

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility
- Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion Award Winners
- Theta Alpha Kappa
- New Professor
- Alumni News

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## Dr. Donald Musser named the Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility

A new endowed chair, the Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility, was announced in January 2005 by Dr. Doug Lee, Stetson University president. Hyatt and Cici Brown, University trustees, contributed the major portion of the gift to honor Reverend Marchman. Stetson raised the additional funds to complete the \$2 million endowed chair. Dr. Donald Musser has been appointed the inaugural holder of the Marchman Chair.

Chairman and chief executive officer of Brown & Brown Inc., Hyatt Brown has been a member of Stetson's Board of Trustees for 23 years; Cici Brown has served on the board since 1999 and is currently a member of the executive committee. The Brown's support is tied to the recognition that "over the years, Marchman has been a champion for people no one else is really interested in. This new chair will be a lasting tribute to all of the wonderful, selfless things he's done." Marchman's contributions to the community include his longtime commitment as the Daytona International Speedway chap-

lain, former pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, lobbyist for Volusia County's public schools, co-founder of the Stewart-Marchman Treatment Center in Daytona Beach, ministry work



**Dr. Donald Musser**

with alcoholics and drug addicts, prisoners, the homeless, the elderly and at-risk youth.

In the words of Dr. Lee, "the new Marchman Chair will further develop the university's leadership role in community and social responsibility initiatives and will inspire others to

become even more involved in community transformation."

As Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility, Dr. Donald Musser's career, like Marchman's, has been characterized by service. Dr. Musser has taught in the Religious Studies Department at Stetson since 1978 and currently chairs the University Values Council. He is widely published in issues of contemporary Christianity. For 21 years he served as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserves and is a long time member of the board of the Neighborhood Center of West Volusia. Like Marchman, Donald Musser has strong ties to Central Baptist, serving twice as their interim pastor.

People whose lives have been touched by Marchman are asked to consider a gift to the endowment for the Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility. Contributions can be sent to Stetson University Development Office, 421 N. Woodland Blvd., Unit 8286, DeLand, FL 32723.



Go to the department website and read Dr. Fant's recent poem, "Lamentation," concerning the New Orleans disaster. [www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion](http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion)

## Chair Comments



The 2005-06 academic year has brought several changes for the Department of Religious Studies. Most importantly, we welcome a new faculty colleague, Dr. Leena Taneja, who will be broadening our course offerings in non-Western religious traditions (see page 3). Dr. Phillip Lucas is on sabbatical for the 2005-06 academic year, and I am on sabbatical for fall 2005. To assist the department during these

sabbaticals, Ms. Ramona Kirsch, who taught with us last year as a visiting assistant professor, is remaining for another year to teach. We are continuing to increase the number of students who choose to pursue a major or minor in religious studies. We do not have an exact count, but we currently have approximately 45 majors and 40 minors. Perhaps the most obvious change is what you

are now reading—the inaugural issue of our department newsletter. We hope you find it informative and a good way to stay in touch with Stetson and the department. Please be sure to send us any news about what's happening to you or other religious studies graduates.

Mitchell G. Reddish

*“The formula of my happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, a goal.”*

*Philosopher,  
Friedrich Nietzsche*

Allen Hall,  
Offices of  
the Religious  
Studies Department



## Puchalla and Holcomb Awarded the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion



During the Spring 2005 Academic Honors Convocation the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion was awarded to two recipients. First place went to Daniel Puchalla, Sarasota, FL for his essay entitled, “Concepts of Afterlife in the New Testament.” Puchalla graduated this past spring with a B.A. in Religious Studies and is a graduate student at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Second Place went to Tara Holcomb, Eustis, FL, a senior majoring in Religious Studies with a minor in Psychology for her essay entitled: “The

Authorship of Matthew.”

The Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion started with a letter from Sam R. Marks, a Jacksonville lawyer. The letter, dated December 15, 1950, expressed Marks desire to establish an annual prize to stimulate greater interest among the students in the Religion Department (as it was then called.) Mr. Marks suggested essays dealing directly with the Bible be the main focus of the prize. His wish was to encourage those interested in biblical study to sharpen their ability to understand and interpret the Bible and to communicate their knowledge effectively in writing and in

speech. The first award was given on May 23, 1952 to Mr. Parker McLendon for “The Meaning of the Prophet Hosea for Today” and second place to Ms. Gloria Kline for “Jesus’ Estimate of the Worth of Human Personality.”

Over the past fifty-three years the requirements and prize awards have changed only slightly, with numerous students, both religious studies majors and non-majors, submitting papers for the award. To view the current criteria for the award please visit the department website at: <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion/students.php>.

# Theta Alpha Kappa Inducts New Members

Theta Alpha Kappa is a national honor society for professors and students of Religious Studies/Theology. On April 28<sup>th</sup> Theta Alpha Kappa, chapter Alpha Gamma Omicron, inducted seven new members: **Mary Beth Christian**, a Religious Studies major with minors in Music and Spanish; **Nicole Galinat**, a Finance and Economics major with a minor in Religious Studies; **Kevin Hanson**, majoring in Religious Studies and Philosophy with minors in Business Law and Political Science; **Tara Holcomb**, a major in Religious Studies and a

minor in Psychology; **Amy Ridgon**, majoring in Religious Studies and French who will be attending Stetson Law School this fall 2005; **Jessica Simons**, a Psychology major with a minor in Religious Studies; and **Casey Smith**, a major in Religious Studies who plans on attending graduate school in the fall of 2006. To date Theta Alpha Kappa, chapter Alpha Gamma Omicron has inducted 65 students. The chapter was started in 1996.



Theta Alpha Kappa was conceived as a college-university learned society at Manhattan College, New York City, during the academic year 1976-77. Its prime purpose is to further the study of Religious Studies and Theology at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its title embraces the three areas of primary concern to students of Religion: God, Humanity, and Community. Students must meet certain criteria in order to be nominated into Theta Alpha Kappa. To learn more about Theta Alpha Kappa go to the national website at: <http://www-hl.syr.edu/admin/>

## Religious Studies Outstanding Juniors and Seniors



Congratulations to our Outstanding Students who were selected by the Religious Studies Department for the 2004-2005 Academic Year.

**Juniors: Jamie Haskins, Adriene Zedick, and Mary Beth Christian**

**Seniors: Amy Ridgon, Daniel Puchalla, and Kenneth Matthews**

## New Religious Studies Professor

The Religious Studies Department welcomes its newest member, Dr. Leena Taneja. A May 2005 graduate of The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Dr. Taneja specializes in the religions and cultures of South Asia. Born in London and raised in Canada, her international background includes work as an assistant English language teacher in Japan, Sanskrit studies at the American Institute of Indian Studies at Pune Univer-

sity in India, and recent conference presentations in Finland and Turkey. Degrees include a Bachelors of Arts - History of Western Philosophy from McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and Masters of Arts - History of Religions in Hinduism and Islam, Masters of Philosophy and a Doctorate, Program on Human Sciences - an interdisciplinary program in Language, Culture and Society from George Washington University. Religious Studies offerings

in World Religions will be expanded as Dr. Taneja develops courses in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Married and expecting her first child, Dr. Taneja will make her home in Sanford, Florida.



## INFORMATION LINKS FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENTS

Stetson Library's Research guide to Religious Studies — <http://www.stetson.edu/library/rg12.html>

Stetson Library's Religion and Religious Studies Page — <http://www.stetson.edu/library/religion.html>

Chicago of Manual of Style 15th Edition — <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/>

SBL Handbook of Style —

<http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/PublishingWithSBL/SBLHS.pdf#search='SBL%20Handbook%20of%20Style>

## FACULTY NEWS

**Dr. Mitchell Reddish**, Professor of Religious Studies, conducted a weekend seminar March 18-19 at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. The Seminar, "An Introduction to the Bible," was sponsored by the Smithsonian Associates.

**Dr. Dixon Sutherland**, Professor of Religious Studies was recently appointed the new director of the Edmunds Scholarship Program.

**Dr. Sutherland and Dr. Musser**, Senior Lecturer, and Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility have published *War or Words? Interreligious Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace*.



**Dr. Clyde Fant**, Visiting Professor, led in the annual retreat for the Baptist Laity Institute at Laity Lodge near San Antonio, Texas, in October, and also served as the featured speaker for the annual Cooperative Baptist Pastors' Meeting in Birmingham Alabama. In August Dr. Fant was the keynote speaker for the national meeting of the International Council of Community Churches. He is also a regular contributor to a publisher of homilies that go out internationally to some 3,000 Catholic and Episcopal priests, as well as Protestant ministers.



**Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland** gave the Staley Christian Lecture and spoke in several women's study classes at Columbia College (SC) in April and was the Church in Radburn Foundation lecturer for the annual conference of the International Council of Community Churches in Orlando in August. Beginning fall 2005, Dr. Queen-Sutherland was appointed the Sam R Marks Chair of Religion.

**Dr. Leena Taneja** published (September 2005) in *Religion East/West*, entitled "Deconstructing Faith: Gaudiya Vaishnavism and the School of Deconstruction." The article explores the interaction between the ancient Indian devotional school of Vaishnavism and the contemporary theoretical school of Derrida's deconstruction.

**Dr. Phillip Lucas** has been busy working on his book on western European Megaliths, Past and Present. The book examines what these sites meant in their original settings, and how they are being used today by various spiritual seekers. The book also includes surveys of the 100 best sites in western Europe, with a history of the archaeology of each site, as well as photos. Dr. Lucas attended the BASR Conference in London in September, where he participated in discussions of the role of religious studies scholars in public life. He traveled to Ireland, Scotland, the Outer Hebrides, the Orkney Islands, Brittany, Sardinia, and Wales during August and September surveying megalithic sites and interviewing people who are using the sites. He is on sabbatical for Fall 2005 - Spring 2006. In November and December, Dr. Lucas will visit ashrams and temples in South India and Taoist temples in Taiwan.



**Ramona Kirsch**, Visiting Assistant Professor, will be presenting a paper on November 20, 2005 at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) annual meeting in Philadelphia. Her paper is entitled "Bodies in Perilous Balance: A Rabbi's Response to 'Othering,'" and is part of the panel entitled Eastern European Jewry: Culture, Thought, and Impact in the Study of Judaism Section.

## Stetson University

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Welcome to the Stetson University Department of Religious Studies. Our mission is to help students explore the role of religion in shaping human cultures through studies of sacred texts, languages, ethics, beliefs, rituals, spiritual methods, and the history of religious traditions.

Website: [www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion](http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion)

## Alumni News

**Daniel Puchalla, 05'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies program at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL—**Matthew Foreman**, is attending Stetson Law School, St. Petersburg, FL—**Annie Genetti, 05'**, is attending the University of Central Florida and is enrolled in the Masters Program: Educational Leadership, Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education Track in Orlando, FL—**Amy Rigdon, 05'**, is attending Stetson Law School, St. Petersburg, FL—**Jennifer Tyre, 05'**, is a

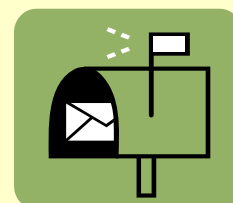


student in the master of divinity studies program at Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, PA—**Anneliese Winchester, 05'**, is a student attending the masters in college student affairs at Penn State, Philadelphia, PA —**Ben Collins, 04'**, is a student in the master of divinity program at Asbury Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL, and is the Interim Youth Pastor at First Baptist Church, DeLand, FL—**John Mills, 04'**, is attending Cornell Law School in Ithaca, NY—**Elizabeth Reddish, 04'**, is a student in the masters in social work at Boston University, Boston, MA —**Emily Snyder, 04'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies program at Vanderbilt University, Divinity School, Nashville, TN—**Wesley Sun, 04'**, is a student in the

master of divinity studies program at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL—**Jonathan Bailey, 03'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies program at Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA—**Amy Bucciarelli, 03'**, is working at the Children's Miracle Network in Orlando, FL—**Christine Hinton, 02'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies program at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL—**Klem-Mari Cajigas, 01'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies program at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, TN—**Timothy Reddish, 01'**, is a student in the master of divinity program at The Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Richmond, VA—**Sarah Reed Jay, 00'**, is Senior Interim Pastor at the Community Church of Barrington, Barrington, IL —**Laura Dunifon Kicklighter, 99'**, is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, VA—**Carrie Veal, 99'**, is the Minister to Children at the First Baptist Church, Gainesville, GA—**Ryan A. Wright, 99'**, is a student in the master of divinity studies at The General Theological Seminary, New York, NY—**Britt Young, 98'**, is the Minister to Students at the First Baptist Church in Pensacola, FL—**Penny Brady, 97'**, is the Assistant District Attorney, Manhattan, New York County, New York, NY—**Beverly Doxier, 97'**, is a Policy

Analyst on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA—**Tiffany Smith Weakley, MD, 96'**, is an Internal Medicine Physician at Pulmonary Associates of Stuart, Inc., Stuart, FL. We would like to congratulate Tiffany and her husband Jeff on their new baby daughter, Amanda Katherine Weakley.—**Daniel Bell, Jr., 88'**, Associate Professor of Theological Ethics and Director of Methodist Studies, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C.—**Dr. D. Gregory Sapp, 88'**, is Associate Professor of Christianity and Interdisciplinary Studies at Mercer University, Macon, GA—**Patrick Hadley, 89'**, is Pastor of Christ Community Church and Principal at Heritage Christian High School in Anchorage, AK

We ask alumni to please visit our website at [www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion](http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion) and to please print the alumni questionnaire and send it to us at 421 North Woodland Blvd. Unit 8354, DeLand, FL 32723. We would love to hear how everyone is doing including marriages, children, career moves, and graduate work. Also please contact Mrs. Guenther, Department Secretary for any corrections to the Alumni News. We can't wait to hear from you!





## STUDENT VOICES

Visiting Assistant Professor, Ramona Kirsch believes that religion should not only be taught out of a textbook. “There is theory and then there is praxis in religion. Often what is practiced is markedly different from written or stated doctrinal beliefs,” Kirsch explains. Every semester, Kirsch takes students to a Shabbat service in a local synagogue. The site visit is often the first time most students have experienced worship outside of their own traditions.



real experience of religion besides what is absorbed from a textbook.”

Jake Cobb, “Site visits are important when studying religion because religions are living institutions. While each religion has distinctive characteristics and themes, none exist outside of the people who practice religion.”

Amy Elsila: “I think this was a useful visit because it makes you more aware of other religious practices and cultures. I think it would be ignorant to believe blindly in your own religion and not be willing to experience others. This also builds a bridge of tolerance and understanding between cultures.”

Below are a few reflections by students this semester in REL 109 (Introduction to World Religions) answering the question, “What is the usefulness of a site visit in the study of religion?”

Jenny Carpenter, “My entire religious life has been spent within the walls of a Protestant church. When this class presented me with the opportunity to observe another religious worship service, I was excited to partake in the new experience. ... If anyone calls him or her self a student of religion, they should venture to worship services of various traditions to gain a

Roger Pawlak, “I believe that the usefulness of the site visit in the study of religion serves a two-fold purpose; one being association, which gives us a feeling of connection with the text and lectures, a sort of ‘hands on experience;’ secondly, it represents a chance to discard misconceptions and prejudices that may have been formed previously.”

## Bi-Annual Dessert Social—October 18, 2006

“Yes, Dr. Musser (out of picture, left), your peanut butter pie is wonderful...but we’d like to talk about Tillich!”



Twice each year the department gathers for an evening of sweets and conversation. Students get a taste of Reddish pecan chewies, Queen-Sutherland brownies & the best Publix dessert Dr. Fant can find. We eat a little, talk a lot, and enjoy ourselves as faculty and students outside the classroom.



After ice cream and cake, serious decisions are made: “We will be majors, we will be majors, we will....”