Brother and Sister Act: Burton Marvin Tansky, Eva Tansky Blum Named Co-chairs of University’s $2 Billion “Building Our Future Together” Campaign

By John Harvith

Burton Marvin Tansky and Eva Tansky Blum—siblings, Pittsburgh natives, and Pitt alumni and trustees—have been named co-chairs of the University’s $2 billion “Building Our Future Together” fundraising campaign.

Tansky is president and CEO of The Neiman Marcus Group, Inc. Blum is senior vice president, director of community affairs, and chair of the PNC Foundation, the PNC Financial Services Group.

The first-known brother and sister in the University’s 230-year history to serve concurrently as Pitt trustees, Tansky and Blum also are the first-known brother and sister to cochair a higher-education fundraising campaign of the magnitude of Pitt’s.

They succeed Thomas J. Usher, retired chair and CEO of United States Steel Corporation and currently chair of Marathon Oil Corporation, who has chaired Pitt’s capital campaign since its inception. With Usher as chair, the campaign goal doubled twice—from $500 million to $1 billion in 2002 and from $1 billion to $2 billion in 2006—with more than $1 billion raised thus far, making Pitt’s fundraising initiative the most successful such campaign in the history of Western Pennsylvania.

“We are delighted that Bert Tansky and Eva Tansky Blum—each of whom is a distinguished Pitt alumnus and member of the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees—will cochair the next phase of our record-setting capital campaign,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “Their talents, experiences, and expertise, combined with their devotion to Pitt and its mission, will reposition an already successful campaign to attract even higher levels of support. We are grateful to Bert and Eva for their willingness to serve their alma mater. We also forever will be indebted to our former campaign chair, University Trustee Tom Usher, for his own extraordinary leadership, service, and philanthropy.”

A 1961 graduate of Pitt’s College of Arts and Sciences, Tansky began his career in Pittsburgh as an assistant buyer at Kaufmann’s. He worked for several other retailers, including Filene’s (Boston, Mass.), Rike’s (Dayton, Ohio), Forbes and Wallace (Springfield, Mass.), I. Magnin (San Francisco, Calif.), and Saks Fifth Avenue (New York City) before joining The Neiman Marcus Group, Inc., in 1990, serving in a number of senior executive positions—including chair and CEO of Bergdorf Goodman and the group’s president and COO—before assuming his current position in 2001.

Tansky was honored as a Pitt Legacy Laureate in 2000, was given the Pitt Alumni Association Award of Distinction in 1990, and is a lifetime member of the Pitt Alumni Association. Tansky has been accorded numerous honors, among them the Superstar Award from Fashion Group International in 2006, a Visionaries’ Award in 2005 from the Museum of Arts and Design, the 2004 Gold Medal Award from the National Retail Federation (considered the highest honor in retailing), and, in 2002, appointment as a Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur by the French government.

Blum is a 1970 graduate of Pitt’s College of Arts and Sciences and a 1973 graduate of Pitt’s School of Law. She began her career as an attorney in the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. She joined PNC’s legal division in 1977, became vice president in 1986, and was elected senior vice president and chief compliance counsel in 1990. She has served as senior vice president and deputy general counsel/director of regulatory affairs and has served as senior vice president and director of comprehensive risk management and compliance at PNC.

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Outgoing “Building Our Future Together” campaign chair Thomas J. Usher receives a framed citation from Chancellor Nordenberg, commemo rating Usher’s campaign leadership.

Blacks are the most disadvantaged racial group in Pittsburgh, based on a wide range of quality-of-life measures.

The rate for serious mental illness in the Black population is substantially higher in Allegheny County than it is across the nation.

Blacks and Hispanics in the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area are employed in management and professional positions at a much higher rate than the national average.

Only about one-quarter of Black women in Pittsburgh are married, compared with half of White and Hispanic women and two-thirds of Asian women.

These are just a few of the striking findings in the inaugural racial demographic report on the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan region compiled by the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP).

Titled Pittsburgh’s Racial Demographics: Differences and Disparities, CRSP’s new report is the most comprehensive study ever done on the quality of life of multiple racial groups in greater Pittsburgh—African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Whites—and provides a snapshot of the quality of life for Pittsburgh area residents compared with national quality-of-life averages.

The report was released June 26 before an audience of Pitt faculty, community leaders, representatives from city and county government, as well as foundations. It is available at www.crsp.pitt.edu/demographics.html.

The report explores six areas: families, youth, and elderly; economic disparities; education; intergroup relations; mental health; and criminal justice. The data are expected to be helpful to policy makers, community leaders, and those who work to improve access to higher education and health delivery systems. Some of the findings follow.

Families, Youth, and Elderly

Blacks and Whites in the Pittsburgh region, like those across the nation, live largely in racially segregated communities. This has serious implications for Black communities, which are often disadvantaged in many quality-of-life factors, including job and transportation access and public safety.

Only about one-quarter of Black women in Pittsburgh are married, compared with half of White and Hispanic women and two-thirds of Asian women.

Education

A much higher percentage of Asians and Hispanics in the Pittsburgh area have graduate professional degrees, compared with Whites and Blacks. Black students are not as proficient as White students in math in grades 5, 8, and 11. The number of Black girls graduating from Pittsburgh public high schools has increased substantially from 2003 to 2004, but the same did not occur for Black boys.

Economic Disparities

Home ownership rates in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area are higher for Whites...
Resnick to Step Down as LRDC Director in 2008

Will continue here as researcher and director of Pitt’s Institute for Learning

By Patricia Lomando White

Lauren Resnick, director of the University’s Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) since 1977, will resign that post next summer.

University Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science, Resnick will then focus on her internationally renowned research and will continue as director of Pitt’s Institute for Learning.

“Few people have contributed as much to our understandings of how children learn than University Professor Lauren Resnick,” said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “She is an internationally known scholar in the cognitive science of learning and instruction and has applied her knowledge to improve teacher and student performance in school systems across the country. Under her leadership, our University’s Learning Research and Development Center has gained national recognition, and we always will be grateful for her commitment, both to leading-edge educational research and to Pitt.”

Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor James V. Maher said Resnick’s decision to resign as LRDC director “concludes 30 years of notably successful administrative leadership and service in that position to the center and to the University. It has been an honor to work with Dr. Resnick, both in her role as director and in her participation in the activities of our Council of Deans.”

Promoted to the rank of University Professor in January 2006, Resnick is the founder and director of the Institute for Learning, providing organizational design, professional training services, and research on learning and teaching advances to urban school districts across the nation. She also was the lead sponsor and codirector of the New Standards Project, which developed educational standards and assessments for school districts and governments.

Among Resnick’s many awards and honors are the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction Oncore Award for outstanding contributions to the science of learning and instruction, the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Edward L. Thorndike Award for distinguished Contributions to Applications of Psychology to Education and Training Award. She is a lifetime national associate of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine; a member since 1981 of the National Academy of Education; a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and a fellow of the American Psychological Association.

Resnick was founding editor of Cognition and Instruction and, more recently, of Research Points. She is past president of the American Educational Research Association. Resnick has been awarded honorary doctorates by two European universities.

She earned an AD in history at Radcliffe College in 1957, graduating magna cum laude with the Radcliffe History Prize; an AM in teaching at Harvard University Graduate School of Education in 1958; and an EdD in research in instruction at Harvard University Graduate School of Education in 1965.

A search committee, chaired by Vice Provost George E. Klinzing, will be formed in the coming months to identify a new director of LRDC.

Blacks the Most Disadvantaged Racial Group

In Pittsburgh, Research by Pitt’s CRSP Finds

By Jim Swyers and Jocelyn Uhl Duffy

Continued from Page 3

and Hispanics, compared with the rest of the country. And, as is the case throughout the country, Asians in this region have the highest median household income. All four racial/ethnic groups use public transportation at a higher rate to go to work in the Pittsburgh area than do like groups elsewhere in the nation.

Intergroup Relations

About half of Allegheny County’s Black residents and one-fifth of its White residents see race relations as a serious problem both in the region and nation. Half of the county’s Black residents also reported being victims of unfair treatment or discrimination in a store within the last six months. Fewer than half of the county’s Black residents said they believe citizens of all races are treated fairly by the police.

Mental Health

Pitt researchers found the rate of serious mental illness in Allegheny County substantially higher among Blacks than Whites. Whites with an income of less than $25,000 a year have a higher rate of serious mental illness than Whites with a higher income. Blacks who earn less than $25,000 a year have a higher rate of serious mental illness than Whites who earn that amount.

Criminal Justice

In the Pittsburgh region, most of the Black individuals arrested for murder and non-negligent manslaughter are involved in cases in the city of Pittsburgh, while the majority of White arrests for the same crimes are outside Allegheny County. The majority of juveniles and adults arrested for property crime in the city are Black, while most of the juveniles and adults arrested for property crime in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area and the nation overall are White.

CRSP will release a followup report, exploring solutions to some of these problems, within the next year.
Science & Technology

Heavier May Mean Healthier For People With Type 1 Diabetes

Pitt researchers find more fat equals less coronary artery calcification

By Michele Baum

Pitt researchers studying links between an early sign of heart disease called coronary artery calcification and body fat have found that, paradoxically, more fat may have some advantages, at least for people—particularly women—who have Type 1 diabetes.

Cardiovascular complications, including heart disease, are a leading cause of death for people with diabetes, who tend to suffer cardiovascular disease decades earlier than nondiabetics.

“Gaining weight may reflect good or better treatment with insulin therapy, which may partly explain why participants who gained weight over time had lower mortality rates,” said Trevor Orchard, a professor of epidemiology in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH), who presented the findings during the American Diabetes Association’s annual meeting June 22-26 in Chicago.

The research by Orchard and his colleagues focused on 218 patients with Type 1 diabetes participating in the Pittsburgh Epidemiology of Diabetes Complications Study, an 18-year prospective study of childhood onset Type 1 diabetes, which began in 1986. As part of the study, the patients recently received a special computed tomography scan (CT) to assess coronary artery calcification.

The participants’ mean age was 42, and mean duration of diabetes was 34 years. In addition to the CT scan, patients were evaluated for fat underneath the skin and in the abdominal region, body mass index (BMI), and waist circumference. Although investigators noted a positive association for all measures of fatness and having any coronary artery calcification, the findings also monitor patients who had calcification, the relationship reversed so that people with more fat had less severe calcification.

This association also varied by gender. Women with less fat under the skin had more evidence of coronary artery calcification than those with more fat. Thinner men also had more evidence of coronary artery calcification than men with a higher BMI.

“What it comes down to is a kind of double-edged relationship,” said GSPH graduate student Baqiyahv Conway, lead author of the abstract detailing Pitt’s findings, adding that these associations of less severe artery calcification with greater weight persisted even when controlling for standard cardiovascular disease risk factors such as increased levels of LDL, or bad cholesterol, triglycerides, high blood pressure, and lower levels of HDL, or good cholesterol.

“Controlling for kidney disease, another common complication of diabetes, weakened the association in men but not in women.”

“This is not a firm recommendation to people with Type 1 diabetes to put on weight, but it does raise the possibility that weight recommendations in Type 1 diabetes may be somewhat different than those for the general population, and emphasizes the complex relationship between body fat and cardiovascular risk in diabetes,” said Orchard, who also is a professor of medicine and pediatrics in Pitt’s School of Medicine.

Beating Pulse

Weathered, flattened corpse of rival falcon from Cleveland found when Cathedral of Learning nest removed for restoration project

By Morgan Kelly

The male peregrine falcon that launched a failed takeover of the nest atop Pitt’s Cathedral of Learning in March came from the Cleveland area, but as natural justice would have it, he won’t be going back.

Caretakers of the Pitt nest discovered the interloper’s withered and nearly decapitated body in a water drain on the Cathedral’s 40th floor July 2 as they removed the falcons’ nest so that restoration crews can clean the tower’s top.

The fallen bird’s tracking band identified him as being named Pulse, born at the Hilliard Road Bridge in Lakewood, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, in 2004. His body finally explains how his daring, early morning invasion on March 18 ended. Web camera images of the row show Pulse and Erie, the paterfamilias of the Pitt nest, slashing each other with their talons and beaks for 20 minutes before rolling out of the nest and out of view.

That early morning invasion triggered an outcome that defies conventional reason, he said. Pulse also holds potential clues about local falcon behavior. Falcons in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio seem to interact frequently, said Kate St. John, a volunteer for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) who monitors the Pitt falcons and who also found Pulse’s body. Eric hails from Columbus and many of his Pittsburgh-born children have flown west to Cleveland, Toledo, and Youngstown, among other cities. That seems sensible, except that Dorothy comes from far-off Wisconsin. By knowing Pulse’s identity and origin, Bledsoe said, it might help to determine if peregrine falcons maintain a regional pattern in how they breed and seek out nests.

Pitt’s victorious peregrine falcon, “Erie” flies high above Oakland as he circles the top of the Cathedral of Learning.

Although dead, Pulse could still provide important information on the behavior and living conditions of peregrine falcons, said Anthony Bledsoe, a lecturer of biological sciences in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences who helps monitor the falcons. An analysis of the remains could reveal the levels of toxins and air pollutants he was exposed to in life. Such information could shed light on the environments in which falcons live and threats to their survival.

“By determining the cause of death—which currently appears to be a massive wound to the neck—researchers can gain insight on how falcons fight and defend territory,” Bledsoe said. In this case, an interesting component is that the nine-year-old Erie bested a three-year-old challenger, an outcome that defies conventional reason, he said. Pulse also holds potential clues about local falcon behavior. Falcons in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio seem to interact frequently, said Kate St. John, a volunteer for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) who monitors the Pitt falcons and who also found Pulse’s body. Eric hails from Columbus and many of his Pittsburgh-born children have flown west to Cleveland, Toledo, and Youngstown, among other cities. That seems sensible, except that Dorothy comes from far-off Wisconsin. By knowing Pulse’s identity and origin, Bledsoe said, it might help to determine if peregrine falcons maintain a regional pattern in how they breed and seek out nests.

Eric and Dorothy most likely will continue living at the Cathedral as the $4.8 million restoration project progresses toward the tower’s summit. Bledsoe said. Eric and Dorothy claim the eastern 42-story Gothic-revival building as their territory and rarely visit the nest outside of the early spring nesting season.

Cost Company, which was hired by Pitt to clean off more than 70 years’ of industrial soot and preserve the structure, rearranged its cleaning schedule earlier this year as to avoid the falcon nest until the chicks hatched and flew away on their own. A new nest for Eric and Dorothy will be installed after the restoration project concludes in September.
Contributor to Aggressive Cancers Identified by Pitt Medical Researchers

Mutations in cell-adhesion molecule allow tumor cells to grow more rapidly, spread beyond original site

By Jim Sayers

Mutations in the cell adhesion molecule known as integrin alpha 7 (integrin α7) lead to unchecked tumor cell proliferation and a significantly higher incidence in cancer spread, or metastasis, in several cancer cell lines, Pitt School of Medicine researchers found in a study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute on June 6.

The findings suggest that integrin α7 represents an important new target for cancer therapy and prevention.

Integrin α7 belongs to a major class of cell membrane proteins that play a role in the attachment of a cell to the extracellular matrix (ECM), which is the material that holds cells within a particular type of tissue together. Integrins also help cells attach to one another and are involved in transmitting chemical signals between cells and the ECM.

Pitt researchers led by Jianhua Luo, a professor in the medical school's Division of Molecular and Cellular Pathology, examined whether this gene is mutated in specimens of various African cancers as well as whether the level of integrin α7 expression is associated with clinical relapse of human cancers. They also investigated whether integrin α7 has tumor suppressor activity.

To determine whether mutations in integrin α7 contribute to cancer, Luo and his colleagues sequenced the integrin α7 genes from 66 human cancer specimens and cell lines representing a number of different kinds of cancer, including cancer of the prostate, liver, brain (glioblastoma), and muscle (leiomyosarcoma).

They found mutations in the integrin α7 gene, particularly those that resulted in an abnormally shortened protein product, or truncation, in 16 of 28 prostate cancers. They also found truncation-inducing mutations in five of 24 liver cancer samples, five of six glioblastomas, and one of four leiomyosarcomas.

Integrin α7 mutations also were associated with a significant increase in the recurrence of cancer among patients. Nine of 13 prostate cancer patents with integrin α7 mutations experienced a recurrence of their cancer after radical prostatectomy versus only one of eight prostate cancer patients without such mutations. There were five recurrences among eight hepatocellular carcinoma patients with integrin α7 mutations versus only one recurrence of cancer among 16 patients without such mutations.

To examine the effect of alterations in the level of integrin α7 on tumor formation, the researchers assessed the ability of cancer cells to form colonies in a standard growth medium after increasing or decreasing the level of normal integrin α7 in the cell lines. In this experiment, control cancer cells formed large colonies with up to 100 cells each. Cancer cells with normal levels of integrin α7 expression formed fewer and smaller colonies. When investigators decreased the level of integrin α7 in two cancer cell lines using siRNAs, or silencing RNAs, both cell lines formed more colonies and grew better than corresponding control cell lines.

“When we increased levels of normal integrin α7 in cancer cells, they grew at a much slower rate,” Luo said. “This suggests that this protein is a fairly potent tumor suppressor.”

Luo and his colleagues then investigated the role of integrin α7 in metastasis by examining the relationship between the level of integrin α7 expression and cell migration by increasing the expression of normal integrin α7 in three cell lines. The migration rate was significantly reduced in all of the cells compared to those in which the expression of integrin α7 remained deficient, suggesting that the level of normal integrin α7 expression is inversely associated with tumor cell migration.

Finally, to investigate whether normal integrin α7 possesses tumor-suppressor activity, the researchers implanted human cancer cells into immune deficient mice. Some mice received tumor cells in which levels of integrin α7 were decreased, while others received tumor cells in which the levels of normal integrin α7 were increased. Six weeks after mice were implanted with cancer cells in which levels of normal integrin α7 were increased, compared to patients with a normal volume about four times as large as mice with implanted cancer cells in which normal integrin α7 levels were increased.

Similarly, the researchers found no visible metastasis in mice with tumors in which levels of normal integrin α7 had been increased. On the other hand, they did find evidence of metastasis in three of 12 mice with one type of tumor deficient in normal integrin α7 and in four of the 12 mice with another type of tumor deficient in normal integrin α7.

“Furthermore, the six-week survival of mice bearing tumors with increased levels of normal integrin α7 was higher than that of mice bearing tumors in which normal integrin α7 had not been experimentally increased. Thus, increasing the level of normal integrin α7 in tumors was associated with decreased tumor growth and metastasis in this animal model,” Luo said.

According to Luo and his fellow researchers, these findings suggest that not only is integrin α7 an important tumor suppressor, but it is potentially a critical new target for cancer treatment.

“This study shows rather definitively that when we experimentally decreased the level of integrin α7 protein or the protein was naturally mutated in cells, those cells lost their inhibitory signals for both cell migration and proliferation,” Luo explained.

“This suggests that the loss of integrin α7 activity may lead to unchecked tumor cell proliferation and a significantly increased risk of tumor metastasis. More importantly, it suggests that if we can somehow restore normal integrin α7 levels in tumor cells in vivo, we may be able to reduce the risk of them spreading to other sites, which would be a significant achievement in cancer therapy.”

This research was supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute, the Pitt Department of Urology’s development fund, and the John Rangos Foundation for Enhancement of Research in Pathology.

Adding Medication Improves Recovery for Elderly With Major Depressive Disorder

By Joelyn Ulh Duffy

Adding a medication to a standard treatment regimen for major depressive disorder in the elderly improves chances of recovery in those who do not adequately respond to the first-course therapy or who relapse from it, according to a Pitt School of Medicine study published in the June issue of the American Journal of Psychiatry, the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association.

Up to 84 percent of the elderly who experience depression either fail to respond to first-course treatment or relapse during the first six to 12 weeks of treatment, as they have shown.

The Pitt research found that adding a second drug to the treatment of depressed patients over the age of 70 who either did not respond to initial treatment with the antidepressant paroxetine and interpersonal psychotherapy, or to those who responded to the initial treatment but quickly relapsed, caused the likelihood of recovery to rise from 40 percent to 60 percent. Recovery was slower in those who did not respond to the original treatment.

“Depression should not be considered a normal part of aging. The scientific evidence is growing that there are a number of effective treatment options available for people of all ages,” said Mary Amanda Dew, a Pitt professor of psychiatry, psychology, and epidemiology and the study’s author.

Pitt researchers followed 105 adults aged 70 or older who had major depressive disorder over two years.

“Clinicians referred to standardized treatment of paroxetine and interpersonal psychotherapy or who did respond but experienced an early recurrence of depressive symptoms. Participants were given one of three augmenting agents: sustained-release bupropion, nortriptyline, or lithium.

Researchers selected the additional agent that each participant received based on individual medical status and history. Thirty-six participants either declined new medicine or did not receive augmentation because of accompanying medical conditions.

Half of the patients who did not receive augmentation for the initial treatment responded to the augmentation therapy. It took a median 28 weeks for the participants to respond to recovery. Of the patients who relapsed after the initial therapy, 67 percent recovered after augmentation over a median recovery time of 24 weeks. Of the patients who responded to the first-course therapy of paroxetine and psychotherapy, 87 percent achieved recovery.

“While the recovery rates of those receiving augmentation are not as high as in those who responded to first-line therapy, the recovery rates are still high enough to suggest that augmentation should be tried when older adults’ depression is not improving,” said Dew.

Pitt’s study was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.
Trustees Elect, Re-Elect Members; Approve Student Fee Increases; and Amend Bylaws

Pitt Board of Trustees Chair Ralph J. Cappy and Vice Chairs Suzanne W. Broadhurst and Robert M. Hernandez were re-elected to one-year terms during the board’s annual meeting June 29.

Cappy is Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. Broadhurst is director of corporate giving for Eat’n Park Hospitality Group, and Hernandez is chair of RTI International Metals, Inc., and retired vice chair and chief financial officer of USX Corp.

Also during the meeting, the Board of Trustees:

• Elected new members and re-elected others to the board and its executive committee;
• Elected and re-elected University directors and members of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Board of Directors’ executive committee and the UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside Board of Directors;
• Approved increasing the student orientation fees at Pitt’s Greensburg and Titusville campuses, the student center fee at Pitt-Greensburg, and the student activity fee at Pitt-Johnstown; and
• Amended the board’s bylaws to eliminate term limitations for community representatives on trustees committees.

New and re-elected members of Pitt and UPMC boards and committees

Elected as members of Pitt’s Board of Trustees were:

• Terrence “Terry” P. Laughlin (KGSB ’81) of New York City, senior vice president and head of Strategic Growth Opportunities, Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc., and chair of Merrill Lynch Bank & Trust Co., FSBE;
• Susan P. McGalla of Pittsburgh, president and chief merchandising officer of American Eagle Outfitters, Inc.;
• Bryant J. Saler (CAS ’71) of Florida, founder and CEO of Business Diplomacy Consulting, LLC; and
• Stephen R. Tritch (ENGR ’71, KGSB ’77) of Monroeville, president and CEO of the Westinghouse Electric Company.

Laughlin, McGalla, Saler, and Tritch were advanced for election as trustees by the board’s nominating committee.

Also elected to Pitt’s board were:

• David Tilton, president of Extrude Hone Corp., a subsidiary of Kennemetal Inc., and a member of the Pitt-Greensburg advisory board, and
• Emil M. Spadafore Jr. (CAS ’71), a partner in the Meadville, Pa., law firm of Thomas, Spadafore, Walker & Keenan and chair of the Pitt-Titusville advisory board. Tilton and Spadafore were advanced for election as trustees by the Greensburg and Titusville advisory boards.

For biographies of Laughlin, McGalla, Saler, and Tritch, see the story in the June 25 Pitt Chronicle available online at www.chronicle.pitt.edu/?p=330. For biographies of Tilton and Spadafore, visit www.chronicle.pitt.edu/?p=456.

Re-elected to Pitt’s board during the June 29 annual meeting were G. Nicholas Beckwith III, chair and CEO of Arch Street Management, LLC; Michael A. Bryson, chief financial officer and director of finance and corporate strategy, Mellon Financial Corp.; Ralph J. Cappy; F. James McCarl, president of The McClarr Group; John H. Pelusi Jr., executive managing director, H.J. Heinz Co.; William S. Dietrich II, president and CEO, WQED Multimedia; Marlee S. Myers, managing member, Holliday Fenoglio Fowler L.P.; George Conomikes, chair of the executive committee for one-year terms ending June 2008; and Burton M. Tansky, president and CEO, Thomas, Spadafore, Walker & Keenan and chair of the Pitt-Titusville advisory board.

Elected as members of the UPMC board’s executive committee were Robert G. Lovett, partner, Lovett Bookman Harmon Marks LLP; and Thomas J. Usher. Re-elected were J.W. Connolly, retired senior vice president, H.J. Heinz Co.; William S. Dietrich II, managing director, Dietrich Charitable Trust; Ira J. Gumberg, president, the CEO, J.J. Gumberg Co.; Robert M. Hernandez; Arthur S. Levine, Pitt senior vice chancellor for health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine; Martin G. McGuinn, retired chair and CEO, Mellon Financial Corp.; Donald J. Kearns, retired chair and CEO Mark A. Nordenberg; Robert A. Paul; and William E. Strickland.

Student fees

Pitt trustees approved increasing Pitt-Greensburg’s student orientation fee by $10 to $50 for first-year students. The board also approved increasing Pitt-Greensburg’s student center fee from $38 to $45 per term for full-time students, and from $14 to $17 per term for part-time students. The increases will take effect this fall. The fees had not been increased since 2001.

In addition, trustees approved increasing Pitt-Johnstown’s student activity fee from $58 to $83 for each fall and spring term for full-time students, effective this fall. The fee was last increased in 2000.

Also, trustees approved increasing Pitt-Titusville’s student orientation fee for new full-time students from $45 to $60, effective this summer. The fee was last increased six years ago.

Bylaws amendment

Board of Trustees committees other than the Executive, Nominating, Compensation, and Conflict of Interest Committees may include community representatives who attend meetings as nonvoting representatives. Board bylaws formerly held that such community representatives could serve no more than four consecutive one-year terms. But trustees voted June 29 to eliminate that term limit.

“The University has benefited greatly from the expertise provided by community representatives, particularly in the fields of finance and investing,” read the background statement for the resolution amending the bylaws. “In order to maintain the continuity of service and expertise of community representatives on Board of Trustees committees, it is deemed appropriate that the term limitation be eliminated.”

John Verbanac Appointed Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Trustee on Pitt’s Board of Trustees

By John Harvith

Pitt alumnus John Verbanac of Cranberry Township, Pa.—CEO of Summa Development LLC, the real estate arm of investment holding company Summa Group LLC—has been appointed by Pennsylvania Trustee on Pitt’s Board of Trustees, effective June 30.

Experienced as a leader in diverse categories of business and at all levels of government, Verbanac has served since early 2005 as a director of Summa Group, which manages a diversified portfolio of service and technology companies.

From 1994 through 2004, Verbanac served in a number of business leadership positions and undertook several entrepreneurial ventures.

Several years ago, Verbanac nurtured the growth of two start-up companies: IdeaMill, a Pittsburgh-based branding and advertising firm, and Nerti-Verbanac Public Affairs, a Harrisburg-based public affairs agency. In less than three years, Nerti-Verbanac’s leading product, The Insider, became Pennsylvania’s largest statewide political publication; as its chair, Verbanac led the firm to maturation and broadened its offerings, culminating in its sale in 2005.

From 1997 to 2000, Verbanac led the restructuring of BrabenderCox as the marketing/advertising company’s executive vice president. Throughout its restructuring and subsequent launch of a new brand—Adams Marketing, of which Verbanac became president—BrabenderCox underwent substantial growth. Mellon Financial Corp. Of Pittsburgh, the company’s vice president of public affairs at Ketchum Communications Worldwide, one of the world’s leading public relations firms, handling such major national brands as GNC, MCI, Wal-Mart, Heinz, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Verbanac began his career in government and politics working on Capitol Hill for two U.S. senators and as a senior aide of Congress; during that time, he functioned as a senior aide and political strategist. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pitt’s College of General Studies in 1990.
Juan Manfredi, currently chair of the Department of Mathematics in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences, will become the school’s associate dean for undergraduate studies, effective Sept. 1.

As associate dean, Manfredi will chair the Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Council, convening and leading that council and representing it on the Arts and Sciences Council; as such he will be responsible for providing leadership on curricular issues. Manfredi also will lead the team of assistant deans and other professionals who provide the academic services traditionally expected of the Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, including the Advising Center, the Academic Resource Center, the Office of Experimental Learning, Student Records, and Freshman Programs.

“Dr. Manfredi has a distinguished record as a teacher,” wrote N. John Cooper, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, in a memorandum to the school’s department chairs and program directors, announcing Manfredi’s appointment. “He has been deeply engaged with our undergraduate program throughout his career at the University of Pittsburgh, and led the team that started our Calculus Project, an initiative that brought core calculus instruction into the digital age in the early 1990s. Dr. Manfredi’s innovative programming for graduate education in harmonic analysis, and the theory of nonlinear potential theory, using the methods of classical complex analysis, was supported financially by the NSF [National Science Foundation] between 1993 and 1996, and his contributions were recognized through the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award.”

“Dr. Manfredi is an experienced academic administrator,” Cooper added, “including service as an NSF program director and, since 2005, as chair of our Department of Mathematics.”

Manfredi’s research specialty is nonlinear potential theory, using the methods of classical complex analysis, nonlinear partial differential equations, harmonic analysis, and the theory of quasi-regular mappings. Manfredi has published extensively in the major peer-reviewed journals of his discipline and has a strong record of NSF support for his research.

He came to Pitt as an assistant professor in 1989 and was promoted to associate professor and awarded tenure in 1993. He was promoted to professor in 1998.

Mathematics professor Ivan Yotov will serve as interim chair of the mathematics department at the Sept. 1, 2007, until Aug. 31, 2008.

The Global Studies Program within Pitt’s University Center for International Studies was awarded a $78,000 grant by the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad, part of the International Education Programs Service of the U.S. Department of Education. With the goal of helping U.S. educators integrate Islamic culture and history into their curricula, the grant—titled Islam, the West, and the Muslim World—will enable the participating educators’ ability to offer valuable information in the classroom, design curriculum models for secondary and higher education, and speak about the Islamic world in their communities.

The resulting course work, curriculum models, and publicly available syllabi will be designed to expand academic offerings at a range of education institutions.

From June 24 through July 22, representatives of Pitt, five regional colleges, and two high schools participated in an Egypt study tour that was developed in collaboration with South Valley University in Gena and the Program for Dialogue of Civilizations at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University. The Egyptian tour included visits to Luxor, where group members focused on ancient Egypt; Alexandria, where the fusion of East and West from ancient times to the British occupation was studied; and Cairo, where participants investigated the evolution of religious diversity and the spread of Islam into contemporary society. The tour included seminars with Egyptian faculty members; discussions with religious, cultural, political, and community leaders; visits to historic sites; and attendance at cultural performances.

Christine Hippert, who recently completed the joint PhD and Master of Public Health program in anthropology and public health at Pitt, has been awarded the inaugural Eduardo Lozano Memorial Dissertation Prize. Hippert was nominated for her dissertation, titled “Identity and Development in Rural Bolivia: Negotiating Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in Development Contexts.”

The Eduardo Lozano Memorial Dissertation Prize is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation at Pitt on a topic related to Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latin American communities in other countries. The prize includes a $1,250 cash award. It was created to honor the life and work of the late Eduardo Lozano, who founded the Latin American collection at Hillman Library in 1967 and directed it until his death in August 2006. Lozano developed the collection into one of the most outstanding of its kind in the world.

Hippert will assume a tenure-track position as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in the fall.

Sanford Asher, Distinguished Professor of Analytical Chemistry, Biophysical Chemistry, Materials Sciences, and Physical Chemistry in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences, will receive the 2008 Pittcon Spectroscopy Award at the 2008 Pittcon Conference & Expo in New Orleans in March 2008. Established in 1957, the award honors individuals with an outstanding record of contributions to the field of applied spectroscopy, or the study of the interaction of light particles and matter. The Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh presents the award.

Asher has been at the forefront of spectroscopy for more than 20 years, having pioneered the development of UV Raman Spectroscopy, which allows the study of interactions between molecular electron clouds and nuclear vibrations. Asher also was instrumental in the development of a noninvasive method to detect glucose levels in bodily fluid. Using a sensory material worn like a contact lens, millions of diabetics could one day be spared the ordeal of having to prick their fingers to check blood sugar levels. The thin plastic sensor would change colors based on the concentra-

Carnegie Science Center Awards for Excellence

Cara J. Hayden (center), associate editor of Pitt Magazine, received the Carnegie Science Center’s 2007 Award for Excellence in the Journalism category. Pictured, from left, at the awards ceremony are Karen Hoffman, a communications manager in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences; Gary A. Covey, art-director in the Pitt Office of Public Affairs’ Department of News and Magazines; Hayden; Pitt Magazine Editor Cindy Gill; and Robert Hill, Pitt vice chancellor for Public Affairs.

Other recipients of Carnegie Science Center 2007 Awards for Excellence from Pitt were Sanjeev Shrivastav, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Biomedical Engineering; Robert Lozano, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Bioengineering; and Sanford Asher, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Analytical Chemistry.

Other recipients of Carnegie Science Center 2007 Awards for Excellence from Pitt were Sanjeev Shrivastav, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Biomedical Engineering; Robert Lozano, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Bioengineering; and Sanford Asher, professor and Gerald McGinnis Chair in Analytical Chemistry.
Cathedral of Learning Society

The University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association recently elected eight new members to its 2007-08 board of directors. Dexter Edmunds, Arnold Epstein, Lauren Feintuch, Alka Patel, and Haig Sakonian were elected to the position of director at large. Rebecca Borghi, Aminu Idris, and Chris Porter were elected to the position of regional director.

Both positions carry a two-year office term and a wide range of responsibilities, including serving as hosts at Alumni Association events and on Alumni Association committees. Biographical information of the newly elected officials follows:

**Dexter Edmunds** is president and CEO of Business Diplomacy Consulting, LLC. He graduated from the University in 1984 with a BS degree in information technology. He has served on the Katz Graduate School of Business in 1994 with an MBA degree. He has served on the Katz Alumni Association as a Pitt Golden Panther and a member of the Pitt Letterman Club. Edmunds resides in Atlanta, Ga.

**Arnold Epstein** is an adjunct instructor in Pitt’s Administration of Justice and Legal Studies program. He graduated from Pitt in 1969 with a BA degree in education. As a member of the University’s Alumni Leadership Council, Epstein has supported numerous Alumni Association activities. He resides in Pittsburgh.

**Lauren Feintuch** graduated from Pitt’s College of Business Administration in 2006 with a degree in marketing. As an alumnus, Feintuch has served as president of Omicron Delta Kappa and the Student Association of International Students. She resides in Hoboken, NJ.

**Alka Patel** is an associate of Pepper Hamilton, LLP. She graduated from the University in 1996 with a BS degree in materials science and engineering. Patel resides in Pittsburgh.

**Haig Sakonian** is the director of Environment Health and Safety and Operations Audit with Alcoa Inc. Sakonian has earned three degrees from the University in 1996 with a BS degree in biochemistry in 1975, an MS degree in industrial hygiene in 1979, and an MBA degree in 2004. Sakonian has served as a corporate level sponsor for the University’s Athletics programs. He resides in Pittsburgh.

**Rebecca Borghi** is a medical technologist with INOVA Fairfax Hospital. Borghi graduated from the University’s School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences in 1997. She has served as membership coordinator of the Chesapeake & Potomac Pitt Club and in various positions with the Alumni Leadership Council. She resides in Fairfax, Va.

**Aminu Idris** is an assistant director with the Independent National Electoral Commission. Idris graduated from the University with a BA degree in political science in 1985 and an MPA degree in 1987. Idris resides in Abuja, Nigeria.

**Christopher Porter** is a senior vice president at Jefleche & Company, a global securities and investment banking firm. Porter graduated from the University’s Katz Graduate School of Business in 1994 with an MBA degree. He has served on the Katz Alumni Association Board of Directors. He resides in New York, NY.

Some 140 people gathered for cocktails and dinner in the Cathedral of Learning’s Commons Room on the evening of June 29 to honor new inductees into the Cathedral of Learning Society (CLS).

Each of the society’s members has donated $1 million or more to Pitt. Inductees or members of their families received framed citations.

Pictured in the front row, from left: Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg and inductees Marlin H. Mickle (ENGR’61, ’63G, ’67G), Nickolas A. DeVecceo Professor and professor of telecommunication and computer, electrical, and industrial engineering in Pitt’s School of Engineering, Athena and Frank Sarris, founders and owners of Sarris Candies; Marianna Zamias and George D. Zamias (KGSB ’53 and ’54G), founders of George D. Zamias Developer and Zamias Services, Inc.; Jeanne H. Olofson, president of the Tom W. and Jeanne H. Olofson Foundation, and Tom W. Olofson (KGSB ’63), chair and CEO of EPIQ Systems, Inc.; and Rhoda Steiner and Charles M. Steiner (KGSB ’63), retired CEO, founder, and chair of Branch Group, Inc.

Back row, from left: inductees Gordon J. Vanscoy (PHARM ’84, KGSB ’91), associate dean for business innovation and professor of pharmacy and therapeutics in Pitt’s School of Pharmacy, and Bethann Vanscoy, E. Maxine Bruhns, director of Nationality Rooms Programs at Pitt; Margaret E. Wilkes and James E. Wilkes (CAS ’59), retired president, owner, and CEO of Wilkes Venture; Kristy Rodriguez (daughter of CLS inductees J. Faye Sampson and the late Myles D. Sampson), who was the chair and CEO of Romeo Properties, Inc.; and William Rodriguez. J. Faye Sampson, trustee of the J. Faye and Myles D. Sampson Family Foundation; William F. Beuter (CGS ’71), chair and international chief executive of Acusis, and Christina Stacey.

CLS 2007 inductees do not include the late Fred C. Bruhns (GSPIA ’69), who with his wife E. Maxine Bruhns conducted resettlement work for the United Nations and U.S. refugee agencies before he became a GSPIA professor; the late Thomas E. Cadman (CAS ’52, MED ’56), whose medical career included 30 years of service to the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa.; Wyoming rancher Allen L. Cook, who in December 2005 donated to Pitt a 4,700-acre property rich in dinosaur bones and Native American archeological remains; Kathleen DuRoss Ford, president of KDP Overseas Investments, Inc.; and L. Frank Chapin, a retired principal in the law firm Chapin & Miller; the late Anthony E. Gill (ENGR ’49), who was a civil engineer for Dravo Corp.; the late Frank E. Jeffries (DEN ’33), a dentist and career officer in the U.S. Navy, and Dorothy T. Jeffries, who established the Frank E. Jeffries Scholarship in Fund in Dental Medicine in Pitt’s dental medicine school; professional golfer, businessman, and philanthropist Arnold Palmer; Henry Posner (CAS ’48), chair of The Hawthorne Group, and Helen Posner; Thomas J. Usher (ENGR ’64, ’66G, and ’71G), retired chair and CEO of U.S. Steel Corp. and currently chair of Marathon Oil Corporation; and Sandra L. Usher; Robert J. Weiss, an opthalmologist, cofounder, and president of Seneca Eye Surgeons, Inc.; and chair of the Department of Surgery for the medical staff at Warren General Hospital, and Mary B. Weiss.

July 9


July 10

Musical Performance, Salamis, 5 p.m. Katz Plaza, Penn Avenue and Seventh Street, downtown, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s JazzLive Katz Plaza series, 412-456-6666.


Film Screening, Autonomous Farmer, directed by Michael Polish, dusk, Schenley Park’s Flagstaff Hill. CinParks’ Cinema in the Park Series, 412-937-3939.

Film Screening, Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, 8 p.m., 120 David Lawrence Hall, Pitt Film Studies Program’s Films of Pedro Almodovar series, film4@pitt.edu or ek1@pitt.edu.


July 12

PhD Dissertation Defense by Hala Ismael Hassan, Pitt Department of Instruction and Learning, “Arabas as ESL Readers of American Literature: Their Attitudes, Their Responses, and the Sources of Their Misinterpretations,” 9:30 a.m., 5614 Point Hall.

PhD Dissertation Defense by Clare Holte, Pitt Department of Psychology, “Maternal Harshness and the Mother-Child Relationship in the Toddler Years: Associations with Internalizing Problems at School Entry,” 1:30 p.m., Sennott Square.

PhD Dissertation Defense by Rachelle Prantil Baun, Pitt Department of Bioengineering, “Biomimetics and Function of the Female Rat Urethra in Stress UIterary Incontinence Induced by Birth Trauma,” 1:30 p.m., 700 Kaufmann Building.


Film Screening, Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, 8 p.m., 120 David Lawrence Hall, Pitt Film Studies Program’s Films of Pedro Almodovar series, film4@pitt.edu or ek1@pitt.edu.


Film Screening, Autonomous Farmer, directed by Michael Polish, dusk, Schenley Park’s Flagstaff Hill. CinParks’ Cinema in the Park Series, 412-937-3939.

July 16

PhD Dissertation Defense by Kesha L. Tyler, Pitt Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, “The Applicability and Usage of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) to Address Obesity Among U.S. Children and Youth,” 10:30 a.m., A719 Crabbe Hall.

Musical Performance, Dwayne Dolphin, 5 p.m., Katz Plaza, Penn Avenue and Seventh Street, downtown, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s JazzLive Katz Plaza series, 412-456-6666.


July 17

Film Screening, Live Flesh, 8 p.m., 120 David Lawrence Hall, Pitt Film Studies Program’s Films of Pedro Almodovar series, film4@pitt.edu or ek1@pitt.edu.

July 20

Farmers’ Market, 3:30-6:30 p.m., every Friday through Nov. 16, Sennott Street between Atwood Street and Meyran Avenue, Oakland Business Improvement District, 412-683-3423, www.oaklandland.org.