New UPG, UPJ Presidents Named

Sharon P. Smith
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Sharon P. Smith, vice chancellor for academic affairs, provost and vice president for academic affairs, and special projects advisor for National University and for the National University System, has been named president of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, effective July 1.

Prior to being named to her positions at National University and the National University System, Smith served from 2001 to 2003 as professor of management systems and dean of the Colleges of Business and the Faculty of Business at Fordham University. She also was dean of the College of Business Administration at Fordham from 1990 to 2001. Smith’s professional experience includes service as an economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and as a district manager for American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

“Sharon Smith is an accomplished administrator, a distinguished researcher and educator, and an experienced member of the financial services industry who has the talent and ability to lead the Greensburg campus to even higher levels of attainment and impact,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “We welcome Dr. Smith to the University of Pittsburgh community and have every confidence she will be successful in her new role.”

“Dr. Smith has an established record of distinguished performance in strategic planning, reinvigorated academic programs, and administration,” said Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor James V. Maher. The background, combined with her strong interest in a team-oriented environment and her experience in working effectively with community leaders, will stand in her good stead as she helps to shape an exciting future for our academic efforts in Greensburg."

Smith served as governor of the Security Traders Association from 1977 to 2005; a trustee of St. Barnabas Hospital, Bronx, N.Y., from 1997 to 2006; chair of the Partners in Health Board of Trustees in 2000-02; president of the NASDAQ Stock Market Educational Foundation, Inc., in 2000; and public governors of NASD, Inc., from 2000 to 2006. She is the coauthor of Finding the Best Business School for You: Looking Past the Rankings (Praeger Publishers, 2006) and Faculty Retirement in the Arts and Sciences (Princeton University Press, 1991) and has published more than 40 professional articles and book reviews.

Smith was a visiting fellow with the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University during the 2005-06 academic year and a Visiting Senior Research Economist for Princeton University in 1988-90.

She received her A.B. degree, summa cum laude, in 1970; M.A. degree in 1972; and Ph.D. degree in 1974, all in economics from Rutgers University.

Jem Spectar
University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

Jem Spectar, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Western Oregon University, has been named president of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, effective July 1.

Prior to becoming provost at Western Oregon University, Spectar was associate provost for academic affairs at the University of Scranton, director of studies at Princeton University, and assistant dean of students at the University of La Verne, in La Verne, California.

“Provost Maher and I look forward to working with Dr. Spectar and the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown community to ensure the continued success of the campus under his capable leadership. Jem Spectar is a visionary leader and celebrated teacher,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “He has the skills and experience necessary to build effectively upon the strengths of our Johnstown campus and to enrich the lives of students, faculty, staff, and administrators.”

“As a senior administrator at several institutions of higher education, Dr. Spectar has established a leadership style marked by an emphasis on consultation, collaboration, and transparency,” said Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor James V. Maher. “His outstanding academic and administrative leadership as well as his capacity for fundraising, friend-making, and fostering positive community relations make him the ideal president for our Johnstown campus.”

Spectar also was an associate professor of law at the University of La Verne, a lecturer in political science at Princeton University, and a professor of political science at the University of Scranton, director of the Center for Law and the 1995 Professor of the Year, Legal Studies, at the University of LaVerne.

Pitt’s Male Peregrine Falcon Defends Nest From Intruder in Bloody Clash of Talons and Beaks

By Morgan Kelly

A quiet Sunday morning for the peregrine falcons living atop Pitt’s Cathedral of Learning erupted into a bloody struggle for territory when a third falcon attempted to overtake their nest.

Images of the third falcon appears to have been injured during the 20-minute melee on March 18, but a Web camera that monitors the falcons’ nest recorded the battle, making for rare and informative footage, said Anthony Bledsoe, a lecturer of biological sciences in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences who helps monitor the birds.

“Fights over nests and territory are pretty common, but nobody ever sees the fight,” Bledsoe said. The footage could help people who study peregrine falcons better understand how a new male—or sometimes female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said. Researchers often find a new parent—often female—takes over a nest, Bledsoe said.

The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The device, called the SONO filter, is a simple, inexpensive filter that removes arsenic from drinking water that won its inventor, Pitt alumnus Abul Hussam, the $1 million Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability.

The University of Pittsburgh takes great pride in the news that alumnus Abul Hussam was selected as the first-place winner in the 2007 Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability, said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “I’m proud of the University for creating a reliable, affordable, and sustainable method for treating arsenic-contaminated groundwater is helping to solve a massive public health problem—the poisoning of millions of people in Bangladesh and other developing countries.”

Hussam, today an associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry at George Mason University, earned his Ph.D. in analytical chemistry at Pitt in 1982. While at Pitt, Hussam became adept at trace analysis, or finding minute traces of substances in water. That skill would come handy in the late 1990s, when Hussam’s brother, a physician in their hometown of Kushtia, Bangladesh, shared with Hussam his suspicion that some of his patients were suffering from arsenic poisoning.

Bangladesh and other Southeast Asian countries have reported high rates of arsenic poisoning in recent years. The naturally occurring toxic substance enters well water at levels far above those considered safe. Arsenic poisoning can lead to organ failure, cancer, and death. Children and malnourished adults are particularly vulnerable.

The only way for Hussam to know...
Pitt Dance Ensemble to Present Spring Performance March 29-31

The University of Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble will present its spring performance, titled “Unleashed,” featuring the premises of guest choreographer Meredith Koleski’s “Too Many People” and student choreography in jazz, hip-hop, ballet, and modern styles of dance. Performances will be presented at 8:15 p.m. March 29-31 in the Trees Hall Dance Studio.

Koleski’s “Too Many People” was choreographed while in residence with the Dance Ensemble in February and March 2007. It combines modern dance with hip hop styles and was inspired by a study done on human gesture. Since her arrival in Pittsburgh, Koleski has performed with Atma Theater and is a choreographer of Flux, an umbrella company of choreographers across the United States who explore collaboration and the creative process.

Pitt student choreographers include Stephanie Brenner, Alicia Elder, Kirsten Hugheney, Sarah Kobert, Nancy Mandrandjeff, Dyanne Murrell, Christ Robinson, Eirk Roth, Michele Sable, and Kathryn Yamar.

The Pitt Dance Ensemble is a student dance group that performs theatrical dance and provides classes, workshops, and master classes for University students. The students choreograph, perform, and work behind the scenes to produce this and other concerts throughout the year.

Tickets are $6 for general admission and $3 for students with student ID. Tickets also may be purchased at the door. For more information, contact Susan Gillis-Kruman at 412-648-8262 or gillis@pitt.edu.

—Angela Duggins

European Experimental Film Subject of University Conference

Changes in the European political landscape have had a dramatic effect on film production in Europe. The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences will host a conference titled “After the Avant-Garde: European Experiments with the Moving Image,” March 30 and 31 in 232 Cathedral of Learning.

The goal of the conference is to address dramatic changes in policy, production, technology, and aesthetics in Europe from the 1990s to the present, and to explore how these changes shape the aesthetics and politics of the moving image in Europe today.


One of Germany’s most significant filmmakers, is a University Professor in the Institute for Media Research in the Academy of Fine Arts Dreieich.

For a complete schedule on the free public conference visit www.pitt.edu/AFShome/scl/h Arts/avant-garde/schedule.htm.

In addition to Heim, visiting conference participants will include Thomas Elsaesser, research professor at the University of Amsterdam and general editor of the series Film Culture in Transition, published by Amsterdam University Press (1994-2007); Rabbert Helser, a forthcoming book on Alfred Hitchcock and associate professor in the Department of German, Scandinavians, and Dutch at the University of Michigan; Rieke Kuczor, professor of German and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Richard Langton, assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Reinhold Stengger, associate professor in the Humanities Department at the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester.

Pitt participating faculty will include Lucy Fischer, professor of film studies and English and director of the Film Studies Program; Randall Holle, the Klaus W. Janos Professor of German and Film Studies; Marcia Landy, Distinguished Service Professor of English and film studies; Vladimir Padunov, associate professor of English and film studies; and Phillip Watts, assistant professor of French and Holon languages and literature.

The event will be sponsored by a grant from Pitt’s Faculty and Research Scholarship Program, European Union Center of Excellence, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and Film Studies Program.

For more information, contact Randall Holle at 412-648-2614 or rhalle@pitt.edu, or visit www.pitt.edu/public_html/avant-garde.

—Patricia Lamanda White

An ongoing series highlighting University of Pittsburgh history

March 1924—The University of Pittsburgh opens its own educational radio station. During one of a series of five-minute talks broadcast by the station, Pitt Chancellor John Gobbom Barwon will speak of his dream of constructing what he calls a “Tower of Learning” on Pitt’s campus. That talk, also broadcast by Pittsburgh’s KDKA Radio on its powerful signal, will inspire a retired school teacher listening in Rutland, VT, Elizabeth Watson, to mail a letter and a $1 bill to Bowman to support the building of the University’s Cathedral of Learning.

March 26, 2007

The University of Pittsburgh Press is celebrating 40 years of publishing the Pitt Poetry Series with the release of American Poetry Now: Pitt Poetry Series Anthology. Compiled by series editor Ed Ochester, American Poetry Now includes the work of 48 authors from diverse backgrounds, without allegiance to any particular school or style. The volume also includes an introduction by Ochester, author biographies, photos, and a suggested list for further reading.

Since its inception in 1967, the Pitt Poetry Series has featured the work of some of America’s finest contemporary poets, including Poet Laureate Billy Collins, Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winner Ted Kooser, Denise Duhamel, Bob Hicok, and Pitt faculty members Tori Derricotte and Lynn Emanuel, among others.

Ochester, who has been editor of the series since 1978, told Poets & Writers, “I think one of the things that makes the Pitt Poetry Series different from just about every trade house now—and probably a number of university presses—is that we have open submissions. We do read everything that comes in over the transom.”

Former director of Pitt’s creative writing program, Ochester is a professor emeritus of English here. He is the author of more than 14 volumes of poetry and is founding editor of the literary magazine 5 A.M.
Women's History Month Series

Norma B. Leftwich

Pitt alumna is the first woman in the 140-year history of Howard University to serve as HU's top legal officer

By William Sloan

As a Pitt undergraduate, Norma B. Leftwich (CAS ’69) never imagined that she would become, in 1995, the first woman in the 140-year history of Howard University to serve as general counsel—the top legal officer—of that venerable Washington, D.C., institution.

“I think that my coming to Howard University actually happened by chance, but after being here I feel drawn to a university setting,” says Leftwich. “Howard is the flagship HBCU [Historically Black College and University] in the nation. Its history and its mission are embedded in this country. It’s been such an important place for many, many generations of African Americans. And, it has been important globally as well. Howard is a very international university.”

Internationalism figured into Leftwich’s decision to attend Pitt.

Born and raised in the Bronx in New York City, Leftwich first dreamed of working for the United Nations. As a high school student, she took courses in Mandarin Chinese at Columbia University. One of the reasons Leftwich enrolled at Pitt was that it offered courses in Mandarin Chinese, a rare thing for a U.S. university to do at that time. Fascinated by languages, Leftwich majored in French here, also taking courses in Mandarin and German. In addition, she earned a minor in political science.

“I received a solid education at Pitt,” Leftwich declares. “That has served me very well as a foundation for my career and for many years later, when I attended Georgetown University Law Center.”

Leftwich says Pitt also gave her the gift of lifelong friends, many of whom she met through the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, which she pledged here.

One of her favorite Pitt memories is of the view of campus (“among the most beautiful in the country,” Leftwich says) from her room on the 16th floor of the Tower C residence hall. She also fondly remembers Lantern Night, a rite-of-passage ceremony for Pitt freshman women that extended the 10 p.m. curfew for female freshmen by a couple of hours. (Male freshmen did not have a curfew in those days. By the time Leftwich graduated, Pitt had abolished curfews for female as well as male students.)

After graduating from Pitt, Leftwich set out on a career path that did not draw on her earlier intense study of foreign languages. She worked as a personnel interviewer at a bank, then taught in a program that helped adult students earn their G.E.D.s and prepare for careers in banking. Eventually, Leftwich found herself in the field of work that she would pursue for nearly 20 years: developing initiatives to provide opportunities for underrepresented business owners and minority-owned businesses from underrepresented populations.

In the late 1970s, Leftwich worked with the Office of Minority Business Enterprise in Washington, D.C., where she helped to manage a $58 million program to develop businesses owned by Blacks and members of other underrepresented groups. Subsequently, as special assistant to the director of the Interagency Council for Minority Business Enterprise in the U.S. Department of Commerce, Leftwich developed innovative strategies to increase opportunities for minority-owned businesses seeking to contract with federal agencies. Leftwich later directed the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization in the U.S. Department of Defense. There, she was primarily responsible for setting “goals and policies that would assist small, women-owned, and minority-owned firms in getting their fair chance to compete for defense contract dollars,” she says. Leftwich also oversaw more than 750 employees nationwide, managed approximately $50 billion in procurement dollars, and served as an oversight consultant to the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition.

At age 40, Leftwich felt ready for a career change. She enrolled at the Georgetown University Law Center, earning her J.D. in 1992. Completing that degree fulfilled a family dream, Leftwich points out: Her father, Leon Bogues, a New York State senator, had dreamed of earning a J.D., but circumstances had ruled that out.

“I went to law school to fulfill a family pledge,” Leftwich says. “My father had very much wanted to go to law school. He actually had started but wasn’t able to finish because of his family responsibilities.”

Leon Bogues died in 1985 at age 58 during his second term in the New York State Senate. “When I graduated from Georgetown, I made sure to include my maiden name on the diploma to honor my dad,” Leftwich says. “That was very important to me. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be the family’s first lawyer.”

Another of Leftwich’s proudest professional achievements was her appointment to the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics, on which she served from 1989 to 1998. In this volunteer position, Leftwich helped to oversee the electoral process in the nation’s capital.

Throughout her career, Leftwich has been honored with a number of awards, including the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the NAACP Roy Wilkins Meritorious Service Award, and the Pioneers of the Profession—Association of Minority In-House Counsel.

On a personal level, Leftwich is proud to have raised—together with her husband, Willie, a retired attorney who now is a full-time potter—a Pitt graduate: Their son, Curtis Leftwich, earned a B.A. in economics here in 2002.

As general counsel of Howard University, Leftwich manages the legal affairs of the university as well as its subsidiaries, including Howard University Hospital, the WHUR 96.3 FM radio station, and the public television station WHUT-TV. She oversees issues related to employment law, torts, contracts, estates, real property, federal procurements and grants, student and faculty issues, intellectual property, compliance investigations, health law, and corporate governance and litigation.

Leftwich provides counsel to Howard’s president and its board of trustees. She serves as the university’s chief compliance officer with overall responsibility for Code of Conduct compliance by university officials and board members. In addition, Leftwich manages nine attorneys, four paralegals, and 10 administrative clerical personnel.

All in a day’s work.

“We [in the general counsel’s office] are also advisers to Howard University Hospital, its doctors, and university scientists doing research. The office covers a variety of legal issues, and that’s what makes it so exciting,” Leftwich says. “You never see the same thing day after day.”

Nor do Leftwich’s colleagues at Howard often see such a multifaceted administrator.

“Norma Leftwich is a consummate professional. It has been a delight to work with her over the years,” says Franklin Chambers, Howard’s vice provost for student affairs. “She has always been a student advocate, and her advice is invaluable. We look to her for guidance in a myriad of situations, and not all of them are related to legal advice.”

William Sloan is a writer/editor in Howard University’s Office of University Communications.
Women’s History Month Series
Selected Highlights of Women’s History at the University of Pittsburgh

1895 Sisters Marga ret and Stella Stein are the first women to enter the Western University of Pennsylvania (now the University of Pittsburgh) as full-time sophomores, when the University was on Observatory Hill in Allegheny City (now Pittsburgh’s North Side). The Stein sisters have an advantage over previous female applicants because Chancellor William Jacob Holland believes that two women could look after each other and keep each other company. The sisters take all the mathematics courses offered, plus astronomy, mathematical chemistry, and surveying.

1898 Stella and Margaret Stein graduate, tied for first place in their class at Pitt. The sisters decide Stella should be the valedictorian.

1901 The Stein sisters return to Pitt for their master’s degrees, another first. Stella went on to teach modern languages and mathematics at South High School, and Margaret was principal at Avalon High School until she married.

1909 Shortly after the University moves to Oakland, Pittsburgh, the first graduating class from the School of Education.

1910 Jean Hamilton Walls receives the bachelor’s degree at Pitt, the first Black woman to do so at the University. In 1938, she becomes the first Black woman to receive the Ph.D. degree here.

1919 Virginia Proctor Powell Florence is the first African American woman in the United States to complete a professional education program in librarianship. She graduates in 1923 from the Carnegie Library School, which later became part of Pitt’s School of Information Sciences. (In 2004, a plaque honoring Florence is installed in the Information Sciences Building lobby.)

1942 Eighty-two percent of the students in the professional nursing program enlist in a unit of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps organized by the University. Because of a wartime shortage of nurses, the federal government mandates that nursing schools receiving federal money accept Black students. Adena Johnson Davis becomes the first African American admitted to the School of Nursing. She graduates in 1947.

1949 Chancellor Wesley Posvar creates the Advisory Committee on Women’s Opportunities to address the agenda of the newly formed University Committee for Women’s Rights.

1972 The Pitt Women’s Studies Program is founded.

1983 The Provost’s Advisory Committee for Women’s Concerns is created.

2000 Katherine Detre, Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health, begins leading a national study—involving 2,368 patients at 40 sites across the United States—to determine the best way to treat people with both Type 2 diabetes and early coronary artery disease. The study attracts funding for the largest combined grant in Pitt history, $65 million.

First graduating class from the School of Education

Women’s basketball, the first competitive sport for women at Pitt. (For an update on the Pitt women’s basketball team, see p. 6.)

Pitt hires its first woman faculty member, Blossom Henry.

Lantern Night, a candlelight ceremony for freshman women, begins.

Girls’ Varsity Basketball team sweeps its home game opponents and loses only one game on the road.
Margaret E. “Peg” Covert, a Pioneer For Women’s Athletics at the University

Dec. 2, 1911 - Dec. 27, 2006

By M. Ferguson Tinsley


Margaret E. “Peg” Covert of Oakland brought women’s sports to the University of Pittsburgh into the modern age, encouraged sports participation by disabled children, and introduced the elegance of modern dance to the University curriculum.

Covert, professor emerita at Pitt, died of pneumonia on Dec. 27, 2006. She was 95.

Covert rose from assistant professor in 1946, the year she joined the Pitt faculty, to full professor and director of intramural and recreational sports by 1953.

Along the way, she led Pitt’s first female cheerleading squad, despite resistance from the dean of women students and the school’s athletic director at the time.

According to a 1998 article by Peter Hart in the University Times, then-Chancellor Edward Litchfield decided it was time for young women to take up the pom-poms.

“Tom Hampton [athletic director] was against it. Dean [HeLEN] Rush was against it. I don’t know if she felt it lowered the university’s prestige or if it wasn’t appropriate for women’s behavior. But Litchfield handled it beautifully,” Covert said in the article.

“He said, ‘Now Dean Rush, we’re not here to decide if we’re going to have cheerleaders. We’re going to have cheerleaders and I’m putting Miss Covert in charge for one year to start it off.’” Covert recalled. “Well, luckily we had 97 girls try out so we had the cream of the crop of the women athletes. And they always dressed well, and were well-behaved, and so there was no comeback.”

Covert, who grew up in Hundred, W.Va., also had a vision for Trees Hall, the current home of Pitt’s department of health and physical activity. She stressed the need for two swimming pools.

“We’re building for the future here,” said Covert. “Let’s not skimp. Let’s do it right. Let’s not call the small gym and pool the women’s gym and pool as it says on the plans.”

Covert started a new program to teach physical education to children with cerebral palsy, along with teaching their parents.

In 1947, she introduced modern dance into the university curriculum.

She also loved to travel, and in 1957 was assigned to handle choreography for the University drama departmentClearColor. She part of her work in that area, Covert arranged to take a student production of Lerner and Loewe’s “Brigadoon” to military bases in the Azores, Iceland, and Bermuda.

In 1959, she brought fencing to the University. She taught gymnastics, coached field hockey, and built women’s gymnastics, volleyball, and swimming into competitive teams.

Traveling again on sabbatical in 1961, Covert went around the world collecting international folk dance resources and lecturing to physical education students in Australia.

In 1972, she was appointed head of women’s athletics at Pitt.

Covert’s diligence and determination upgraded women’s athletics at Pitt six years before Title IX mandated that women’s sports opportunities be comparable to men’s.

Although she worked hard, said Goldie Edwards, a colleague and close friend for more than 40 years, Covert loved having fun.

“She laughed very easily,” Edwards recalled. “These days there are many people who don’t laugh at all. But she loved to laugh. She would usually say, ‘You have to be quick to do that. I used to spend every Christmas with her and I remember a time when we laughed uncontrollably.’”

Covert is survived by a half-brother, Leland Covert of Shawnee, Colo.
published a story about the University of Pittsburgh in the late 1970s and early 1980s. "The city and campus he had come to love is unfortunately no more," he said. "We found arsenic in almost the whole neighborhood. In the city of Kushtia, almost 60 percent of the wells were contaminated," Hussam said. "Measurement was the key to developing an effective filter." Hussam said that the analytical chemistry he learned while studying at Pitt under his doctoral advisor, Johannes Coetzee, current emeritus professor of analytical chemistry here, and coadvisor Stephen Weber, a Pitt professor of bioanalytical chemistry, was "absolutely essential" to developing the SONO filter.

After leaving Pitt, Hussam had lost touch with his advisers. But soon after The Washington Post published a story about his award-winning invention last month, Hussam received a phone call from a man who asked him detailed questions about trace analysis. Hussam did not catch the caller's name at first.

"He asked me, 'What was the species of arsenic I had found in the water?'" Hussam recalled. "And I thought that this person certainly knew what he was talking about because very few people ask me that question.

Hussam decided to mail the caller copies of his research papers, Hussam began taking down the man's name and address. As the caller spelled his name—Johannes Coetzee—Hussam realized he was speaking with his former adviser.

"It was a very pleasant surprise when I read the article about Abul," said Coetzee, who retired in 1999 after 37 years at Pitt and who now lives near Washington, D.C. "When we talked, he said it was the best day of his life. I was delighted."

Coetzee added, "I'm not shocked that Abul created the SONO filter, because he certainly had the ability. His filter is a major contribution to science and to the welfare of Bangladeshis. I think he can be a role model for young chemists. He applied the knowledge from his doctoral studies to a practical matter of great importance. You may have 1,000 people with Abul's competence, but only one will make a great achievement."

"It's very rewarding for me as an advisor," Coetzee said, adding with a laugh, "Obviously, I didn't do too many things wrong" in advising Hussam.

For Hussam, reconnecting with Coetzee brought back happy memories of the U.S. city and campus he had come to love in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
Pitt to Feature Editorial Cartoonists Who Take Aim at Iraq War

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s Rob Rogers will moderate March 28 panel presentation

By Patricia Lombardo White

Pitt and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette will host an illustrated panel presentation titled “There’s Nothing Funny About War: Editorial Cartoonists Take Aim at Iraq.” Internationally renowned editorial cartoonists and moderated by Post-Gazette editorial cartoonist Rob Rogers at 7:30 p.m. March 28 in The Twentieth Century Club auditorium, 4201 Bigelow Blvd., Oakland.

Featured panelists will be David Axe, military editor for Defense Technology International Magazine; Ted Rall, columnist and cartoonist for Universal Press Syndicate; Scott Stantis, editorial cartoonist for The Birmingham News; and Signe Wilkinson, editorial cartoonist for the Philadelphia Daily News.

Those interested in attending this free public event must RSVP by telephone, 412-624-6880; fax, 412-624-6885; or e-mail, uuevent@pitt.edu, by March 23, providing name, phone number, and requested number of tickets, which will be available at the door.

Axe was born in Arlington, Texas, and attended Furman University in Greenville, S.C., and the University of South Carolina, studying medieval history. After college, he built a freelance writing career while man-aging a movie theater working at a dog spa, and impersonating Star Wars characters for children’s birthday parties. He later joined the staff of the Times, Argus, S.C., weekly newspaper, convincing them to send him to Iraq in January 2005. In Iraq, he quit the paper and began a freelance career as a war correspondent, reporting for The Village Voice, The Washington Times, C-SPAN, BBC Radio, and Popular Science, Fat Company, and Cosmo magazines. Axe’s graphic novel WAR FIX, (NBM ComicsLit, 2006), drawn by Steve Olexa, is based on his first month in Iraq. After seven trips to the war zone, Axe joined Defense Technology International Magazine, which sent him to Iraq, Lebanon, and Japan. After Lebanon, Axe launched a blog at www.warisboring.com—appears in more than 140 newspapers throughout the United States, ranging from The New York Times and Los Angeles Times to such alter-native weeklies as the Village Voice and Los Angeles City Beat. Via his trademark “Generalissimo El Busho” caricature of President Bush, Rall has become a lightning rod for criticism from the right, being smeared as “treasonous” by The Weekly Standard and “anti-American” by The Wall Street Journal editorial page. The Right Wing News Web site named him 2003’s “Most Annoying Liberal,” and he was ranked No. 15 in Bernard Goldberg’s book 100 People Who Are Screwing Up America (Harper Coll- ins, 2005). Rall has won numerous awards, including the 1995 and 2000 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for Outstanding Coverage of the Problems of the Disadvantaged. In 1996, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Stantis has been the editorial cartoonist for The Birmingham News since 1996 and produces an editorial cartoon weekly for USA TODAY. His work is syndicated in more than 400 newspapers and has been featured in Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, The Daily News in New York City, the Los Angeles Times, and the Chicago Tribune and CNN’s “CNN This Morning,” and ABC-TV’s “Nightline.” He has been an editorial cartoonist for the Orange County Register, The Commercial Appeal in Memphis, Tenn., and The Arizona Republic in Phoenix. Stantis began the daily comic strip “Prickly City” in 2004. The character-driven conservative political and social commentary of “Prickly City” now appears in nearly 100 newspapers.

Stantis is a past president of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC), the largest organization of its kind in the world. He is on the board of the Editorial Cartooning Initiative, the foundation arm of the AAEC, and is a member of the board of directors of the Audubon Society’s Foundation of Central and Northern Alabama. Stantis is a 2004 graduate of Leadership Birmingham.

Wilkinson began her career as a stringer for the West Chester Daily Local News, which published her first drawing in 1984. Finding their interests combined her interests in politics and art, Wilkinson moved to Phila-delphia, where she studied political drawing classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, worked at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural History, Philadelphia, and began freelance artwork at various local publications, including The Philadelphia Daily News and the Philadelphia Daily News. In early 1982, she joined the San Jose Mercury News as editorial cartoonist. She was hired in fall 1985 in the same position for the Philadelphia Daily News. In addition to creating political art, Wilkinson has drawn mulch-based cartoons for Organic Gardening magazine; this resulted in her book How to Draw the $735 Tomato.” Her work has appeared in many magazines and books. Most recently, she has released a guide to composting and a book by Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Brooks Jackson, UnSpam: Finding Facts in a World of Spam E-mailation, to be published in April. Wilkinson has written articles on a variety of topics, including the Danish cartooning controversy for Beliefnet.com, The AIGA Design Forum, and The Vista.

In October 2006, she successfully helped defend the proposition Freedom of speech includes the right to offend” at a public debate at the Asia Soci- ety in New York City. Wilkinson has won numerous awards for her cartoons and is a past president of the AAEC.

Rogers’ work is nationally syndicated through United Feature Symp- dicate. His cartoons regularly appear in The New York Times, The Philadelphia Daily News, USA Today, Newsweek, and many other media out-lets. In 1994, Rogers’ depiction of “The Gingrich Who Stole Christmas” graced the cover of Newsweek’s December issue. Born in Philadelphia, Rogers began copying his favorite characters out of the Inquirer’s comics pages as soon as he was old enough to grasp a pencil. His interest in “political” cartooning was cultivated at Oklahoma State University, where he was among the first to draw cartoons for the college paper. He continued to hone his craft for The Vista at Central State University (now University of Phoenix) in Edmond, Okla., during which time he covered the 1980 Presidential election. After graduation, he passed the Bar at Temple University with an M.F.A. degree in painting. Rogers was hired as staff cartoonist for The Pittsburgh Press Club in 1993 and joined the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Rogers received the 2000 Overseas Press Club Award, 1995 National Headliner Award, and 10 Golden Quill Awards from the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania. He also was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1999.
March 26

**Lecture**

“Should We Disclose Harmful Medical Errors to Patients, and If So, How?” Thomas Gallagher, associate professor of medicine and medical history and ethics, University of Washington School of Medicine, 9 a.m., Slate Hall Auditorium 5, Pitt Center for Bioethics’ 24th Annual Meuser Lecture, 412-647-5700, www.pitt.edu/bioethic.

**Lecture, PASSPORT TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS**


**Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

by Judith A. Callan, Pitt School of Medicine, “Strategies for Efficient Determination and Characterization of Bioengineering,” 2 p.m., Russell Hall Floor Conference Room.

**Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

by Gulsun Sharma, Pitt Department of Bioengineering, “Structural Analysis-Driven Shoulder Arthroplasty,” 3:30 p.m., B36 Benedum Hall.

**Musical Performance, African Music and Dance Ensemble**


**March 27**

**Lecture, MySQL Performance, African Music and Dance Ensemble**

**March 28**

**Lectures**

“Polish Accession to the EU and NATO: Its Impact on Poland’s Relations With Its Neighbors,” noon-10:30 a.m.; 4:30-5:30 p.m., 102 Scaife Hall.

**Film Screenings, films by directors Matthias Müller, Bjorn Mjolby, and Michael Brystrøen:**

7:30 p.m., 205 David Lawrence Hall, Pitt Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures series, “Experimental, Underground: Revolutionary Artañá: Films From Germany, Austria, and Switzerland,” 412-648-2614, halle@pitt.edu.

**Theatrical Performance, The Producers, The Reading and The Bear**
directed by Anton Chekhov, 9 p.m., continues through April 1, Stephen Foster Memorial’s Charity Randall Theatre, Pitt Playwright’s Theatre, 412-624-7529, www.pitt.edu/play.

**Film Screenings, The Syran Bride (2004)**
directed by Irak Riklis, 8:30 p.m., 410 Point Park Hall, Pitt’s Global Studies Program, 412-624-2918, drista@pitt.edu.

**March 29**

**Workshop, “The Myths, the Religion, the Science: Finding Funding for Your Innovative Research,” 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Pitt’s Small Business Development Center, registration required, 412-648-1542, ferligenow@katz.pitt.edu.

**Pitt Wellness Fair**, featuring health screenings and demonstrations, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., William Pitt Union’s Assembly Room, Pitt Wellness Program, www.pitt.edu/wellfitpm.

**Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

by Polina Beth Wolf, “Evidence of Hepatocyte-based Association in SLE at the C-reactive Protein Locus: Population-based and Family-based Association Studies,” 10 a.m., 109 Purnall Hall.

**Luncheon Discussion, Religion, Power, and Vernacularization in Medieval India**

Richard Cohen, associate director, Pitt’s Asian Studies Center, 3 p.m., 109 Purnall Hall, Pitt’s Asian Studies Center, 412-624-7763, jordanb@pitt.edu.

**Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

by Teresa Mammoliti Beigay, Pitt Graduate School of Public Health, “Examination of the Perceptions of an Elderly Population in Subsidized Housing and Their Utilization of Community-Based Health Care,” 1 p.m., Parrihan Hall’s 2nd Floor Conference Room.

directed by John Webster, University of Ohio College of Nursing, 3 p.m., 129 Victoria Building, Pitt’s University Center for Social and Urban Research, 412-624-5442, ucsr@pitt.edu.

**Film Screenings, films by directors Matthias Müller, Bjorn Mjolby, and Michael Brystrøen:**

7:30 p.m., 205 David Lawrence Hall, Pitt Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures series, “Experimental, Underground: Revolutionary Artañá: Films From Germany, Austria, and Switzerland,” 412-648-2614, halle@pitt.edu.

**Theatrical Performance, The Producers, The Reading and The Bear**
directed by Anton Chekhov, 9 p.m., continues through April 1, Stephen Foster Memorial’s Charity Randall Theatre, Pitt Playwright’s Theatre, 412-624-7529, www.pitt.edu/play.

**Film Screenings, The Syran Bride (2004)**
directed by Irak Riklis, 8:30 p.m., 410 Point Park Hall, Pitt’s Global Studies Program, 412-624-2918, drista@pitt.edu.

**March 30**

**Conference, Fourth Biannual Early China Symposium, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, Pitt’s Asian Studies Center, Global Studies Program, Center for Latin American Studies, Department of History of Art and Architecture, 412-648-7465, ablow@pitt.edu.

**Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

by Ivan Martinez, Pitt School of Information Sciences, “The Effect of Emotionally Expressed Genes: title of the event, name of the speaker(s), date, time, location, sponsors, and a phone number and Web site for additional information. Items also may be faxed to 412-624-3888 or sent by campus mail to 422 Craig Hall. For more information, call 412-624-1033.

**Publication Notice**: The next edition of the Pitt Chronicle will be published April 2. The deadline for submitting information is May 5. March 28, Items for publication in the Pitt Chronicle, including information for Happenings, should be submitted to chs@pitt.edu. Happenings items should include the following information: title of the event, name and title of speaker(s), date, time, location, sponsors, and a phone number and Web site for additional information. Items also may be faxed to 412-624-3888 or sent by campus mail to 422 Craig Hall. For more information, call 412-624-1033.