Thomas P. Detre, Academic Leader at Pitt and Architect of UPMC, Dies at 86

“Tom Detre was the most accomplished academic leader I have known, and it was a great privilege to work with and learn from him. Dr. Detre’s leadership in bringing world-class medicine and pioneering research to Western Pennsylvania transformed the character and culture of this region.”

—Mark A. Nordenberg

Dr. Thomas P. Detre, 86, the academic leader whose ambition and determined efforts helped propel the University of Pittsburgh’s schools of the health sciences to international prominence and the architect behind the transformation of the University’s teaching hospitals into UPMC, an integrated global health enterprise, died at home Oct. 9 after a long illness. Since 2004, he had held the titles of Emeritus Distinguished Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences and Emeritus Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh.

During Dr. Detre’s tenure as the University of Pittsburgh’s senior vice chancellor for the health sciences, he established an innovative funding cycle of driving dollars from clinical practice into interdisciplinary research and then applying the results of those endeavors to clinical advances. This approach attracted more patients and led to those endeavors to clinical advances. This research and then applying the results of clinical practice into interdisciplinary innovative funding cycle of driving dollars to international prominence and the architect of the University of Pittsburgh’s senior vice chancellor for the Health Sciences and Emeritus Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh.

His impact—in advancing the reputation, quality of life, and economic strength of Pittsburgh, a city that he loved—was enormous. In addition to his legendary record of professional achievement and impact, Tom was beloved for his kindness, compassion, wit, and old-world charm. He will be sorely missed, here in Pittsburgh and around the world, by a multitude of admiring colleagues and devoted friends.

Dr. Detre began his illustrious career at the University of Pittsburgh in 1973, when he left a tenured position at Yale University to become director of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (WPIC) and chair of the Department of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine.

He often told the story of a Yale colleague who, when hearing of his departure, said, “Planes fly over Pittsburgh. They don’t land there.” Dr. Detre’s response was characteristically bold and droll: “They will land when we land,” he said.

Upon landing at WPIC, he immediately brought in several accomplished physician-scientists and other talented health professionals to start large-scale research programs, revamp psychiatric training, and reinvent community outreach.

While WPIC director, Dr. Detre negotiated with the University to take control of hospital clinical revenues, with the aim of reinvesting profits into faculty recruitment, patient care, and research. As a result of those strategies, the psychiatry department became one of the top three in NIH funding within a decade, and the number of its full-time faculty grew from 36 to almost 150 between 1974 and 1982.

Dr. Detre’s accomplishments in the Department of Psychiatry were apparent to University administrators, who asked him in 1982 to serve first as associate senior vice chancellor for the six health sciences schools and, two years later, as senior vice chancellor, a position he held until 1998. In the latter role, he was responsible for the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health.

“His philosophy of integrating research with the practice of medicine brought brilliant clinician-researchers to the University and altered its scientific landscape,” said Arthur S. Levine, who succeeded Dr. Detre as senior vice chancellor for the health sciences in 1998 and Public Health.

Continued on page 4

Walking 6 Miles a Week May Preserve Memory, Erickson-Led Study Says

By Sharon S. Blake

New research shows that walking at least six miles a week may protect brain size and, in turn, preserve memory, according to a University of Pittsburgh study published in the Oct. 13 online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

“Brain size shrinks in late adulthood, which can cause memory problems,” said study author Kirk Erickson, a Pitt professor of psychology.

The study shows in cognitively normal elderly persons that a relatively easy activity like walking may be a way of staving off cognitive impairment—the stage of memory loss that comes before dementia and Alzheimer’s disease—by increasing the volume of the brain’s gray matter, which is associated with fewer memory problems.

“If regular exercise in midlife could improve brain health and improve thinking and memory in later life, it would be one more reason to make regular exercise in people of all ages a public health imperative,” said Erickson.

“Our study results suggest that walking is good for the brain and reduces the risk for future memory decline,” said Cyrus Raji, an MD/PhD candidate in Pitt’s School of Medicine and coauthor of the study.

For the study, 299 dementia-free people recorded the number of blocks they walked in one week. Nine years later, scientists took brain scans of the participants to measure their brain sizes. After four more years, the participants were tested to determine whether if they had developed cognitive impairment or dementia.

The study found that people who walked at least 72 blocks per week, or roughly six to nine miles, had greater gray matter volume than those who walked less.

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Continued on page 4
Pitt’s Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Program Presents Lovers and Fighters Oct. 14-24

The University of Pittsburgh’s Shakespeare-in-the-Schools program will offer an anthology described as “a perfect introduction to the Bard,” Shakespeare’s Lovers and Fighters, which will run at 8 p.m. Oct. 14-24 in Pitt’s Henry Heyman Theatre in the Stephen Foster Memorial. Matinees are scheduled for 2 p.m. Oct. 16 and 24. There is no Monday performance.

Part of Pitt’s Department of Theatre Arts, the Shakespeare-in-the-Schools program connects students and teachers to the writings of Shakespeare and other classical authors through touring shows, field-trip matinees, K-12 artist residencies, teacher workshops, talk-back sessions, and study guides.

Shakespeare’s Lovers and Fighters was adapted by Pitt theater arts graduate student Chip Crane and directed by Pitt teaching artist Sam Turich. The 45-minute production features 10 of Shakespeare’s best-known romantic and sparring scenes, including excerpts from Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Each performance will be followed by a talk-back session with the actors. Tickets are $12 general admission and $8 for students and may be purchased by calling 412-624-PLAY (7529), visiting www.play.pitt.edu, or stopping by the Stephen Foster Box Office between noon and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, visit www.shakespeare.pitt.edu.

—By Sharon Blake

Pitt to Offer Entrepreneurship Course for Faculty, Grad Student Innovators

Pitt’s Office of the Provost and Office of Technology Management (OTM), in partnership with the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business’ Center for Executive Education, will host a seven-week course titled “Academic Entrepreneurship: The Business of Innovation Commercialization,” beginning Nov. 1.

The course takes inventors from idea conception through a process that includes lateral thinking techniques, intellectual property protection and licensing, early-stage market research, and the effective communication of ideas to potential licensees or investors.

“This course supports Pitt’s commitment to foster innovation development and commercialization and to create a more entrepreneur-ial environment at the University,” said Dan Bates, strategic relations manager of the OTM. “The course is designed to motivate faculty and graduate students to engage in innovation development and commercialization and to educate them about the tools and thought processes that strategically transform their ideas into innovations with greater market potential.

The course includes a one-day Innovation Workshop on Nov. 22, during which participants will have an opportunity to discuss their innovations and ideas and join the staff of OTM and the schools of the health sciences’ Office of Enterprise Development for a showcase luncheon.

The intensive course will be held Mondays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in 531 Alumni Hall. Class size is limited, and participants are encouraged to register by Oct. 22.


—By John Fedele

Head of U. of Minnesota’s Institute on Race And Poverty to Speak Nov. 4

The Innovation Clinic at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) will present a lecture by Myron Orfield, executive director of the Institute on Race and Poverty and professor of law at the University of Minnesota. The lecture titled “Metro Patterns and Regional Engagement,” part of the Changing Nature of Civic Engagement in America lecture series, will take place at 9 a.m. Nov. 4 in Ballroom A of the University Club.

An expert in the fields of civil rights, state and local government, state and local finance, and the legislative process, Orfield is a nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., and an affiliate faculty member of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Cosponsored by The Congress of Neighboring Communities and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, among others, Changing Nature of Civic Engagement in America is the Innovation Clinic’s newest lecture series, designed to further students’ interest in local and national public policy issues.

The event is free and open to the public, though RSVP is required by Oct. 25. A continental breakfast will be available 30 minutes prior to the lecture. For more information or to RSVP, call 412-648-2282 or e-mail gspiaic@pitt.edu.

—By Sierra L. Starks

Pitt, Drexel Partner on $3.2 Million Project to Train Public Health Professionals

To ensure public health professionals are well trained to meet the nation’s diverse health needs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded $3.2 million to the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) to create the Pennsylvania Public Health Training Center (PAPHTC).

The five-year grant funds a partnership between GSPH, Drexel University School of Public Health in Philadelphia, and the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford that will provide training to help counteract the impact of a shrinking public health workforce. In Pennsylvania, only six counties and four cities have full-service public health departments.

“With diminishing resources, staff, and state funding for public health, workers have been required to do much more with less,” said Maggie Potter, principal investigator of the grant, director of the GSPH Center for Public Health Practice, and GSPH’s associate dean for public health practice.

“These increasing demands make training and support more important than ever by enabling public health workers to provide essential health services in the communities they serve. We are fortunate and grateful to have the support of the Health Resources and Services Administration.”

PAPHTC staff will develop partnerships with community-based organizations and health departments to provide training in management, health communications, program development and evaluation, and public health law and policy. PAPHTC also will provide organizational development services such as strategic planning and quality improvement.

“At a time of ever-increasing health care cost, prevalence with the actors. Time-frame modifyable diseases, emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention through a trained public health work force is a step in the right direction to improve health outcomes in our state and country,” said Younasul J. Saeed, PAPHTC project manager and director, Center for Rural Health Practice, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

The PAPHTC center is one of 27 accredited Public Health Training Centers being funded by HHS over the next five years. The PAPHTC project director is Linda S. Duchak, associate director, GSPH Center for Public Health Practice.

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A Love of Family, Medicine, Sports—and Pitt

By Lynn Shee

As a student at the University of Pittsburgh in the 1940s, Alexander Minno (A&S ’43, MED ’47) made an annual visit to the Office of the Chancellor. Minno’s purpose: to show then-Chancellor John Bowman that he’d earned high enough grades to deserve the University’s continued financial support.

Clearly, Minno made the grade. Born into a Slovakian immigrant family with a steelworker father, Minno went on to pursue a long and successful career practicing internal medicine and rheumatology and teaching as a Pitt clinical professor. He and his wife, Frances, remained steadfast in their support of the University, providing numerous student scholarships both before and following Alex Minno’s death in 2009.

“Pitt was very good to Alex,” said Frances Minno. “He always felt very close to Pitt, and I, of course, felt very close to him.”

The couple supported scholarships for students in medicine and nursing. And, since 2009, Frances Minno has endowed yet another scholarship: The Dr. Alexander and Frances Minno Athletic Scholarship, which supports student athletes majoring in the health sciences. The scholarship honors both her husband’s profession as well as one of his favorite pastimes, Pitt athletics. Over the course of three decades, the Minnos attended many Panthers basketball games and nearly every home football game.

The Minnos also endowed a scholarship for students in the School of Nursing. The Frank and Anna Minno Scholarship Fund is named for Alex Minno’s parents and honors the memory of his sister, Lt. Col. Julia Minno (NURS ’49, ’53), who joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in 1954. She served for 17 years in the United States and abroad and ran a general clinic in Ethiopia, where she helped introduce preventive medicine, gave immunizations, and provided health care education.

Frances Minno continues to attend the School of Nursing’s annual Convocation and enjoys meeting the students who are recipients of her family’s generosity. The school shares a similar desire to stay connected with its supporters. In 2004, it recognized Alex Minno with an Honorary Alumni Award for his advocacy on behalf of the School of Nursing.

This year, third-year medical student Christopher Donatelli received the Class of 1947 Legacy Scholarship. The oldest of four children, all of whom are attending college, Donatelli said he is extremely grateful.

Alex Minno’s support of his own school is also well documented. In 1995, he helped establish the Class of 1947 Legacy Scholarship with a generous gift to the School of Medicine; he also solicited contributions from other class members.

The endowment was presented to the School of Medicine at the Class of 1947’s 50th reunion. The scholarship provides annual awards to students whose parents, grandparents, or other relatives attended Pitt medical school. This year, third-year medical student Christopher Donatelli received the Class of 1947 Legacy Scholarship. The oldest of four children, all of whom are attending college, Donatelli said he is extremely grateful.

“The money helps ease the burden of paying for my medical education—something I have dreamed about since a young age,” said Donatelli.

Pitt Sets Schedule for 40th Annual Jazz Seminar and Concert Nov. 4-6

By Sharon S. Blake

One of the region’s premiere jazz events celebrates 40 years this November, as the University of Pittsburgh hosts its annual 2010 Pitt Jazz Seminar and Concert Nov. 4-6.

Founded in 1971 by Pitt Jazz Studies Program director Nathan Davis as the first academic jazz seminar of its kind in the country, the event features international artists connecting with aspiring students in a lecture format, then performing together as an ensemble. Over four decades, the Pitt Jazz Seminar and Concert has played host to some of the greatest names in American jazz history, including saxophonists Grover Washington Jr. and Sonny Stitt, drummer and band leader Art Blakey, trumpet master Dizzy Gillespie, and pianist Billy Taylor, among many others.

In keeping with tradition, a stellar group of international jazz musicians will hold free on-campus lecture/demonstrations, visit area schools and community venues, and convene for the annual concert at 8 p.m. Nov. 6 in Carnegie Music Hall, 4400 Forbes Ave., Oakland.

Musicians taking part this year include Randy Brecker, trumpet; Bobby Broom, guitar; George Cables, piano; Leon Lee Dorsey; Pitt assistant professor of jazz studies and coordinator of Pitt’s Jazz Studies Program, bass; Jon Faddis, trumpet; Winard Harper, drums; Javen Jackson, tenor saxophone; Peter King, alto saxophone; and Dave Pike, vibraphone.

Details on the Pitt Jazz Week events follow.

Concert

The Nov. 6 concert is a one-of-a-kind performance, given the diverse playing styles and the show’s impromptu nature. Tickets are $18; students with a valid ID pay $8. Tickets are available by contacting ProArtsTickets at 412-394-3353 or www.proartstickets.org—or by visiting Pitt’s William Pitt Union (WPU) box office. Student tickets can only be purchased at WPU.

The Honorable William R. Robinson, District 10 representative to the Allegheny County Council and former Pennsylvania state representative, will serve as the evening’s master of ceremonies. At intermission, one of the guest artists will be presented with the University of Pittsburgh Jazz Seminar Committee Award, and two other musicians (one living and one deceased) will be inducted into the University of Pittsburgh International Academy of Jazz Hall of Fame.

Brown-Bag Lunches

(Open and free to the public)

As a preview to Jazz Week and to set the mood on campus, free brown-bag lunch performances by members of the Pitt Jazz Ensemble have been taking place through-
Thomas P. Detre, Academic Leader at Pitt, Dies at 86

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum presented the New York State premiere screening of the 2010 documentary “The Shot Felt ‘Round the World,” which had received its world-premiere screening April 14 at an Oakland event cohosted by Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg and Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs Robert Hill. Produced by Pitt senior lecturer in film studies Carl Kurlander, the documentary tells the story of the Pitt research team—including senior scientist Julius Youngner, now Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus in the Pitt School of Medicine—and the Pittsburgh community’s roles in the creation of the Salk polio vaccine, as well as FDR’s creation of the public fundraising mechanisms that provided the support for the Pitt team’s research.

The Sept. 23 screening in Hyde Park, N.Y., took place in Milstein Auditorium of the Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and was introduced by Kurlander (pictured, from left), film history faculty member Susan Edwards Harvith of the Oasis national senior education program in Syracuse, N.Y., and Pitt senior associate vice chancellor for University News and Magazines John Harvith. Harvith served as historical consultant for the documentary and was editor in chief of The Defeat of an Enemy, Pitt’s award-winning 2005 monograph celebrating the 50th anniversary of the polio vaccine being declared “safe, effective, and potent.” Edwards Harvith was research consultant for The Defeat of an Enemy.

The documentary was produced by, in addition to Kurlander, Laura Davis with Steeltown Entertainment Project and WQED Multimedia Pittsburgh in association with the University of Pittsburgh and 1905 Productions. It was directed, written, and edited by Tjardus Greidanus; Stephanie Dangel Edwards Harvith was research consultant for The Defeat of an Enemy.

Walking 6 Miles a Week May Preserve Memory, Erickson-Led Study Says

The American Academy of Neurology, an association of more than 22,000 neurologists and neuroscience professionals, is dedicated to promoting the highest-quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating, and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system, including epilepsy, dystonia, migraine, Huntington’s disease, and dementia.

“His philosophy of integrating research with the practice of medicine brought brilliant clinician-researchers to the University and altered its scientific landscape. He brought WPIC into the modern era of biological psychiatry and went on to foster science-based approaches throughout the health sciences schools, encouraging interdisciplinary efforts and high standards of scholarship that became and continue to be the foundation of our exceptional growth and achievement.”
—Arthur S. Levine
Deborah Walker (standing), student conduct officer and assistant to the dean in Pitt’s Office of Student Affairs, was selected to be a presenter at the Oxford Round Table in Oxford, England, for five days in July. Walker’s presentation, “Responding to Crime at an Urban-Based Research University,” was followed by a roundtable discussion. The conference, which drew about 40 participants from around the world, was hosted by the Oxford Round Table, Ltd., a not-for-profit educational and charitable organization whose mission is to promote education, art, science, religion, and charity through academic conferences and the publication of scholarly papers.

Nicole Constable (middle) was the keynote speaker during a Sept. 29 reception held in Posvar Hall by the Pitt Office of the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Women’s Concerns and Pitt’s Women Studies Program. Her talk was titled “Telling Tales of Migrant Workers: Religion, Activism, and Women’s Life Scripts.” The reception welcomed new women faculty. From left, Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia A. Beeson; Alberta Sbragia, vice provost for graduate studies; Constable, a professor of anthropology and associate dean for graduate studies and research in the School of Arts and Sciences; Jean Ferguson Carr, a professor of English and director of the Women’s Studies Program; and Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg.

Senior Pitt officials met with the directors of four German academic-research exchange programs on Sept. 27 in Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg’s office. The exchange programs’ representatives explained their programs designed for students, postdocs, and faculty members to conduct research or study in Germany or with German researchers. From left, George Klinzing, Pitt vice provost for research; Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia A. Beeson; Sebastian Fohrbeck, director of the German Academic Exchange Service in New York; Cathleen Fisher, president of the American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; Max Voegler, director of the German Research Foundation’s North American office; Susann Hübner, director of the German Centre for Research and Innovation; Chancellor Nordenberg; and Provost Emeritus James V.加拿, Pitt professor of physics and astronomy and senior science advisor.
Awards & More

G. Kelley Fitzgerald, a professor of physical therapy in Pitt’s School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, was awarded a $1.41 million, four-year grant from the federal Agency for Health Research and Quality. Fitzgerald will serve as the principal investigator on the multicenter trial that will examine the clinical and cost-effectiveness of using booster sessions in the delivery of exercise therapy and supplementing exercise therapy with manual therapy techniques in people with knee osteoarthritis.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded a four-year $1.18 million grant to the Pitt School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences’ Department of Communication Science and Disorders. The grant will fund outstanding students recruited into the department’s programs and will focus their training on the clinical service of local high-risk children living in poverty.

James G. Greeno, a visiting professor in Pitt’s School of Education and the Margaret Jacks Professor of Education Emeritus at Stanford University, and Gaea Leinhardt, emeritus professor in Pitt’s School of Education and scientist emeritus in Pitt’s Learning Research and Development Center—members of a team of researchers along with Carnegie Mellon University faculty—recently received Science magazine’s Science Prize for Online Resources in Education (SPORE) for their ChemCollective Web site. The prize acknowledges superior projects from around the world that offer freely available online improvements of science education. The ChemCollective Web site (www.chemcollective.org) was developed to provide chemistry instructors and students an alternative to textbook learning through the use of virtual labs and scenario-based learning activities. In addition, Greeno and Leinhardt served as coauthors of an essay on the ChemCollective program that was published in the April 30 issue of Science magazine.

Robert Weyant, an associate dean of Public Health and Outreach and professor and chair of the Department of Dental Public Health Information Management in Pitt’s School of Dental Medicine, was appointed to an Institute of Medicine committee charged with reviewing the current oral health care system for the U.S. population. The committee, called An Oral Health Initiative, will review and make recommendations on ways to improve access to dental care.

The National Science Foundation awarded $877,074 to Tia-Lynn Ashman, a professor of plant evolutionary ecology in Pitt’s Department of Biological Sciences. The money will fund Ashman’s project “Collaborative Research: Initiation of a Sex-Determining Chromosome—Insights From Sexually Dimorphic Strawberries.”

Margo B. Holm, a professor and director of postprofessional education in the Pitt School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences’ Department of Occupational Therapy, was awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant. Holm is conducting research and lecturing at the University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan, this fall. Specifically, she is helping to develop a rehabilitation science educational and research program.

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Pitt Sets Schedule for 40th Annual Jazz Seminar and Concert Nov. 4-6

Noon-1

Outreach Appearances in Schools and in the Community
(Media coverage is welcome; only Hill House event open to general public)
Friday, Nov. 5
1 p.m.
Falk Laboratory School, Aliquippa and Brackenridge streets, Oakland.
Guest musician: Dave Pike, vibraphone.
1 p.m.
Pittsburgh CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts) 6-12, 111 Ninth St., Downtown.
Guest musician: George Cables, piano.

Saturday, Nov. 3
11 a.m.
Ronald McDonald House, 451 44th St., Lawrenceville.
Guest musician: Bobby Broom, guitar.

Saturday, Nov. 3
11 a.m.
Hill House Senior Service Center, 2038 Bedford Ave., Hill District, open to the public; light refreshments.
Guest musician: Winard Harper, drums.

Jazz Memorabilia Exhibition
Jazz memorabilia—including photos, music, posters, and a xylophone that once belonged to Lionel Hampton—will be on display during Jazz Week in the Conney M. Kimbo Gallery on the main floor of WPU. The artifacts represent artists who have made major contributions to jazz.

For more information about the seminar and concert, call 412-624-4187.
Concerts


“Two Senses of Activity and Grav ity in Newton’s Treatise,” Hylistic Kochiras, postdoctoral fellow, Pitt Center for Philosophy of Science, 12:05 p.m. Oct. 19, 817B Cathedral of Learning, Lunchtime Talks Series, Pitt Center for Philosophy of Science, 412-624-1052, philsci@pitt.edu.

“Cause Language and the Structure of Force in Newton’s Treat is e,” Hylistic Kochiras, Pitt Center for Philosophy of Science postdoctoral fellow from University at Buffalo, SUNY. 12:05 p.m. Oct. 19, 817B Cathedral of Learning, Center for Philosophy of Science, 412-624-1052, www.pitt.edu/~philsci.

“Using Baker’s Yeast to Under stand Human Disease: What Happened to Poor Sam the Bird?” Jodyl B. Brooks, Aviul Professor of Biological Sciences, Pitt School of Arts and Sciences, 4:30 p.m. Oct. 19, 2500 Posvar Hall, First Year Inaugural Lecture, 412-624-5750.


Happenings


Exhibitions


Lectures/Seminars/ Readings


Opera/Theater/ Dance


Miscellaneous

A Woman Like That, film screening, Frieda Fino Arts Auditorium, October 21

A Woman Like That, film screening, Frieda Fino Arts Auditorium, October 21

Recent Works on Paper by Thomas M. Weprich, Artist Image Resources, Upper Front Gallery, October 22-31


2010 Events Calendar

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The Pitt News to Celebrate 100 Years of Publication During Pitt’s Homecoming Festivities Oct. 29-31

Although the news operations have changed tremendously—from the use of Underwood typewriters and hand-set typography to stories filed with handheld PDAs and Web publishing—there is one constant: “Journalism is still journalism,” says Harry Kloman, news adviser for The Pitt News and an adjunct professor in Pitt’s Department of English. “It’s still about finding the right people and asking the right questions.”

“It’s ironic how technology has benefited journalism as a whole but is hurting newspapers,” says Chris Kuzneski (A&S ’91, ENGR ’93), international-bestselling author of Sign of the Cross (Penguin, 2006) and Sword of God (Penguin, 2007), who wrote for The Pitt News during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Internet was in its infancy and Google wasn’t available as a research tool. Although the tools of journalism have changed, said Kuzneski, the talent, curiosity, and ability of student journalists remain a constant.

Ron Barber (A&S ’83), who served as Pitt News opinions editor in the early 1980s, said that student journalism is important because it continues to hold student government and school administration accountable for their decisions. “Many of the stories in these areas wouldn’t be covered by media outside the University,” says Barber, who today represents newspapers as an attorney at one of the oldest law firms in Pittsburgh, Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky.

According to Kloman, the continued vitality of student journalism at Pitt a century after the founding of The Pitt News reflects the obligation that journalists have to their readers: “Many papers are facing problems staying in business. The fact that we’re still thriving speaks to a need for newspapers, whether it’s print or online.”

For more information and a complete schedule of events, visit www.pittnews.com/centennial-celebration/ or contact the Pitt News office at 412-648-7980.