Dr. Queen-Sutherland and Dr. Sapp Recognized

Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland was the recipient of the distinguished Hand Award for Community Impact. The award was presented at Stetson’s spring commencement.

Stetson College of Law alumna, Dolly Hand and her husband, Homer, established the awards to applaud faculty members who are not only dedicated teachers but who also have notable achievements in scholarship or creative work in their areas of expertise and who have made a difference in their local or larger communities.

Dr. Queen-Sutherland has long been involved in the community as a volunteer in public schools, on the board for the Neighborhood Center, and in leadership roles with the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion. She is also one of the most active faculty members at Stetson, serving on committees related to tenure and promotion, curriculum, enrollment growth, finances and investments, long-range planning, and international exchange programs. She chaired the university’s Self Study for SACS reaccreditation in 2000 and, since 2008, the Faculty Implementation Group for Stetson’s new course-unit curriculum system.

Dr. Sapp, Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility, received tenure in the fall of 2010. Dr. Sapp has held a faculty position in the Religious Studies Department since 2006 in which he teaches classes in Philosophical Theology and the History of Christian Thought. Dr. Sapp has been very active in the Stetson Community, serving as the Chair of the Community Engagement Council of the Values Council, the Weiner Memorial Holocaust Lecture Committee, the General Education Assessment Committee, the Quality Enhancement Plan Steering Committee, and the Steering Committee for the Campaign for Working Families. He also manages the Sarah George Trust Fund, which channels donated money to La Plaza Comunitaria in Pierson and to the Spring Hill neighborhood of DeLand. Dr. Sapp also started the Service-Learning Faculty Group, a group of faculty interested in using service-learning pedagogies in their courses.

Walker Room Renovations

The renovations for Allen Hall room 201, the Walker Room, were conducted during the spring 2010 semester. The room was updated with a 47” plasma screen, computer, VCR/DVD player, and wooden blinds. The walls were painted blue to compliment the fireplace in the room. The custom cabinet for the computer equipment was made from benches that were originally in the H. Douglas Lee Chapel. These renovations came after reupholstering the chairs in fall 2007. Future renovations include replacing the ceiling. Funding for the renovations was provided by the Religious Studies Department, Instructional Technology, and the office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Science.
Chair Comments

A comparison of the current courses offered in the Department of Religious Studies with the courses offered five years ago will indicate a host of changes that have taken place. Several courses are no longer offered, while many new courses have appeared. Some courses were dropped because of retirement of faculty or to make way for other courses. New courses were added to meet recently implemented curricular requirements, to respond to student interest, or to provide a means for faculty to explore with students current scholarship or research interests. Among the new courses in our curriculum are Dr. Taneja’s “Sexual Bodies, Gendered Lives: Women in Asia”; Dr. Sutherland’s course entitled “The Ethics of Mortality”; Dr. Queen-Sutherland’s course on “Slaves, Whores, and Poors: Religion and Oppression”; Dr. Lucas’s Junior Seminar “Religion and Human Rights”; Dr. Sapp’s course on “The Idea of the Devil”; and my course entitled “The Bible in Art and Artifact.” Many of the faculty in the department are also offering First Year Seminars, with such intriguing titles as “Belief and Unbelief,” “The Promises and Perils of Religion in 21st-Century Societies,” “The Search for Wisdom,” “Self and World,” and “The Dynamics of Friendship.” Such curricular changes require considerable planning and preparation, but the result is a fresh set of courses, enlivened by intriguing topics and ideas and a variety of teaching methodologies. Our department is committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship—from our students and from our faculty. A reinvigorated curriculum is one way we try to meet that goal.

Mitchell G. Reddish

Books, Books & More Books

Titles recommended as a must read


Jhumpa Lahiri, Unaccustomed Earth. Vintage, 2009.— Dr. Taneja


Miguel A. De La Torre, Reading The Bible From the Margins. Orbis Books, 2002. —Dr. Queen-Sutherland

Catherine Wessinger, The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism. Oxford University Press, August 2010.—Dr. Lucas

Charles Darwin, The Voyage of the Beagle. CreateSpace, 2010.—Dr. Sapp

Alumna Travels to Indonesia...Jennifer (Tyre) Lancaster

As an undergraduate at Stetson University, I became interested in the study of religion and the interplay between religion and culture. Now, as a graduate student at Lancaster Theological Seminary, I have had the opportunity to study religion and culture in a country where the role of religion and religious history deeply influences the social identity of the Indonesian community. During the summer of 2009, I was a Henry Luce fellow at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The religious history in Indonesia is both unique and diverse. One of my first encounters with Indonesia’s rich religious history was on a trip to the Borobudur Temple in Central Java. Dating to the 9th century, Borobudur is a Buddhist temple that was lost to society sometime after Islam arrived in the 15th century. Likewise, Hinduism’s presence in Java began to decline around the same period. The Sukuh Temple, high atop a mountain near Solo, might have been strategically constructed at the high elevation to avoid the onset of Islam in Java.

Islam in Indonesia dominates the religious landscape. While the Indonesian government officially recognizes six religions (Islam, Catholic Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism & Chinese religion), nearly 85% of the population is Muslim. Primarily, I experienced Indonesian Islam on the island of Java and no doubt, the “way they do religion” is heavily influenced by culture, ethnicity, and tradition. An example of this is the pesantren, or Islamic boarding school. These institutions (numbering upwards of 14,000 in Indonesia) provide both religious and secular education and are deeply rooted in age-old cultural traditions.

Through my elementary exposure to theoretical figures such as Emile Durkheim and Clifford Geertz during my Stetson years, along with my current studies as a graduate student, living in Indonesia felt as if I had experienced a place where religion is central to meaning-making for its people. Whether watching a Balinese Hindu dance ritual in Ubud, or witnessing the construction of new mosques in Sulawesi, or even participating in ritual washing at a Javanese Catholic shrine, my experience of religion was always varied.

Dr. Lucas in Guatemala

In June, I joined my Stetson colleague Robert Sitler on an eight-day trip to Guatemala sponsored by the Maya Conservancy. The Conservancy is an international group of scholars, teachers, Mayan elders, and others who are interested in preserving and protecting Mayan culture throughout Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize. We began our trip in the former colonial capital of Antigua. This lovely city boasts a number of cathedrals and cloisters as well as thriving markets, restaurants, and museums. Our troupe of thirty participants then made its way to significant Mayan sacred sites, where thirteen Mayan elders led us in ancient rituals celebrating the natural order and asking spirit ancestors for the healing of the Earth. We learned about the history and archaeology of these sites from expert scholars and discussed the significance of 2012 in the Mayan Long Count Calendar. A high point of the trip was a visit to Chiapas State, Mexico, where we joined our Mayan guides in performing rituals at Izapa, an ancient Mayan temple complex that many believe is the place where the Long Count Calendar was invented. We then visited the stunningly beautiful village of Momostenango, located high in the mountains, where we held our final ceremonies and parted company with our Mayan guides. Another high point of the trip took place in Santiago Atitlan, where Dr. Sitler and I gave a new, white Stetson hat to the local protector deity, Mam. Mam’s priests laid the hat carefully over the black one he was wearing, and all worshippers appeared content with the transaction (see picture on the right). I plan to make a short documentary film that will cover the main events of the trip. It was a memorable journey to the heart of an indigenous Central American culture.

Religious Studies Outstanding Juniors and Senior

Congratulations to our Outstanding Students who were selected by the Religious Studies Department for the 2009-2010 Academic Year.

Senior: Robert Echevarria
Juniors: Stacey Mann and Josie Warren
FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Reddish presented a lecture on “Palestinian Judaism in the First Century: Understanding the Semitic Mind of Jesus” in Lake Worth, Florida, on February 6, 2010. Sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council, the lecture was given at St. Andrews Episcopal Church. In April, Dr. Reddish was elected to a two-year term as chair of the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Dixon Sutherland’s essay, “From Terri Schiavo toward a Theology of Dying” was published in a book edited by Australian scholars David Neville and Keith Dyer, Resurrection and Responsibility, Smyth and Helwys/Pickwick Press. He chaired the Values Council, which supported over 20 events during the year, including a major display of the council’s work that encompassed the entire Quad around the fountain in celebration of President Wendy Libby’s inauguration.

Dr. Greg Sapp has been busy chairing the University’s QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) steering committee that is developing initiatives to enhance student learning at Stetson. This is a requirement of our reaccreditation process by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In December, Dr. Sapp traveled to Atlanta with Dr. John Tichenor and Provost Beth Paul for the annual SACS conference.

Dr. Sapp also traveled to North Carolina with the first-year Bonner students for a week of service in rural North Carolina. He again accompanied Stetson undergradautes as they joined with Stetson’s College of Law for their summer Civil Rights travel course. This year, eight undergraduates visited important sites and museums in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, and met several Civil Rights Movement leaders as they learned about this important era in our history.

Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland served as chair of the faculty implementation group, giving oversight to the start of the new concept-based curriculum in Arts & Sciences. She continues to work as an editor of the Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentaries as well as research and writing on her own volume. Her community involvement includes being vice-president of the Executive Board for The Neighborhood Center in DeLand.

Dr. Leena Taneja presented a paper at the Madison-Wisconsin South Asian Conference in October 2009 entitled “Expecting the Unexpected: The Secret of the Gift in Gaudiy Vaishnavism.” Her article, “Guru Speaks!”, based on fieldwork conducted on gurus in America, was published in the Journal, Man in India (89) 4. In the fall, students from Sacred Arts of Asia presented a mini art show in Allen Hall based on original student art work. She is currently conducting research on a new book entitled Sacred Arts of Asia.

Dr. Phillip Lucas taught his Survey of European Culture course this summer in Innsbruck, Austria. His class visited various cathedrals, museums, and experienced a concert of classical music in Vipiteno, Italy, in the Tirolian Alps. A highlight was the Ice Man exhibit in Bolzano, Italy, where the mummified remains of a man over 5000 years old are on display, as well as his weapons, tools, and clothing. Dr. Lucas also helped produce and was interviewed for a Florida Public Television documentary called “Florida, Heaven on Earth?”, which appeared in May of 2010 on Florida Public Teleivision stations. The documentary looked at four spiritual communities in Florida and examined their contributions and challenges to the larger cultural matrix of Florida. Dr. Lucas’s article on New Age Millenialism was published in the Oxford Handbook of Millenial Movements in August 2010. The volume contains over 40 articles on various facets of millenialism.

Dr. Donald Musser is coordinator of the new first-year seminars for the College of Arts and Sciences; was the annual Connick Lecturer at Whittier College (CA) on “Pauline Theology in Perspective”; attended the international meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Montreal; co-authored, with Joseph Price, Tiloc in the Abingdon Press Pillars of Theology series of books; wrote nine theological commentaries for Westminster Press’s “Feasting On the Word”, guides to biblical preaching; taught three Elderhostel courses at Stetson; delivered twelve sermons in six regional churches; and gave the keynote address to kickoff Stetson’s Relay for Life in support of cancer research.

Rabbi Barry Altman was architect of an annual Jewish Education Symposium this past spring. The initial event was open to the public and drew over 100 participants from Volusia and Flagler Counties. Lectures presented by area clergy and educators ranged from theology to popular culture and Hebrew and Yiddish Language classes. Rabbi Altman was rabbinic advisor of programming for the Bi-Annual Jewish Heritage Festival held at the News-Journal Center and Grounds.

Robert Echevarria Wins
Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion


The award was presented by Dr. Mitchell Reddish, Professor and Chair of Religious Studies. Robert graduated in Spring 2010 with a major in Religious Studies and will continue his education at Harvard University pursuing a master of divinity.

Robert Echevarria with
Dr. Mitchell Reddish
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 the study of sacred texts, languages, ethics, beliefs, rituals, spiritual methods, and the history of religious traditions.

Website: www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion

Alumni News

Robert Echevarria ’10 is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.—Katherine Hager ’10 is pursuing a master of divinity degree at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.—Angelo Sanchez ’10 is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC.—Stephanie Champagne ’09 is assistant chaplain for the Georgia Cumber-land Academy, Calhoun, GA. —Charles Thomas Parks ’09 is employed at Epic Medical Software Company, Verona, WI —Amanda (Reece) Nix ’09 is the Bonner Scholars Program Coordinator with Stetson’s Center for Service Learning. She married Kevin Nix on October 3, 2009 in Melbourne, FL.—Adam Darragh ’08 is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC.—Anneliese Halsten ’08 recently accepted a position as the Philanthropy and Community Outreach Manager for Alpha Xi Delta Fraternity.—Ansley (Faulkner) Alfano ’07 is pursuing a master in social work at the University of Alabama.—Genna Douglas ’07 is working for the Bureau of National Affairs, reporting for health care policy, in Washington, DC.—Allison (Bartelson) Coyle ’07 graduated in December 2009 with a master’s degree in occupational therapy from Florida International University in Miami, FL. She currently works as an occupational therapist in Cumming, GA. She married Brian Andrew Coyle March 6, 2010.—Kyle Kaminski ’07 has been assigned to serve two years with the Peace Corps in Costa Rica in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language program, earning master’s credit for his international education degree.—Valerie Winship ’07 is pursuing a master of business administration at the University of Georgia, Atlanta, GA.—Paul Gloersen ’06 is associate director for the American Cancer Society in Naples, FL. and married Brittany Green ’08 on July 12, 2010 in Port Orange, FL.—Jamie Haskins ’06 was ordained into the ministry of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ on July 25, 2010. Jamie is Minister of Faith Formation and Social Justice at University Christian Church in Seattle, WA.—Adriene (Zedick) Tribble ’06 married Keith Tribble on January 30, 2010 in Winter Park, FL.—Jennifer (Tyre) Lancaster ’05 studied in summer 2009 at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.—Matthew Foreman ’05 is a lawyer with The Hogan Law Firm in Brooksville, FL.—Daniel Puchalla ’05 is Associate for Communication and Administration at St. Paul and the Redeemer Church in Chicago, IL.—Gennifer Bridges Powell ’04 gave birth to twins, Caleb Edwin and Joshua Matthew, on August 19, 2010.—Jonathan Martin ’04 is Assistant State Attorney for the 20th Judicial Circuit in Glades County, Florida.—Emily (Snyder) Fulmer ’04 gave birth to a baby boy, Emmett Augustine, on July 6, 2010.—Kelli Daniel-Richards ’03 is web publicist for the publishing company Hachette and recently had a baby girl on April 27, 2010.—Amy Bucciarelli ’03 obtained a master’s in art therapy from Florida State University in 2007. She is an art therapist at Mary Washington Hospital/ Snowden in Fredericksburg, VA. She has published an article, “Normative Study of the PPAT Assessment,” in the Art Therapy Journal.—Teresa Schwarz ’03 married Jose Marcio Roque Maciano on March 28, 2010, at the Mission Inn Resort in Howey-in-the-Hills, FL.—Donna York ’02 is a graphic designer for Allusion Graphics, Deltona, FL.—Tim Reddish ’01 is Foster Care Social Worker in the Refugee and Undocumented Minors Foster Care Program at Commonwealth Catholic Charities, Richmond, VA. —Robert “Kelly” Elrod ’98 married Joanne Goodyer at St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church in Boca Raton, FL. Summer 2009.—Penelope Brady ’97 was promoted to Assistant District Attorney for New York City and recently had a baby boy, Brady James Erbis.—Keith Vaughn ’86 is pursuing a doctor’s of ministry degree at Campbell University Divinity School, Buies Creek, NC.—Mike Hartley ’80 was recently (May 2010) named president of Hawaiian Management, Company, Ltd., in Honolulu, Hawaii.—Curtis Tutterrow ’69 is minister of the Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Green River, WY.

We ask alumni to visit our website at www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion and to click on the alumni questionnaire located on our home page and fill it out and send it to us at: 421 North Woodland Blvd. Unit 8354, DeLand, FL 32723, or you may e-mail the questionnaire to lguenther@stetson.edu. We would love to hear how you are doing, including marriages, children, career moves, graduate work, or anything else you might wish to share. Also please contact Mrs. Guenther, Administrative Specialist II, for any corrections to the Alumni News. We can’t wait to hear from you!
In the fall of 1998, I was a senior in high school eagerly touring colleges in my home state of Florida. Stetson was the first university that I visited, but I knew immediately that I would not be interested in any others. And, much to my mother’s horror, I sent out only one college application.

For the last three years of high school, I attended what some might label as a fundamentalist Christian school; so as a college freshman, I felt pretty confident that I would be prepared for Kandy Queen-Sutherland’s Introduction to Biblical Literature course. Prepared, I was not. I was astonished - enthralled even - to learn about the rich history and cultural background of the Old Testament texts. And Dr. Queen-Sutherland’s enthusiasm for the subject just made it that much more compelling. I was hooked after the first class.

From then on, I took at least one religious studies course every semester. Each one opened my mind and made me hungy for more. Each professor was passionate about her or his subject matter - a quality that I didn’t fully appreciate until I went on to graduate school. In fact, I am certain that, had it not been for their passion and their sincere interest in their students I would not have gone on to get my master’s of divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary, and I would not have worked as a publicist for religious books at Random House and Penguin.

But it is because of the encouragement of great teachers that many of us are inspired to explore and find our paths. In May 2003, I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Stetson University, and in May 2006 from Princeton Theological Seminary. Uncertain that I was called to the ministry, I began to look for other ways to use my religious studies and master of divinity degrees. Two months later, I took a job at Doubleday Religion, an imprint of Random House, working as a publicity assistant. Since then, I have worked as a publicist at Tarcher, an imprint of Penguin Group, where I worked on a range of diverse spiritual titles. And in a few weeks, I will begin work as a web publicist at Hachette.

Stetson’s professors, namely those in the religious studies and humanities departments, nurtured my desire to learn and succeed. I continue to draw on the things they taught me and apply them not only to my career, but also to my daily life. The courses I took at Stetson changed my perspective and opened my mind, and I am very, very grateful to have had the opportunity to study there.

**JAIN NUNS**

When one thinks of nuns, one usually thinks of the Catholic variety. However, during the spring 2010 semester, we met a different kind of nun. These nuns told us about Mahavira, the last great Tirthankara of Jainism instead of the Virgin Mary. Instead of praying the rosary, they chanted a prayer of “bowing down” to the enlightened beings. They explained the Jain concept of ahimsa or nonviolence, rather than the various doctrines and beliefs of Catholicism. They eagerly told us about their religion and their way of life, but not as fire-and-brimstone evangelists. Their message, devoid of devotion to any particular deity, emphasized the importance of an intrinsic calling to refrain from harming any living being in thought, word, or deed. While this ultimate goal seems lofty and intangible for average humans, these nuns have devoted their lives to practicing and perfecting the ideals of Jainism.

Christopher Dell, student in Dr. Taneja’s RELS258 Class

**Theta Alpha Kappa 2010**

Theta Alpha Kappa is a national honor society for professors and students of religious studies/theology. Five new members joined Stetson’s Alpha Gamma Omicron chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa on April 28th; Laura Foster, majoring in French with a religious studies minor; Laura Loveday, a communication studies major with minors in religious studies and education; Angela Malinowski, majoring in Religious Studies with a minor in humanities; Elizabeth Stewart, majoring in general business with minors in religious studies and Spanish; and Josie Warren, majoring in religious studies with minors in family business and business law. To date, Theta Alpha Kappa, chapter Alpha Gamma Omicron, has inducted 104 students. The chapter was started in 1996.

To learn more about Theta Alpha Kappa, go to the national website at: http://thetaalphakappa.net.