the area for a summer internship where she can begin to put her sustainable designs into action.

Stephanie Boyd



Billy Howard

continued from page 20

academic establishment. In the future, graduate education succeeds only if it expands the breadth of professional options for its product, the students. As one visionary critic of current graduate education methods put it, universities have a responsibility to expose students to new approaches to problems, different cultures and more deliberate consideration of real-life issues, providing them with skills they need in a constantly changing world.

"There is no simple answer to the future of higher education," says Starich. "But we believe have a vision that will elevate both our students and faculty." ♦♦♦

Ed Lightsey, Candice Dyer and Jessica Jordan also contributed to this article with profiles of alumni and students.

Brenau University's first 'terminal' degree

One of the most caustic comments you hear about graduate degrees is that they are good only if you want to teach at the college level. That's why it is a bit ironic that one of the main reasons Brenau is creating its first "terminal" degree program, a Master of Fine Arts in Interior Design, is to prepare people to teach at the college level.

A terminal degree is the highest degree attainable in any field, explains Lynn M. Jones, the chair of the interior design department at Brenau. "If you are planning teach at the university level, you need a terminal degree," says Jones, who earned her terminal degree in historic preservation at the University of Georgia in addition to an M.B.A. at Brenau. Other universities offer Ph.D. and other doctorates that have interior design as a component, but Jones says there is no pure doctorate in interior design.

Brenau's program is set to start in the fall term on the Brenau North Atlanta/Norcross campus, and it is accepting applicants now for the hybrid on-campus and online program. But do not think for a moment that this is one of those ivy-cover-tower academic gigs. Brenau's highly regarded Bachelor of Fine Arts/Master of Interior Design CIDA accredited program is built on preparing students for professional certification, so, following that tradition, the unique two- to three-year M.F.A. will merge both the academic and the practical: to be admitted, applicants still will have to show a very good portfolio displaying their design skills.

"Our goal is to develop a body of knowledge that increases the depth of understanding of the profession," Jones explains. More than simply picking out drapes that match the sofa, "interior design affects the bottom line in your business, how efficiently people work. It affects how quickly patients recover in a hospital."

Jones has been preparing to launch the program for close to a decade. The program will be one of the first to fully embrace the university's strategic mission to apply broad-based liberal arts philosophies to graduate studies. Indeed, she says, courses will touch all four of Brenau's academic colleges and fully embrace the multidiscipline "four portals" with requirements emphasizing global awareness, communication, scientific and analytical research and appreciation for the arts.

Interestingly, the teaching part, the "pedagogy," in academic speak, does not come from the School of Education, which focuses on preparing teachers for the K-12 environment, but from Brenau's Department of Nursing, which already has a graduate-level program that prepares people to teach in schools of nursing. "The philosophies of how you teach to different learning styles of adults are the same," she says. "They have 'clinicals,' we have 'studios.' They have 'didactics,' we have 'lectures.' It was a perfect fit." Part of the deal, too, is students in the program will be required to do teaching assistantships, thus providing a pool of well-qualified individuals to teach in Brenau's undergraduate programs. The department will accept applications for teaching assistantships through June 15.

For more information, contact Jones at 770.534.6284 or lmjones@brenau.edu. The Web site is www.brenau.edu/sfah/interiordesign.



Drawing by Kristen Rudolph, '09

Leapin' Lords! We have priestesses of the dance, too?

When Lisa Michaels was 12, she struggled with the crisis of faith that afflicts every Southern Baptist who feels born to boogie.

"If I love dancing so much, how can it be considered a sin?" she asked her mother, who prophetically answered, "Lisa, if God gave you a talent, he meant for you to use it."

As it turns out, Michaels, WC '81, would make a career of her grace, in both the physical and spiritual sense of the word.

"There was this split in my psyche when I was grow-



ing up, so I was looking for ways to merge my love for dance with consciousness," says Michaels, who directs the Atlanta-based Natural Rhythms Institute, which offers body-centered classes, workshops and guidance in personal growth through sacred, expressive dance – an "if the spirit moves you" approach that helps women explore their inner lives.

"It's a way of holding the world," she says. "We learn to move isolated parts of the body – an arm, the head, a leg – and coordinate those parts into a graceful, beautiful whole," until, as W.B. Yeats wrote, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?"

Some participants twirl scarves, Stevie Nicks-like, while others sway languidly in place; *prima ballerina* coordination is not required. If students stick with the program, they eventually become "priestesses."

"This is not Wiccan or pagan or tied to any religion," Michaels explains. "It's about simply connecting with the divine that is within yourself, and about connecting to the elements of nature. However, I couldn't do this if I hadn't studied ballet."

Michaels, a Lilburn, Ga., native, was one of six students in Brenau's first class of dance majors. After spending a few years in California teaching, leading a small company, and soul-searching, she returned to Georgia and founded the Duluth School of Ballet, which grew into a 500-pupil enterprise, and choreographed for Ruth Mitchell's Georgia Dance Conservatory. She also produced a series of syllabi and audio-instruction for dance in early childhood education that landed on the cover of *Dance Teacher Now* and won the magazine's National Parent Award. Her tools have been used in hundreds of classrooms nationwide.

More recently, she published *Natural Rhythms: Connect the Creational Dance of Your Life to the Pulse of the Universe*, a book that is part memoir and part instruction manual, and she has become a mover and shaker, so to speak, on the lecture circuit, presenting her ideas at the Women of Wisdom Conference and other Earth-mother gatherings.

"I was skeptical at first when I heard about this 'priestess process,' and when I tried to dance, I felt like the Tin Man,"

says Rebecca Rollins Stone, an art history professor at Emory University and a faculty curator of the Michael C.

Carlos Museum. "At the time, I was depressed and feeling trapped in a bad marriage. Lisa created a safe space for me to work out those issues and push through my own limitations about religion. Her program transformed my life in every way."

– Candice Dyer

"We come spinning out of nothingness, scattering stars...the stars form a circle, and in the center we dance." Rumi, 13th century

Sara Guevara



'No hesitation' helpers

Wilbur Ramsey became suspicious when the young woman he was trying to assist asked him to drop her and her baby off in the middle of nowhere because the road to her house presumably was too muddy for his automobile. He hurried back to his 600-acre farm and, at the rock quarry near his home, accosted a man looting the quarry office. Ramsey whipped out a pistol, held the culprit at bay, tried to capture a second who fled into the woods and squeezed off a couple of rounds at two more suspects bolting in a getaway car. The cops arrived shortly after and mopped up in the arrest of all four. What makes the story so remarkable is that Ramsey at the time was 89 years old.

"The word 'can't' was not in his vocabulary," says his daughter, Jill Ramsey Mansfield. "He believed that there was not anything that you could not do if you put your mind to it."

Dixie Chester Ramsey, Wilbur's wife of 68 years, was nonplussed by the whole episode because, as their daughter explains, "there were so many things. Daddy was quite a character." Apparently so was the wife, who shared the husband's can-do philosophy, an attitude that fueled both their personal and professional lives. When Wilbur died on July 23 and Dixie six months later on Feb. 3, their Georgia community and Brenau University lost dear friends, generous benefactors and colorful collaborators in making the world a better place. They will rest together at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Wilbur Ramsey was one of those larger-than-life characters and Dixie more the behind-the-scenes type who loved garden club work and hoarded a secret recipe for tomato aspic. However, many of Wilbur's exploits now approach legendary status because of his spouse, who was quite the yarn-spinner. Her favorite subjects were embellishments of family lore, everyday life, culture collisions – with the Cambodian family of 18 that they adopted and between the Old South gentility of the Gainesville of the past and the rooster-crowing brashness and influx of newcomers in the community today. "You would laugh out loud at the stories Dixie would tell," says Gladys Wyant, executive director of the Arts Council, Inc.

Wilbur studied agriculture at the University of Georgia.

By the time World War II broke out, the former ROTC cadet already was in the service, becoming at one time the youngest major in the U.S. Army infantry. His celebrated "Bushmasters" regiment was involved in many bloody engagements in the South Pacific. During his three years in combat, he won the Silver Star and other medals for valor. He and Dixie married five months before Pearl Harbor. During the war, she stayed as close to him as possible, moving to San Francisco to work as a government telegrapher.

Back home they quickly became cornerstones of the community. Among other things, Wilbur built a successful poultry and egg business. They worked together in creating the Northeast Georgia Health Systems organization, says John Ferguson, the hospital's long-time chief executive. Wilbur led the board overseeing privatization of the hospital and acquisitions key to its phenomenal growth while Dixie supported those efforts on the auxiliary board.

Although the Ramseys collectively made many other contributions through hands-on work in church, community and cultural organizations, they are most noted, to paraphrase Tennessee Williams, for their kindness to strangers. The Cambodian refugee family showed up in Georgia with nothing but a bucket of water. The Ramseys spearheaded efforts to house them. The men worked in the Ramsey business. Dixie visited the women several times a week, teaching them English and "southern style" cooking. Although the Cambodians moved to Minnesota in the 1980s, at Christmas time they would "just show up, without even calling," Jill says. "They considered my mother their mother."

Brenau Trustee Philip Wilheit served with Wilbur on hospital and bank boards, but he began his relationship with the much older Ramseys when he was only 23 during his first solicitation for a charitable contribution. "It was the easiest call I ever made," he says. Before they wrote a check, however, Dixie gave Wilheit a Coke and Wilbur bade him join in watching their favorite TV program, the Johnny Cash show. Some years later, Wilheit asked for a much-larger donation, but again met no hesitation. "The only thing Wilbur said then," Wilheit recalls, "was 'I hope they enjoy getting this money as much as we enjoy giving it to them.'"

– David Morrison