Burton Marvin Tansky, Tracey Thomas Travis Named 2009 Distinguished Alumni Fellows

By Patricia Lomando White

The University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association has named Burton Marvin Tansky (A&S '61), chair and chief executive officer of The Neiman Marcus Group, Inc., and Tracey Thomas Travis (ENG '83), senior vice president of finance and chief financial officer at Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation, as Distinguished Alumni Fellows for 2009.

The fellows will be honored at the University’s annual Honors Convocation at 3 p.m. Feb. 27 in Carnegie Music Hall, 4400 Forbes Ave., Oakland.

The keynote speaker at Honors Convocation will be Raymond W. Smith, a former University trustee who received his MBA from Pitt’s Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business in 1969. Smith, who in 2008 was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, became chair of Verizon Ventures in 1999. He also was a founding partner of Arlington Capital Partners and chair of Rothschild, North America, Inc., part of the oldest international investment banking firm in the world. Smith’s address is titled “Heisenberg’s Certainty Principle.”

The convocation recognizes outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional student academic achievement; student leadership accomplishments, including recipients of the 2009 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award, Chancellor’s Distinguished Research Award, and Chancellor’s Distinguished Public Service Award.

Brief biographies of the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Fellows follow.

Tansky, a member of Pitt’s Board of Trustees, joined Neiman Marcus in 1990 as chair and CEO of Bergdorf Goodman, serving in various senior executive positions before assuming his current position in 2000. After graduating from Pitt in 1961, he began his career as an assistant buyer at Kaufmann’s Department Store in Pittsburgh. Prior to his years at Neiman Marcus, Tansky worked for Fiden’s in Boston, Mass.; Rike’s in Dayton, Ohio; Forbes and Wallace in Springfield, Mass.; I. Magnin in San Francisco, Calif.; and Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City.

A trustee since 2003, Tansky initially served as an alumni trustee from June 2003 to June 2007. He and his sister, Eva Tansky Blum—senior vice president, director of community affairs, and chair of the PNC Foundation, the PNC Financial Services Group—are co-chairs of the University’s $2 billion Building Our Future Together capital campaign. Tansky also is a member of both the Board of Trustee’s Academic Affairs/Libraries Committee and the Institutional Advancement Committee.

In 2000, the University named Tansky a Pitt Legacy Laureate and, in 1996, he received the Pitt Alumni Association Award of Distinction. He is a lifetime member of the Pitt Alumni Association. In 2006, Tansky, Blum, and their sister, Shirley Gordon, supported and named the Tansky Family Lounge in the William Pitt Union in memory of their parents.

Among Tansky’s honors are a 2006 Superstar Award from Fashion Group International; a 2005 Museum of Arts and Design Visionaries! Award; a 2004 Gold Medal Award from the National Retail Federation, considered the highest honor in retailing; and, in 2002, an appointment as Chevalier de la Legion d’honneur by the French Government.

Travis joined Ralph Lauren in 2005 following a corporate career at General Motors Corporation, Pepsi-Cola/Pepsi Bottling Group, the Beverage Can Americas Group of American National Can, and Intimate Brands, Inc. She spent several years at Limited Brands, Inc., serving as chief financial officer from 2001 to 2002 and as senior vice president for finance from 2002 to 2004, prior to assuming her current position. At Ralph Lauren, Travis is responsible for corporate financial planning and analysis, treasury, investor relations, information technology, tax, and corporate compliance.

Travis serves on the boards of Jo-Ann Stores Inc., the Lincoln Center Theater, the Executive Leadership Council Foundation, and the Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention. She is treasurer of the Ralph Lauren Foundation and a member of Financial Executives International, the National Association of Corporate Directors, the New York Women’s Foundation, and the Executive Leadership Council.

In 2005, Treasury and Risk Management Magazine recognized Travis as one of the Top 25 Women in Finance; in 2006, Black Enterprise magazine named her one of the top 50 Women in Business; and in 2008, she received the Best CFO award from Institutional Investor. This year, Black Enterprise magazine named Travis one of the Top 100 African Americans in Corporate America. In addition to earning her Pitt engineering degree, she received an MBA degree in finance and operations management from Columbia University Graduate School of Business.

Pitt Researchers Create Atomic-size One-stop Shop For Nanoelectronics, From Processors to Sensors

By Morgan Kelly

University of Pittsburgh researchers have created a nanoscale one-stop shop, a single platform for creating electronics at a nearly single-atom scale that could yield advanced forms of such technologically important devices as high-density memory devices and most importantly—transistors and computer processors. This multitude of uses stems from a technique previously developed by the same team to fashion rewritable nanostuctures at the interface between two insulating materials. In the Feb. 20, 2009 edition of Science, the researchers demonstrate this process’ various applications.

“We’ve demonstrated that we can make important technologies that are significantly smaller than existing devices and all from the same material,” said Jeremy Levy, the Science paper’s senior author and a professor of Physics and astronomy in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences. “To sustain the development of smaller and faster computers, we will probably need to transition away from existing materials in the coming decade. The memory bits in magnetic hard drives are about as small as they can get; silicon transistors will get increasingly difficult to miniaturize. We have created advanced storage and processing capability using the same material, presenting a totally new flexibility in building electronics.”

Levy and his team reported in Nature Materials in March 2008 that their process of swapping insulators and conductors works like a microscopic Etch A Sketch®. The drawing toy that inspired Levy’s idea of using the sharp conducting probe of an atomic-force microscope, he created wires less than 4 nanometers wide at the interface of a crystal of strontium titanate and a 1.2-nanometer-thick layer of...
In certain respects, the early weeks of February were very good ones for our University. We have been comforted by the news that the economy appears to continue to build momentum on many important fronts. Let me offer a small number of telling examples.

- In terms of outstanding student achievement, senior Katherine MacCord had not previously been won by a Pitt student.
- Alumnus and trustee John Swan, already one of the country’s most highly honored engineers and also Pitt’s largest individual benefactor, added another very special form of recognition when he was elected to membership in the National Academy of Engineering.
- Just yesterday, Pitt professors Bronwyn Hatcher, from the Department of Mathematics, and Michael Grabe, from the Department of Biological Sciences, were publicly identified, in a full-page New York Times announcement, as recipients of 2009 Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowships. They are among the 118 “early-career scientists” selected for this honor because of their “outstanding promise and potential to contribute substantially to their fields.”

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- Internally, we have identified the members of the faculty and staff selected to receive our annual Chancellor’s Awards for excellence in teaching, research, and service. As always, they were selected from pools of very impressive nominees, and their records of impact and accomplishment are impressive.

- In the area of community outreach, we sponsored our annual K. Leroy Irvis Black History Month Program with Irvis Black: From Doorway to Distinction. By chronicling the 180-year experience of Black men and women at Pitt, this program confirmed that we continue to build momentum on many important fronts.

- Among the most troubling items of recent news was the report from the U.S. Department of Labor that nearly 600,000 American jobs had been lost in January (starkly described by the Times as “20,000 pink slips a day”) and that a total of 3.6 million jobs had been lost since December of 2007, which now is being labeled “the beginning of the recession.” The end of last week brought the sobering higher-ed news that Harvard, in the wake of its endowment losses, would offer buy-outs to 1,600 nonfaculty employees.

The most simple message from that latter development is that if Harvard has been affected in such a dramatic way by the continuing economic crisis, no other university can possibly be immune. Of course, we recognized that fact months ago and have been attentive to the stresses likely to have a negative impact on virtually all of our revenue streams.

- More recently, though, much of our attention has been devoted to just one of those revenue streams—governmental funding. At this point in past years, I might have referred, more restrictively, to state funding. In 2009, though, there is such a strong link between state and federal funding that they really do need to be considered together. And while many of you have been following the unfolding events on your own, let me provide a brief overview.

The State Appropriation. The University already has been subjected to two separate rounds of “appropriation reserves,” mechanisms designed to reduce state funding for the current fiscal year. These amounts are scheduled to be withheld from our June appropriation payment, unless the Commonwealth’s own financial condition markedly improves by then. Those two “reserves” total 6 percent of our appropriation, or nearly $11.4 million, and we have been adjusting our current budgets to deal with that loss.

In his budget proposal for the next fiscal year, the Governor has recommended that our appropriation be held at that reduced level. Dealing with those substantial cuts on a permanent basis will be difficult, and none of us welcomes that particular challenge. However, we also need to be realistic in recognizing that the Commonwealth itself is facing a very large deficit and needs to budget prudently. Therefore, the fact that the state-related universities would be expected to help close that gap is neither surprising nor unfair, and many of us most directly

Continued from page 6

Science and Technology

Philosophy of Science and Technology

The University of Pittsburgh will hold its Five-Campuses Faculty Forum on March 5 in the Cloisters Room, Alumni Hall. Representatives from the Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown, Titusville, and Oakland campuses will be available to discuss the college selection process, scholarships, financial aid, and Pitt staff and faculty tuition benefits.

The free event will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m. It is open to University faculty and staff and their families.

Pitt Plans Lectures on Industrial Design Patents Feb. 26

Intellectual property patents will be the focus of the University of Pittsburgh’s 2009 Distinguished Intellectual Property Law Lecture featuring Annette Kur, senior researcher at Germany’s Max Plank Institute for Intellectual Property, Competition, and Tax Law, at 4 p.m. Feb. 26 in Pitt’s Barco Law Building. Kur’s talk is titled “The European Community Design Right: A Unique Tool for Systemizing Protection of Industrial Design.”

- Annette Kur, at the forefront of international legal protection for industrial design for more than 25 years, spearheaded the Max Plank working group proposal that formed the basis of the European Union’s Community Design Right Legislation. She is president of the International Association for the Advancement of Teaching and Research in Intellectual Property, a professor at the University of Stockholm, and a visiting professor in the Hauser Global Law School Program in New York University’s School of Law.

Immediately following the lecture, a group of panlists will discuss the future of global industrial design protection. Panlists are Janice M. Mueller, a professor in Pitt’s School of Law and author of An Introduction to Patent Law (Open, 2003); Donald S. Chisum, an expert on patent law and intellectual property rights as well as coauthor of Understanding Intellectual Property (Irwin/McGraw Hill, 1992); and Daniel H. Bren, an intellectual property attorney with the Webb Law Firm in Pittsburgh.

The program is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Lila Turner Steffy at 412-648-1505 or steffy@pitt.edu.

- Anthony M. Moore

Novelist William Henry Lewis to Speak Feb. 26

Novelist William Henry Lewis will give an evening reading at the University of Pittsburgh at 8:30 p.m. Feb. 26 in SOTI. The event is part of the 2008-09 Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series.


All events in the Writers Series are free and open to the public.
A Woman of Purpose
Pitt law student Brittany Johnson uses her energy, resourcefulness to meet career goals

By Patricia Lomando White

It was a full academic scholarship from the University of Pittsburgh that drew Brittany Johnson to Pitt in 2002. At the time, she concedes, she was nervous about her choice, but Johnson has traveled quite a path since that day years ago when she moved into the Towers.

Johnson graduated in 2006 from Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences with a bachelor’s degree in communication and political science—and she now is working on a Juris Doctor degree in Pitt’s School of Law and a master’s degree in Pitt’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). A joint-degree student, she will graduate in May 2010. “I love Pitt,” says Johnson. “I’ve met some great people here.”

She filled her undergraduate years with solid academics, service and social activities, and a healthy dose of watching the Pitt men’s and women’s basketball teams. Her busy schedule has continued into her graduate-school years. Along with working part-time at the Veterans Administration hospital in Oakland, Johnson has landed a law-related internship each summer, and she continues to work diligently toward fulfilling her dream of launching a nonprofit organization that mentors young women.

Clearly, Johnson’s experiences at Pitt have helped her develop into a woman of purpose.

Johnson credits Barbara Mowery, her undergraduate advisor, with helping her adjust to life on campus initially. As a member of Mowery’s freshman orientation class, Johnson didn’t take long to become involved in campus life. She joined Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, was academic chair of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, and served as a resident assistant in the Towers.

Johnson always knew she wanted to go to law school. As an undergraduate, her preparation for her future was purposeful.

“I felt the communication degree would be an advantage because, as a lawyer, I would need to be able to express myself well, and the political science degree provides a good foundation for law,” Johnson says.

To enhance her academics, Johnson took classes in Africana Studies, as well as the History of Black Pittsburgh class taught by Pitt history professor Laurence Glasco.

“As a student, you don’t have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the city,” says Johnson.

Born in Reading, Pa., Johnson still maintains close ties with the city’s high school. Although she grew up in Southern Illinois, her family moved back to Reading when she was in the 11th grade. Johnson graduated as one of the top 10 students in her class of 568 students at Reading High School. She also played basketball for the school.

Johnson received $14,000 in scholarship funds from the high school, and she often visits the school when she returns to Reading. She has been the keynote alumni speaker at the high school’s Top Ten Dinner.

Her commitment to service is also evidenced by her part-time job as a sitter at the Oakland VA hospital, where her task can be as simple as keeping a lonely patient company.

“My grandfather and father served in the military; they (those who serve) made a way for me, for us,” she says. “I make sure to treat everyone with dignity.”

As for her decision to attend Pitt’s law school: “I took a good look at Pitt law and the quality of the education, and I was comfortable and confident that I would continue to get a good education at Pitt,” she says.

“I felt the communications degree would be an advantage because, as a lawyer, I would need to be able to express myself well, and the political science degree provides a good foundation for law.”

—Brittany Johnson

Midway through her first year of law school, Johnson decided that she wanted to do more with her education. Her law school class comprises 250 students, and she wanted to set herself apart from the others. She is now pursuing a master’s degree in nonprofit and public management in GSPIA, with a focus on the administration, finance, and governance aspects of health law.

“I’ve always been a student, and I know I have a strong educational background, but because I haven’t worked much, I wanted a better foundation for my long-term goals,” says Johnson, who received scholarships from both the law school and GSPIA.

Johnson’s résumé reflects her energy and hard work. She has served as a research assistant for Pitt law professor William Luneburg. She interned for Lisa P. Lenihan, Magistrate Judge with the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and with Mary Austin, cocounsel for UPMC. This summer, she will serve as an associate in the Pittsburgh office of Burns, White, and Hickton.

Johnson says she’s been lucky to have met and worked with some great women who have been willing to “show me the ropes.” She cited UPMC’s Mary Austin as one recent mentor, and says there have been many others.

“Growing up, I did have a lot of mentors,” says Johnson, who often visits schools to talk to young girls from underrepresented populations. Sometimes, her mere presence gives a message as important as any message she delivers. “When I go to a classroom, sometimes I don’t even have to say anything,” says Johnson. The unspoken message, she says, is, “Look at her! She’s in law school, and she looks like me. I can do it, too!”

Johnson says it’s important for women to serve as mentors. “It’s important to give back, and I make a commitment to do so,” she says. “You don’t get anywhere alone.”
The Knowledge Engine

Harrisburg should learn what Washington knows: Research universities generate jobs and economic growth

By Mark A. Nordenberg

Just last spring, residents of this region celebrated the fact that Pittsburgh had reclaimed its rightful ranking as America’s “most liveable” city. However, as the global economic crisis deepened and job losses began rising to frightening levels, pride in regional amenities gave way to understandable anxieties connected to the suddenly more perilous process of simply continuing to make a living.

In this highly challenged economy, some measure of comfort can be drawn from characterizations of Pittsburgh as a comparatively “recession-proof” city. Those assessments, though taking many forms, all have identified our region’s partnership strengths in education and health care as the key to economic stability and growth.

Pitt has helped advance this region for more than two centuries as an educational institution. More recently, it also has become one of the country’s leading research centers, with annual research expenditures now exceeding $640 million. These expenditures alone support more than 23,000 local jobs and represent a return of more than $3.60 for every dollar of Pitt’s state appropriation.

The beneficial impact of those funds, as they move through the economy, extends far beyond those actually employed in Pitt labs—from the non-university employees who build the research facilities, to the private companies that supply them, to the businesses that meet the needs of the people who work there.

In a Dec. 14 Post-Gazette column, Harold Miller, a highly regarded analyst of regional economic trends, confirmed that our local economy has been doing better than most. He asserted that a major reason for our relatively enviable position was the fact that fully “one-fifth of the jobs in the Pittsburgh region ... are in the two most recession-resistant sectors: health care and higher education.” This places Pittsburgh at a distinct advantage, he made clear, not only with respect to Cleveland but compared to almost every other major metropolitan region of the country.

Even more recently released statewide employment data support this assessment. According to a Jan. 22 report by the state Department of Labor & Industry, Pennsylvania lost more than 27,000 jobs in December. The single bright spots were the education and health services sectors, which added 1,500 jobs and set a record-high job count that month.

Mr. Miller also pushed beyond the present and raised a question critical to our community: How long will our region be able to maintain this comparative advantage? The answer is heavily dependent on the level of priority assigned to public investments in Pennsylvania’s public research universities, which now compete on an uneven playing field and face stiff challenges for research dollars from better-funded competitors.

Signs on the federal front are encouraging. Though bipartisanship began to fray within days of President Barack Obama’s inauguration, there seems to be a widely shared recognition in Congress that well-targeted investments will be required to return our struggling national economy to a position of strength. And the economic stimulus package moving forward in Washington is grounded in a clearly stated commitment by the Obama administration to “increase federal support for research, technology, and innovation for companies and universities so that American families can lead the world in creating new advanced jobs and products.”

As a general matter, state funding trends have not placed a similarly high priority on the unique educational and economic contributions flowing from Pennsylvania’s public research universities. Pitt’s state appropriation, which once represented nearly one-third of the University’s operating budget, has fallen to slightly more than 10 percent today, with many competitor universities still receiving two to three times that level of support from their home states.

In recent years, the decline has been even more dramatic. Since 2001, the overall state budget has increased by nearly 40 percent, and inflation has risen by almost 27 percent, but the state’s direct investment in Pitt has decreased by more than 5 percent, with the appropriation remaining essentially flat over that eight-year period if federal matching dollars are counted as a form of state support. The trend lines for Penn State and Temple are similar.

In the current economic environment, it seems unlikely that there will be room for any funding trends to improve dramatically, and every institution can fairly be asked to share in the sacrifices required to see the state and country through these troubled times. However, an important sense of context was provided more than two centuries ago by Benjamin Franklin, when he said, “An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

That timeless view is supported by current data and seems to be alive and well in Washington. Hopefully, Mr. Franklin’s words of wisdom also will echo through the halls of his own state Capitol in Harrisburg as this year’s state budget-building process moves forward.
Paying It Forward

Like many people trying to get their degrees, Al Silkroski (CGS ’90) worked to support his family and pay for school.

“I went to Pitt for two years, then left to work full-time,” says Silkroski. “I always wanted to go back, but there were so many responsibilities I had to consider.”

As Silkroski continued to work, he developed a solid relationship with his employer, Dick Swanson (KGSB ’35), chair of Swanson Group Ltd., a Carnegie-based supplier of limestone. “About a year after I began to work for him, he heard that I wanted to go back to school,” Silkroski recalls. In a show of support, Swanson lent Silkroski money toward tuition as an incentive for him to finish his degree in the evenings—and it worked.

Silkroski worked as a plant laborer at Swanson Group during the days and went to night school at Pitt for almost five years to finish his bachelor’s degree in business. He was also busy helping his wife raise two toddlers.

“Dick gave me the encouragement I needed so I wouldn’t keep making excuses about my degree,” says Silkroski.

Now the president and founder of Hilltop Enterprises, Inc., an environmental remediation firm in West Chester, Pa., Silkroski attributes a large part of his success to Swanson for helping to jump-start his career.

In appreciation, Silkroski recently created the Perry Richard Swanson Endowed Scholarship Fund in honor of his former employer. The scholarship will help nontraditional students enrolled in the College of General Studies.

“Giving back was important to me,” explains Silkroski. “I feel like I can repay Dick by finally ‘paying it forward’ to help other people who might be in a similar situation. I had hoped from the day he gave me that loan that I’d be able to help someone else. And I finally got the chance.”

Humbled by the honor of having a scholarship dedicated to him, Swanson remarks, “I’m just thrilled that Al has done something like this to help other people keep their dreams within reach.”

Dick Swanson (left) and Al Silkroski

Pitt Researchers Create Atomic-size One-stop Shop for Nanoelectronics

Continued from page 1

Lanthanum aluminate, both of which are insulators and conducting nanowires could then be erased with a reverse voltage or with light, rendering the interface an insulator once more.

The current publication in Science illustrates that the potential of this process extends beyond simple insulators and conductors—it can be tailored to specific uses, most notably field-effect transistors (FETs), the building blocks of computers and electronics. Levy and his colleagues fashioned a transistor they call a “SketchFET” with feature sizes of only two nanometers—considerably smaller than the most-advanced silicon transistor, which measures 45 nanometers. Given the SketchFET’s small size, many more transistors could be packed into a single device.

The SketchFET seems to have notable similarities to silicon transistors, said Alexander Bratkovsky, a senior scientist in the Information and Quantum Systems Lab at HP Labs who is familiar with Levy’s work. HP Labs is the central research facility for Hewlett-Packard.

“The channel current-voltage characteristics of the SketchFET look very close to a silicon transistor, and its characteristics look promising,” he said. “In terms of simplicity, it’s striking. Transistors are typically laid out in many layers. The whole idea that you can take a single buried oxide interface and form structures almost by writing it in a two-dimensional layout is very interesting. It’s an elegant piece of research with a lot of potential for electronics and sensors. It indicates that there could be other interesting developments and uses for oxide interfaces with an unexpectedly high mobility of carriers localized near the interface.”

The Pitt team has introduced a relatively practical method for working with nanotechnology and tailoring it to various applications, said Evelyn Hu, Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Physics and Electrical Engineering in Harvard University’s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

“They have created devices on demand by writing patterns with an atomic force microscope and, in doing so, they are opening up numerous new applications,” Hu said. “To take a blanket sheet and write in the electronic function is accomplishment enough, but to do that then erase it and create a completely different function is truly powerful. They have laid the groundwork for a new technology that can take on many forms. Their approach has particular benefits for nanoelectronics,” she continued.

“Working with nanoscale devices usually requires precise definition and placement of the component structures. Fine-tuning a device or structure is often tedious and expensive. This method, however, allows for ease and flexibility in forming and re-forming the device after the initial preparation. These devices, in their fabrication and generation of electric charge, illustrate a cognizance of the unique potential and challenges of the nanoscale.”

The idea for the Etch A Sketch® process originated from a visit Levy made to the University of Augsburg in Germany where the Science paper’s coauthors, Jochen Manhart and his student Stefan Thiel, showed Levy how the entire interface could be switched between a conducting and insulating state.

Levy thought of adapting the process to nanoscale dimensions, and his student and coauthor, Cheng Cen, brought the idea to fruition.

The full paper is available from Science at www.sciencexpress.org or by contacting the Science press package team at 202-326-6440 or scipak@aaas.org.
involved in the process are grateful to the Governor for his efforts to avoid evergreen cuts. However, the continuation of a pattern assigning deficit-reduction responsibilities in the form of disproportionate cuts across Pennsylvania’s public higher education institutions is problematic. As explained above, the state and the other state-related universities (Lincoln, Penn State, and Temple) were targeted for evergreen cuts and not asked by their assigned miydar “reserve” responsibilities. In contrast, the 14 universities of the State System of Higher Education were recommended to receive an appropriation equal to what had been authorized for the current fiscal year, without any such reductions. Community colleges fared even better, with a recommendation that they receive 2 percent more per student, levels of which had been approved for this fiscal year.

The Tuition Relief Act. This pattern of differentiation was continued in a new proposal labeled the “Pennsylvania Tuition Relief Act. The importance to Pitt of developing ways to provide tuition relief for our students already was clearly, publicly, and tangibly underscored when we made attracting additional scholarship support our highest budget campaign priority. For the state to step in and provide this new, more progressive form of student support would help us to offset comparatively low levels of funding for higher education in Pennsylvania than those of the major factor in escalating tuition rates. The proposed act would rely on the legalization of video poker and the taxation of its proceeds as a revenue base. That revenue would be used to provide up to $7,600 in relief for tuition, fees, room, and board for Pennsylva-nia students with incomes less than $100,000—a group that includes the families of large numbers of Pitt students. Governor Rendell was forceful in articulating the need for this plan, saying: “[The] truth is we can’t afford NOT to provide this relief. Through no fault of their own, many of our students who trusted that they could save for their children’s college education have seen those funds decimated and do not have the means to help a helping hand, we will reap the whirlwind of a future in which our citizens cannot compete for the high-tech and other quality jobs that demand a college education. We have to help them, and we do not feel we can afford to do otherwise.” The Governor’s address itself was only, in general terms, to pay- ment. However, the Governor added: “The ability to fund a public or community college education” and added that “in helping these students, we are investing in a brighter future for ourselves as well.” How- ever, the impact of the act, in its current form will be more flexible, and expanding eligibility.

• The act authorized $16 billion in fund- ing—such as the $10 billion for the National Institutes of Health, $3 billion for the Bonfils Science Foundation, and $2 bil- lion for the Department of Education. Rendell was forceful in saying: This act is designed to help states reverse cuts made in the last two years, including those supporting higher education. The act includes a number of provisions that are of mutual benefit. The Governor noted, this is just the kind of initiative, if properly framed, that could give both the Pennsyl- vania families that depend upon public higher education and the Commonwealth itself a badly needed and immedi- ately beneficial boost. As I stated during the Senate Council meeting on the day of his budget address, when many of the specifics were even less clear, work- ing with the Governor, and others involved in the process, to ensure that Pitt students and their families are among the beneficiaries of any such legislation must be a high priority.

The Federal Stimu- lus Act. Amidst much drama and uncertainty, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, fed- eral legislation designed to stimulate the econ- omy, was passed by the Congress last week and signed into law by President Obama yester- day. It should be noted that U.S. Senator Arlen Specter played a major role in securing the pas- sage of this act, which includes a number of provisions that are of great importance to higher education. Based on the summaries that currently are available, let me comment briefly on some of these that are of particular importance to Pitt and to families of Pitt students. The act includes several beneficial provisions relating to student aid, which will help current and new students quickly improve their educational status and families feel the impact of the recession. Additional funding for the Pell Grant pro- gram will permit an increase in the maximum award from its current level of $4,731, to $5,350 in 2009, and to $5,550 by 2010. Support for research federal work-study programs was also increased, and an expanded Ameri- can Opportunity Tax Credit will replace the current Hope Scholarship Tax Credit— increasing the amount of the available credit, and creating a true, more flexible, and expanding eligibility.

At the conclusion of his bicentennial history of our University, Robert Alberts concluded that “this is essentially a success story—a happy chronicle of a sound and worthwhile accomplishment.” In the 23 years since that volume’s publication, the successes of our University have continued to grow, which is a credit to you and others like you—people who have believed in our mission and who have worked both tirelessly and effectively to advance it.
Concerts


Exhibitions

Bienals, by reception, 3 p.m.

Miscellaneous


You Are Invited

Join our celebration as Pitt students, faculty, alumni and staff are recognized for their outstanding achievements and their contributions to the rich quality of life on campus and in the surrounding community.

23rd Annual Honors Convocation

3 p.m., Friday, February 27
Carnegie Music Hall, 4400 Forbes Avenue

Honor Convocation and a reception following the program are open to the public without charge.

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The University of Pittsburgh Honors College and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette will host a presentation titled “The Future of Journalism and Democracy” featuring a national panel of seasoned media professionals at 8 p.m. Feb. 24 in the auditorium of the Twentieth Century Club, 4201 Bigelow Blvd., Oakland.

Panelists are Chad Hermann, communications consultant, blogger for The Radical Middle; and editorial director of Carbolic Smoke Ball; Meg Martin, editor for The Roanoke Times roanoke.com; Jay Rosen, professor in the Department of Journalism at New York University (NYU); and Jon Wolman, editor and publisher of The Detroit News. Post-Gazette executive editor David Shribman will moderate.

Those interested in attending this free public event must RSVP by e-mail to uhevent@pitt.edu (preferred) or call 412-624-6880, providing name, phone number, and requested number of tickets, which will be available at the door.

Hermann, writer, editor, blogger, and consultant, spent 14 years teaching in higher education—the last 10 of those as a management communications faculty member in Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School of Business—before becoming a consultant. In 2006, BusinessWeek magazine named him one of the country’s top 25 undergraduate business professors. Hermann has coedited eight books, including Gun Monkeys (Dell, 2003); and has contributed poems and essays to such publications as Newsday and The Huffington Post. His blog The Radical Middle appears on the Post-Gazette’s Web site, postgazette.com.

Martin was a multimedia producer and served briefly as online communities editor before taking the lead at roa-noke.com. She spent two years at The Poynter Institute, first as a summer fellow in the institute’s writing program, then as a yearlong Naughton Fellow, and as an associate editor of Poynter Online. Martin has taught at The Poynter Institute and will soon begin work with the News Literacy Project, a partner with The Poynter Institute. A Pittsburgh native, Martin graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2005 with a BA degree in English and a focus on oral storytelling and family narrative.

Rosen has served on NYU’s journalism faculty since 1986 and was chair of the department from 1999 to 2005. He is author of PressThink (www.pressthink.org), a blog he introduced in September 2003 about journalism and its ordeals, which won the Reporters Without Borders 2005 Freedom Blog Award for outstanding defense of free expression. He also blogs at The Huffington Post and is a member of the Wikipedia Advisory Board. He is author of What Are Journalists For? (Yale University Press, 1999). He was director of the Project on Public Life and the Press from 1993 to 1997. As a press critic and reviewer, Rosen has published in The Nation and the Columbia Journalism Review as well as other publications. He received a PhD degree in media studies from NYU.

As The Detroit News’ editor and publisher, Wolman oversees the paper’s administrative and news operations and publishes The Detroit News’ Web site, detnews.com, launched in 1996. Wolman began his current position after three years as editorial page editor of The Denver Post. Prior to joining the Post, Wolman worked at the Associated Press for 31 years. Wolman served as a Pulitzer Prize juror, chairing the national reporting jury in 1999. A native of Madison, Wis., Wolman is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.

Shribman was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Journalism in 1995 for his coverage of Washington and the American political scene. Before coming to Pittsburgh, he was the Washington, D.C., bureau chief of the Boston Globe. He also worked in various positions for The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Star, and The Buffalo News. His column, “National Perspective,” is syndicated to more than 50 papers nationally, and he is a contributing editor for Fortune magazine.