NO. 19 | SUMMER 2007

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

the challenge

Magazine of The Center for Gifted Studies

Gifts to the World

In celebration of Western's centennial, the university selected 100 Gifts WKU Gave the World. In this impressive listing of astronauts, Pulitzer Prize winners, and Poet Laureates, we found ourselves in there three times. The Center for Gifted Studies, the Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky, and Dr. Julia Roberts were all recognized for achievements.

New Position at The Center

We are excited to announce a search for a new position at The Center, Program Coordinator. In addition to managing student programming, this professional will also be responsible for providing professional development and writing grants. The details are on our website. Please spread the word to help us find the best possible candidate!

The Center Launches Newly Renovated Website!

Go to **www.wku.edu/gifted** for a whole new approach to The Center for Gifted Studies. The new format and information should enhance your experience of learning about The Center and what we have to offer.

Letter from Julia

Money talks! The amount allocated for gifted education often tells the tale of how important services for gifted children are deemed to be in a school, school district, or state. Do you know the budgeted amount for gifted education in your state?

The Mississippi legislature recently included $45 million for gifted education in the state budget for the coming year. They set the bar high to ensure that teachers in classrooms across the state are prepared to offer intellectual challenge.

The White Paper on Gifted Education calls for increasing the funding to $25 million for gifted education in Kentucky. The budgeted amount of $7.1 million has been flat since the late 1980s in spite of the fact that teacher salaries have doubled since then. Numerous organizations have endorsed the White Paper. (You can read the White Paper and see the list of endorsing organizations at www.wku.edu/kage.)

Speak out on behalf of gifted children! Your advocacy is needed in your community and state. Decision-makers need to know how important it is to provide intellectually challenging opportunities to all children, and all children includes those who are gifted and talented. In today's classrooms and schools, gifted children may be overlooked in the rush to meet standards of proficiency. Make certain that decision-makers know that proficiency is not enough! As one legislator told me recently, "I don't know there is an issue until people talk with me about the problem."

Let the message be clear in your state and in the country. Meeting the needs of gifted children may seem to be a choice but not a viable one if we want gifted children to develop their potentials or our states to experience economic development at levels needed to be globally competitive in the Twenty-first Century.

A major principle in advocacy is to "know them before you need them." Make certain that you are developing relationships with decision-makers at the school, district, state, and national levels. Only when relationships develop can we communicate the importance of budgetary support for gifted education. Remember – money talks! The allocation of funding for gifted education communicates how important or unimportant folks think that it is to provide services to ensure that children who are gifted and talented have ongoing opportunities to learn at challenging levels. I hope gifted education is so important to you that you will speak out with decision-makers – those who are running for office as well as those who are already in positions to set policy and budgets for gifted education.

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts

Julia Link Roberts
Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies

From the President of WKU

In 2005, the Kentucky Legislature created the Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky and chose to locate it at Western Kentucky University. With that action, Kentucky becomes the 14th state in the nation to offer such a program for its gifted students.

The establishment of the Academy at WKU is significant for several reasons. The first is it is an endorsement of the highly credentialed WKU faculty and the rigor of WKU's strong academic programs. The Academy will be home to 120 of Kentucky's most gifted and talented high school juniors and seniors who will be taking courses offered by WKU. By combining the high school junior and senior years with the university freshmen and sophomore years, students in the Academy will receive at once the challenge of the rigorous university curriculum while completing requirements of a high school diploma. Academy students will be WKU undergraduates for at least two years.

WKU is unique in Kentucky in other ways when it comes to education for gifted and talented young people. It has a 25-year history in providing leadership in gifted education through The Center for Gifted Studies. Summer programming for middle and high school gifted students has been offered each year since 1982. Through the summer SCATS and VAMPY programs and through the Duke Talented Identification Program, WKU is able to identify early in a student's academic life strong candidates who might one day enroll in the Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky.

To top it off, many of these gifted students will find a natural transition into WKU's exciting Honors Program. WKU is creating Kentucky's first true Honors College with a world-class curriculum, study-abroad components, and an intimate learning environment leading to joint degrees with WKU's other undergraduate colleges.

All three dimensions (The Center for Gifted Studies, Academy of Math and Science, and Honors College) uniquely set WKU apart as the emerging intellectual heartbeat of Kentucky. Come and share the intellectual energy of WKU!

Gary A. Ransdell
President, WKU

Photos by Mollie Hanrahan

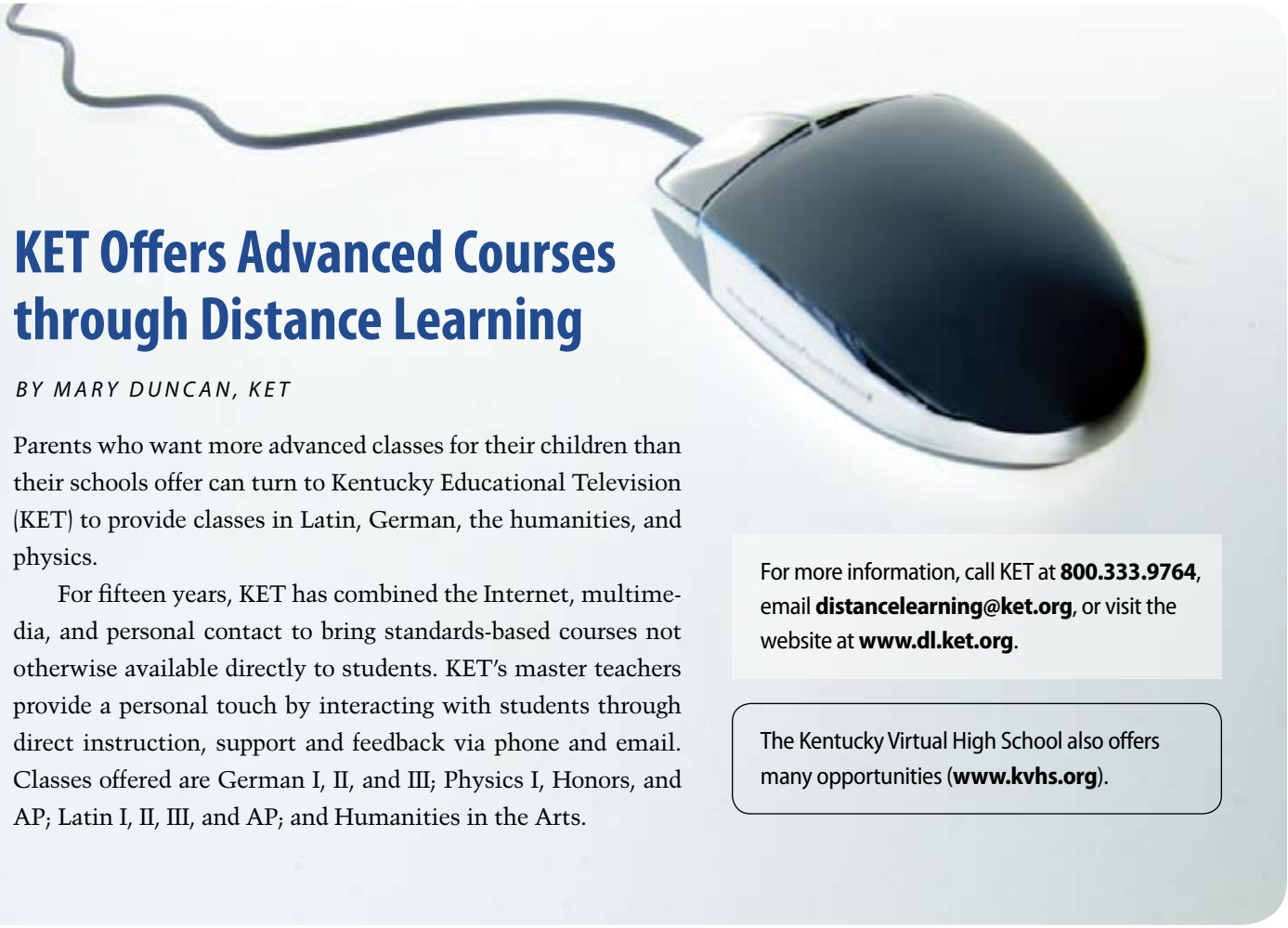
Kentucky Seventh Graders Honored

The Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) Recognition Ceremonies honor top-scoring students from the program's annual Seventh Grade Talent Search, in which academically talented students take the above-level college-entrance exams (SAT or ACT) as a way to learn more about their abilities. For Kentucky, that means that hundreds of young people traveled to Western Kentucky University on May 25 to be recognized for their outstanding achievement.

The Center for Gifted Studies and Western Kentucky University have sponsored this ceremony since 1983. Secretary of State Trey Grayson keynoted this year's event and assisted in distributing the medallions to these outstanding young people.

Of the 67,757 participants in the nation, 21,301 students (31%) have been invited to attend State Recognition Ceremonies and 1,411 students (2%) have been invited to the Grand Recognition Ceremony. Out of 3,472 Kentuckians who participated in the Talent Search, 1,267 qualified for state recognition. The Grand Recognition Ceremony honors seventh graders who have earned scores better than 85% of college-bound seniors who took the same tests. Sixty-seven students from Kentucky qualified for Grand Recognition.

Duke TIP's Talent Search identifies seventh-graders in sixteen states in the Southeast, Midwest, and Southwest who have scored in the top five percent on a grade-level achievement test. In addition to the off-level testing experience, Talent Search participants receive educational materials and resources through 10th grade to help them develop to their full potential – such as information on the Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth (VAMPY). VAMPY was the very first cooperative program with Duke TIP in 1984. The Center welcomes those 7th graders honored to be part of the VAMPY experience.



KET Offers Advanced Courses through Distance Learning

BY MARY DUNCAN, KET

Parents who want more advanced classes for their children than their schools offer can turn to Kentucky Educational Television (KET) to provide classes in Latin, German, the humanities, and physics.

For fifteen years, KET has combined the Internet, multimedia, and personal contact to bring standards-based courses not otherwise available directly to students. KET's master teachers provide a personal touch by interacting with students through direct instruction, support and feedback via phone and email. Classes offered are German I, II, and III; Physics I, Honors, and AP; Latin I, II, III, and AP; and Humanities in the Arts.

For more information, call KET at **800.333.9764**, email **distancelearning@ket.org**, or visit the website at **www.dl.ket.org**.

The Kentucky Virtual High School also offers many opportunities (**www.kvhs.org**).

Competitions Showcase Research

BY JULIA ROBERTS

Opportunities to engage in research allow a passion for learning to focus on a specific question and to develop advanced skills essential for the research. Competitions provide the venue for showcasing research. The Siemens Math, Science, and Technology competition is the premier research competition, and the team who won the competition this year has a tie to The Center for Gifted Studies. Their teacher, Benita Albert, has been a consultant for calculus in the Advanced Placement Institute since it began in 1984.

Benita described one opportunity for students to engage in research at her high school, an opportunity that has been offered for 24 years: "The Oak Ridge High School Thesis course permits our students to reach for the stars or perhaps more precisely to reach for solutions to pressing world problems. Students are paired with scientific mentors at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory where they may choose from a rich variety of cutting edge scientific investigations."

Three of the students chose "Linking Supercomputing and Systems Biology for Efficient Bioethanol Production." In December, 2006, this team was named the first place winner in the Siemens Math, Science and Technology competition. Scott Molony, one of the three students, said, "Scientific research has been incredibly empowering. It takes the mystique out of science, and makes it seem accessible – something that anyone can do." His fellow team member Steve Arcangeli remarked, "The opportunity to do research while in high school is too great to pass up." Scott Horton was the third member of the winning team.

Benita reports that their mentor at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Math and Computer Science Division, Dr. Samatova, claims that "young eager high school researchers bring a freshness and a risk-taking approach to a problem, sometimes unthought of or unspoken in the professional deliberations of scientists." In fact, Dr. Samatova stated, "The students' work was an important contribution to her group being awarded a new $800,000 grant for continued research in bioethanol studies."

Young people at the Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky will have opportunities to engage in research in laboratories across the campus of Western Kentucky University during the academy year and in other settings closer to home in the summers.

The Center for Gifted Studies is proud to have a long friendship with Benita Albert, an outstanding teacher and College Board consultant!

Wanted: Pictures of the Early Years

This summer marks the 25th one that middle schoolers have been coming to Western for academic opportunities! In the next edition of *The Challenge*, we want to remember those twenty-five years of SCATS (you may have called it Academic Camp or Summer Camp for Academically Talented Junior High Students.) Whatever you called the experience, it was two weeks long, at WKU, and mainly for residential campers with some nonresidential campers. If you have any photos you'd be willing to share, please send them to The Center for the Gifted Studies, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd. #71031, Bowling Green, KY, 42101. Please include your name and address on the back so that we can return them. Thanks for sharing!

ALUMNI UPDATE

GAVI BEGTRUP (VAMPY 1996 and 1997; Travel to London and Paris) will be married to fellow WKU alumna Amber Hogart this October. He is a Ph.D. candidate in physics, specializing in condensed matter/nanotechnology at University of California, Berkeley. Gavi serves as president of the Graduate Student Forum of the American Physical Society and vice president of the UC Graduate Student Assembly. His research and his advocacy have him traveling widely to Japan and Austria, plus frequent trips to DC and to the California state capital in Sacramento.

REBECCA BEGTRUP (VAMPY 1996 and 1997; Travel to London) graduated in May from Nova Southeastern University School of Osteopathic Medicine with both her D.O. and M.P.H. degrees. She will return to Tulane (where she received a B.A., cum laude, in Theater while doing her pre-med) to begin a five-year, triple board residency which will lead to certification in Psychiatry, Child Psychiatry, and Pediatrics. Rebecca remains committed to working with underserved populations and will be in the midst of the recovery effort from the devastation of hurricane Katrina.

JAY CROSBY (SCATS 1986) works for Luminetx Corporation, a company that specializes in science technologies. He was instrumental in the development of the VeinViewer, a medical breakthrough that uses a combination of near-infrared light and patented technologies to image vascular structures. The VeinViewer allows medical professionals to locate the vein before any procedure is done (www.veinviewer.com). Jay lives with his wife, Amy Cook Crosby, and their two children in Alabama.

DOUG EATON (VAMPY 1987 and 1988) graduated from Georgetown University in 1994 and earned a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1997. He is an attorney with the firm of Homer Bonner in Miami. He lives on Miami Beach with his wife, Molly, and their son who was born in January of this year.

NATALIE FAY (VAMPY 1990) attended the University of Texas at Austin and graduated in 1999 with degrees in English and Psychology. From there she graduated from Harvard Law School in 2002. She currently is an associate in the tax-exempt organization group at Caplin & Drysdale, Chartered, in Washington, D.C. She also has an LLM in Taxation from Georgetown University Law Center. She's married to Jeff Green, a defense-industry consultant and the president of J.A. Green & Co., LLC.

STEVEN GUMP (Travel to Europe) is in the dissertation phase of a Ph.D. in Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He spent this past summer studying in Spain. Before pursuing his doctorate, he taught for two years in Japan and then completed an M.B.A. in Wales on a Rotary Scholarship.

WILL GUMP (VAMPY 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988; Travel to Europe) is in Durham, NC, in the neurosurgery residency program at Duke Medical Center. Will studied at Tulane University Medical School until Katrina hit. He then moved to Durham. He should complete the residency in summer of 2009.

COLIN HILDINGER (VAMPY 1987) took the CompSci VAMPY class where he explored Intro to Pascal using Borland TurboPascal. He went on to study Aerospace Engineering at Oklahoma State rather than Comp Sci, and is currently the Marketing Manager for an aerospace manufacturing company in Oklahoma. His wife, Courtney, went to Baylor; their child is expected in October.

I was small for a 7th grader, and a bunch of the high school kids nicknamed me "Kneecap," which wasn't nearly as deprecating as it may sound -- everyone knew who I was. That said, it's a nickname that only would be known to people who were there that summer. … I still have good memories of Western Kentucky.

RON HOLDER (SCATS 1986 and 1987) is Assistant Executive Director for Surgery at the Scott and White Clinic, one of the nation's largest group practices. Prior to moving to Texas in 2004, he was the Director of the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Louisville. While there he became a published author, attained Certification by the American College of Medical Practice Executives (ACMPE), and became active in the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) and ACMPE. He has since been appointed to four national committees of MGMA and ACMPE. He earned both a Bachelor of Science and Master's Degree in Health Administration from the University of Kentucky. He and his wife of nine years, Denise, have two children. He is actively involved with his son in Scouts and basketball.

SCOTT HOLLADAY (VAMPY 1993, 1994, and 1995) is in his fourth year of a Ph.D. economics program at the University of Colorado. His thesis examines the relationship between globalization and environmental quality. He married in June to Sara Gore, who is a digital resource librarian at the University of Colorado.

THEA LEDENDECKER (VAMPY 1987 and 1988) graduated from Boston University in 1994 with a degree in French Literature. She then earned an M.A. in Writing and Publishing from Emerson College in 2003. She is currently working on a fantasy novel featuring Asian dragons. She also designs web pages.

KASEY MAGGARD (SCATS 1995) graduated in 2004 from UNC-Chapel Hill with double majors in Spanish and Economics. She begins a joint-degree this fall: Master in Business Administration at Harvard Business School and Master in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government. Kasey currently works for the Boston Consulting Group in Atlanta, GA.

MELANIE MARON (VAMPY 1986, 1987, and 1988) has been promoted to Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee's Washington DC Chapter. Prior to her promotion, Melanie served as the Assistant Director and then Associate Director of AJC's Chicago chapter. Melanie earned a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts at the University of Louisville, and in 2001 graduated with honors from the Chicago Kent College of Law. Through her work at AJC, Melanie engages in diplomatic outreach, political advocacy, and coalition building with diverse ethnic and religious communities on issues of mutual concern. She can be reached at melanie.maron@gmail.com.

SEAN MEGASON (VAMPY 1988) took Doug "Dr. J" Jenkins' physics class: "He was an excellent teacher, and it was very rewarding." He went on to a career in science. He went to the University of Texas at Austin for his undergraduate degree in Biology and Liberal Arts. He then went to Harvard earning a Ph.D. in Molecular Cell Biology. He is currently doing post-doctoral research in imaging, genetics, and systems biology at Caltech.

SATYA REDDY (VAMPY 1989) is a corneal surgeon in Lexington, KY, with Koffler Vision Group. Raised in Hazard, KY, he holds regional clinics in Hazard and Frankfort with his main practice in Lexington. Specializing in advanced LASIK procedures, refractive surgery, and corneal transplant techniques, Satya did his undergraduate work at the University of Rochester, attended the University of Kentucky for medical school, and completed his residency at Louisiana State University in New Orleans. After residency, he completed a one-year fellowship in cornea and external disease at the University of Illinois in Chicago. An active participant in various ophthalmologic societies, Satya has been invited to present research papers at annual meetings. As Visiting Clinical Assistant Professor with the University of Illinois at Chicago, he will continue to instruct residents in cataract surgery at one of their satellite rotations. He maintains a close relationship with the Sri Kiran Institute of Ophthalmology, a charity hospital in India, at which he is a dedicated volunteer.

NATASHA SMITH (VAMPY 1985 and 1986) is currently an officer faculty member at the United States Naval Academy. After high school, she attended the Naval Academy earning a B.S. in Ocean Engineering. She completed a Master's at Vanderbilt University in 2002; this May she completed a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt. Her dissertation is Probabilistic Design of Multidisciplinary Systems. Natasha spent 14 years with the Navy as a Civil Engineer where she received several medals including Fleet Marine Force, Iraqi Campaign, and Humanitarian Service. This National Science Foundation IGERT Fellow has also been recognized with three Navy Commendation medals and two Navy Achievement medals. After this tour at the Naval Academy, she plans on seeking a faculty position.

TERRI STICE (Super Saturdays Instructor) was recently named Apple Distinguished Educator, one of only 25 in the southeastern United States to be named to the Apple Class of 2007, one of 100 in the nation. Since 1994, the Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) program has identified key educators from around the globe who were emerging as leaders in the field of educational technology. After 13 years, this community consists of more than 1,000 educators worldwide who utilize technology to improve teaching and learning for students from kindergarten through higher education. Members of this highly select group possess an identified expertise in educational technology leadership. Terri will participate with other Apple Distinguished Educators this summer in a five-day professional development institute in Monterey Bay, CA.

KEITH STOKES (Counselor) has been recognized by the Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (KAHPERD) as Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year for 2006-2007. As the physical educator teacher at Warren County's Natcher Elementary School, he has been the Jump Rope for Heart coordinator since 1990, raising some $170,000 for the American Heart Association. He also organized the Jumpin' Jaguars, Kentucky's first competitive jump rope team. The team has won many regional and national awards. He has conducted jump rope workshops locally and throughout Kentucky and Tennessee.

MONTE "FISH" TROUTMAN (SCATS 1986) is a professionally licensed consulting engineer at B. C. Engineering, Inc., in Evansville, IN. When earning his degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Evansville, he served as president of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Society of Automotive Engineers. Currently, Monte is very active in the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers where he has served in multiple leadership positions. Highly active in his church, Monte enjoys UK basketball, hunting, fantasy football, and reading Stephen King novels. His greatest joy, though, is his family. He married his high school sweetheart, Jennifer. They have two sons.

I still have great memories of the two weeks I spent at WKU in '86. I learned several things I won't forget (I always think of WKU when I juggle) as well as experienced things most 13-year-old kids didn't get a chance to do. I truly hope my two boys have the same opportunity some day.

Excellent Website

Wonderful resources for gifted and talented young people are only a click away! Thanks to Dr. Kim Code of Northern Kentucky University, students can go to www.GiftedSources.com, a portal for many other sites. Kim explains: "The website provides links to high-quality, interactive websites from all of the Core Content areas. It is designed for classroom and home usage. The linked resources can be used to extend, differentiate, or add depth to classroom curriculum. Activities include an interactive knee-surgery, investment simulations, milestone documents in United States history, and interactive musical composition among many others. Overall, the goal of GiftedSources.com is to provide links to the best content that the World Wide Web has to offer." Be sure to check it out!

Center Alums Earn Prestigious WKU Awards

Western Kentucky University annually recognizes outstanding contributions by faculty members in the areas of Teaching, Research/Creativity, Public Service, and Student Advisement. The Center is thrilled to announce that two of our alumni have earned the Research/Creativity Award for their colleges.

Dr. Steven Wininger, Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department, received the Research/Creativity Award for the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. His research focus in the College is two fold: "One focuses on identifying factors which facilitate versus undermine exercise adherence. My second line of research focuses on social cognitive motivation within the contexts of learning both for students and teachers. These two lines of research have resulted in 58 presentations and 13 publications."

We first knew Steve as a middle schooler in 1984 when he attended Academic Camp (now known as SCATS). He reflects upon the experience: "Attending the summer camp was definitely a positive experience for me. It gave me a chance to interact with other young people who had a love for learning. Perhaps more important, I remember having fun while learning as opposed to being bored or disengaged. Subsequently, some of my research has focused on social cognitive factors associated with intrinsic motivation for learning." Some of that research was conducted with SCATS and VAMPY students. He has also teamed up with Dr. Anne Rinn and Dr. Julia Roberts in a grant proposal examining social cognitive variables of students at the Academy of Mathematics and Science.

Our other winner comes from Ogden College of Science and Engineering. Dr. Nancy Ayers Rice is Assistant Professor in the Biology Department where she teaches introductory biology for both majors and minors, molecular biology for majors, plus upper-level and graduate-level cell biology. In addition to teaching, she has received close to $1,000,000 in grants! Her primary areas of research are Molecular and Cellular Mechanism of Myofibroblast and Differentiation Genetic Regulation of Phosphorylase-b Kinase Expression. Her research involves her with many gifted young people and honors students in the lab.

Nancy attended SCATS and VAMPY: "My association with The Center as a child was what gave me the desire to pursue a career in genetics/molecular biology. I had never even heard the word *genetics* before Mr. Preston's SCATS class!" She also traveled to Europe with The Center in 1987. Nancy even returned to teach VAMPY in 2005.

Congratulations go to both Nancy and Steve!

The Academy Opens in August

The Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky will open in August providing advanced learning and research opportunities for young people from across the Commonwealth. Kentucky will become the fourteenth state to have a residential school with a focus on mathematics and science that is supported by the state. One hundred and twenty high school students with interests in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) will make up the inaugural classes of high school juniors and seniors.

The Academy of Mathematics and Science has two goals. The first is to provide appropriately challenging learning opportunities for young people who are advanced in the STEM disciplines. The second is to promote economic development in science and mathematics, disciplines central to innovation. Kentucky ranks 47th in the number of scientists and engineers, an unenviable position for the state.

Schneider Hall is currently being retrofitted to be the home of the Academy of Mathematics and Science. This residence hall was built in 1928, and it is located behind Wetherby Administration Building, a prime location. The Kentucky General Assembly included funds and bonding capacity to retrofit this building in the 2005 budget. Additions to the fourth floor have extended the capacity to accommodate 120 young people in addition to the residence life staff members who will live in Schneider Hall. Central areas of the hall are planned to offer community space designed specifically for this learning/living community.

Young people have completed applications, the selection process has been completed, and the first classes of Academy students (high school juniors and seniors) are in place. Applications included essay responses, transcripts from seventh grade to the present, recommendations, and SAT or ACT scores. The final step in the application process was the interview. The inaugural classes represent counties across the Commonwealth; specifically, applicants represented 73 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

Students will take university classes and engage in research during their years in the Academy. They will earn sixty hours of college credit during their two years (for the first year only, there will be seniors who will be in the Academy for one year). The budget includes tuition, room, and board for Academy students.

Staff for the Academy of Mathematics and Science will provide leadership for this residential school. Mr. Tim Gott was selected as the director of the Academy last November. Currently searches are underway for staff who will be responsible for academic services, counseling services, admissions and public relations, and residential living.

The concept of a residential school with a focus on math and science supported by the state budget is not a new one. The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics started 26 years ago. Other states with similar schools are Louisiana, Illinois, South Carolina, Texas, Mississippi, Indiana, Alabama, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Maine, Georgia, and Missouri.

A major reason that the Academy of Mathematics and Science was located at Western Kentucky University is the twenty-five year history of The Center for Gifted Studies. Offices for The Center will be located within Schneider Hall along with the offices for the Academy of Mathematics and Science. Dr. Julia Roberts, director of The Center for Gifted Studies and Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies, has been a leading advocate for the Academy for nine years.

Please go to www.wku.edu/academy to learn more about the Academy of Mathematics and Science and about ways you can help.


Mollie Hanrahan


Corey Alderdice
Mollie Hanrahan

Friends Make It Happen

The doors open in August; 120 high school juniors and seniors will unpack their suitcases and prepare for the most engaging and challenging school year of their lives! The Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky has the potential to change the economics of our Commonwealth; it will also change many lives.

The preparation for the opening has been tremendous and taken hundreds of people to make it happen. Some have helped by recommending young people to us. Some have helped by talking to their legislators about the importance of the Academy. Some have scheduled places for us to hold information sessions. Some have arranged media interviews to help spread the word. Some have written letters supporting the applicants. And some have helped us monetarily.

The following people and institutions have made gifts to the Academy:

Ashland Inc.
Covington, KY

Darlene & Warren Eisenstein
Glasgow, KY
Will be naming Dr. Julia Roberts' Office

Monica & D. T. Froedge
Glasgow, KY

Mary Ellen & Charles Lamar
Owensboro, KY
Will be naming a student room

Mary Loyd & Robert A. Lessenberry
Glasgow, KY

Daksha & Prabodh Mehta
Elizabethtown, KY

RBG Foundation
(Glasgow Electric Plant Board)
Glasgow, KY
Will be naming the Activity Room in Memory of Jama Monik Young (1973-2006)

Ross-Tarrant Architects, Inc.
Lexington, KY

Julian Stanley
Baltimore, MD
Gave first gift to the Academy

Toyota Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc.
Georgetown, KY

HEARTFELT THANKS GO TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE HAD A HAND IN CREATING THE ACADEMY.

FROM THE SCREEN TO THE STORE:

Super Saturdays Students Make Virtual Models a Reality

BY COREY ALDERDICE

From the controllers of a video game system to the MP3 player in your pocket, great gadgets take inspiration, design, and planning to go from scribbles on a piece of paper to the next "must-have" piece of technology. Sixth and seventh grade students who participated in the Modeling in Virtual Space course during the Winter 2007 session of Super Saturdays got a hands-on, minds-on opportunity to understand the process of making a great idea a reality.

The course, offered through a partnership with Trace Die Cast of Bowling Green, introduced students to the fundamentals of computer modeling, engineering, and professional design models, as well as how those models are applied in an actual automotive manufacturing system.

Jessica Scott, a WKU graduate in Mechanical Engineering and Program Manager at Trace Die Cast, noted her goal for the course was to introduce students to the process of turning one-dimensional ideas into three-dimensional products. "We performed exercises such as picking out objects in the classroom and drawing them in 3-D, both on paper and on the computer software Solidworks," Jessica explained. "The goal of the class was to draw individual components in Solidworks and eventually form an assembly that would move in real-time on the computer the same way it would if you were holding it in your hands."

Jessica's experience in the classroom as a student at WKU trained her for daily duties at Trace where she is responsible for managing all aspects of a project from design to production. She has daily interaction with customers as well as dealing with production. The students' in-class projects mirrored the real-world duties of production design and execution as well as teaming with others.

Before a part can be manufactured, a three-dimensional model of the geometric data must exist for building the tools to make the part. Students were able to experiment with this process through the Solidworks software. Max Erskine, a first-time participant, said his favorite part of the class was working with the computer. "I liked working on the computer. It was cool to learn to design stuff on the computer and see how it would work in real-life." Max hopes to someday be an architect.

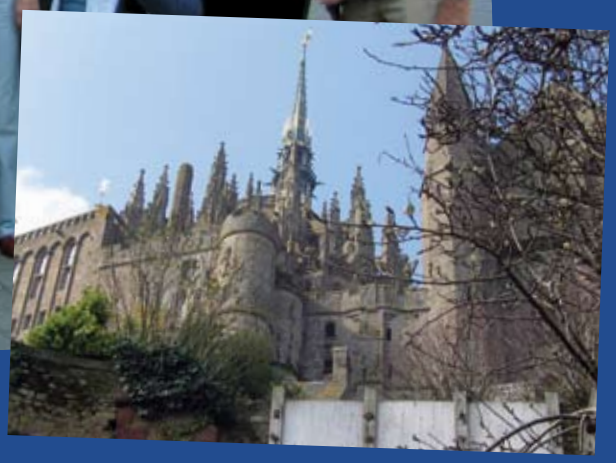
Jessica enjoyed the experience, noting that even she learned something new from her students. "My favorite activity with the students was learning to use the software. It was very interesting to see the diversity between children of the same age. Some students caught on very quickly and were actually teaching me a thing or two, while others took longer to grasp the concepts," Jessica said.

Though adults may often have trouble adapting to technology, most students in the class took to the software with ease. "I learned that even though I am only thirteen years older than these kids, things have definitely changed since I was that age," Jessica said. "All of the kids seemed to share common interests: video games and the internet. The virtual aspect of their interests worked to my advantage in teaching this class."

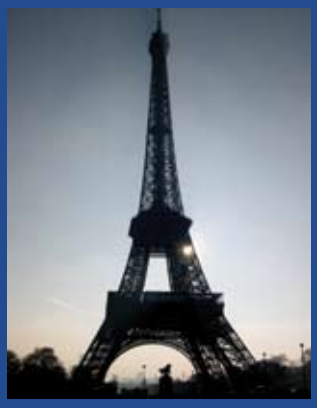
On the final Saturday, students were treated to a tour of Trace Die Cast. The students were shown how the concepts they studied in class apply to professional production. Seventh-grader Shingo Bessho enjoyed the visit. "I really enjoyed the tour," Shingo said. "We got to see how things are made and pictures of a piston and other parts." Shingo said he would like to pursue a career in automotive engineering.

The Center thanks Trace Die Cast for continued support in enriching the classroom experiences of children who are gifted and talented by bridging classroom and professional experiences.

Corey Alderdice



The Center Travels to France



Many people dream of April in Paris! Staff at The Center for Gifted Studies did more than dream – they planned such an opportunity. In April, nineteen students and four adults spent ten days in France, learning about the people, culture, and history of the country. They walked the beaches of Normandy on a cold and rainy day, much like it was in 1945 when the D-Day landing occurred. They strolled in Claude Monet's gardens and around the pond where this famous Impressionist artist created many of his paintings. They saw sites in Paris – the Eiffel Tower (both by night and by day), the Arc de Triompe, the Louvre, and Notre Dame Cathedral to name a few of the highlights. The days were filled with wonderful sights and sounds. For travelers with The Center there were numerous experiences of a lifetime.

"My travels in Paris have been an unforgettable experience. Our strolls through churches like the one on top of Mont Saint Michel provided startling views of the countryside. The view from the top of the Eiffel Tower was breathtaking as was seeing it light up the night sky." — **Jennifer Robinson**

"I never dreamed that I might be in Paris, France. But I am, and I thought it was amazing. It was really hard to narrow down my three favorite things, but they are Mont Saint Michel, Sainte Chapelle, and the Chartres Cathedral. They were all beautiful." — **Tyler Stevens**

"Over the past week I have ventured across France to see some amazing things, an opportunity many people would die for. I learned more about history in France than I did in school and got to experience France as a bonus. My favorite stops were Mont Saint Michel, the port of Arromanches, and the Chateau de Chenonceau." — **Paul Summers**

Nathan Armentrout Volunteers for The Center

"I'm paying back The Center for the lessons I learned that couldn't have come from anywhere else."

Nathan Armentrout's first memories of The Center stem from several Super Saturdays classes where he designed his own business cards on computers and dried grapes to create raisin maracas. These activities "tweaked his interest," but he explains that it was SCATS that had the biggest impact as to his career choice: "I remember taking an HTML class that taught us how to build web pages. This was my first touch with programming, and I loved it. Nothing intrigued me more than that class, and remembering that experience, I started taking computer programming classes in high school." After graduating from Greenwood High School this spring, he will pursue those career interests at the University of Louisville where he has earned the prestigious Hallmark Award. He plans on earning a Master's in Computer Science and Computer Engineering.

As much as he has been influenced by the academic experience he's had through The Center, he argues that the social experiences have made an even greater impact: "Being a SCATS resident really helped prepare me for extended times I would be away from my family (sort of like training wheels for a bike). I toughed it out, and it made me stronger. Also, being around kids that were driven for success like me helped push me to achieve higher goals and want to learn more about different topics. The atmosphere gave a sense of encouragement that one doesn't receive in a public school setting." His years at VAMPY only

reinforced this: "VAMPY was more about social learning. I was fairly shy (still kind of am), but I remember the dances at VAMPY and every kid having a great time. Being in an environment where everyone is just as 'nerdy' as you are drops boundaries and walls and lets people be who they are without fearing ridicule. I made so many friends from VAMPY that I still keep in contact with!" In short, he argues that he "learned invaluable life lessons that the cost of the camps could never pay for. Beyond the information that I learned, real life lessons spring up from the interaction between kids." Because of these life lessons, he wanted to give back.

Nathan spent five weeks last summer volunteering his time at The Center – and he's back for a second summer this year! Few people realize the tremendous amount of work that goes in to organizing five weeks of summer programming for students plus multiple professional development opportunities for teachers. Nathan does now: "I remember putting together 300+ handout folders, transporting textbooks, putting together bags for the teachers, making copies, folding shirts, and counting lanyards." He tackled the tasks before him with a smile and a kind word. Because of Nathan's selflessness, The Center was able to redirect the money we saved by not paying a worker to fund financial aid instead.

Nathan continued to volunteer throughout the school year. He helped elementary school students learn their lines and paint backdrops in the Super Saturdays' Acting Up Is Fun class. He assisted children in learning their Spanish alphabet, creating polymers, and experimenting with bubbles in other classes, too. He has enriched the experiences of dozens of Super Saturdays participants.

Why does he do it?

"I strongly feel that what The Center is doing is a great thing for academically talented students! I want to help The Center help students who are thirsty for knowledge and want to excel," he argues. "I'm paying back The Center for the lessons I learned that couldn't have come from anywhere else."

Thanks to Nathan and our many friends who help us in so many ways, The Center is able to offer those life lessons to thousands of young people.

Nathan attended Super Saturdays several years in the late 1990s, SCATS in 2002 and 2003, and VAMPY in 2004 and 2005.

GTE 538 Practicum for Teachers of Gifted Students: Lessons in Reality

Many preservice teachers will adamantly attest that their best learning experience in all their undergraduate courses was student teaching – that's when all the theory they'd learned went into practice. The same holds true for practicum teachers. The last leg of the 12-graduate-hour Endorsement in Gifted Education, the practicum places the teacher in a classroom with real gifted kids – kids who are hungry for challenge and understanding.

The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students (SCATS) originated so that teachers seeking this endorsement could work with gifted students; since 1983, SCATS has paired teacher and child with great success. Regardless of the years taught, teachers discover that the practicum differs greatly from their regular classroom experience. Jennifer Chaplin, Gifted Coordinator and Resource Teacher for Monticello Independent Schools, taught a unit on the First Amendment in the summer of 2005. She was quick to remark: "I had taught this unit of study for several years, but it was quite different with SCATS. First of all, I had to 'upgrade' the unit, to fit differentiation needs for high-level, high-interest learners. And this is different from differentiation for the regular classroom. After deciding what could be let go, what needed to be revised, and what needed to be added, I took it with me to SCATS." Even with the appropriate modifications, Jennifer realized that the gifted student was indeed exceptional: "I had to quickly learn how to get out of their way. They did not need to be spoon fed as so many students have come to expect. It was a great experience. It could have been intimidating (even to a veteran teacher), but fortunately I trusted myself to be their learning facilitator and let go of the idea that I was their one-and-only source of learning. It was about them – not about me."

Just as Jennifer learned first-hand that these students would soar once the learning ceiling was removed, B. J. Henry (Gifted Coordinator for Elizabethtown Independent Schools) learned a different lesson when she taught in the practicum. She realized the critical nature of gifted students being with others like themselves: "I was able to see first hand how important it was for GT kids to be together for learning experiences." Not only was this important for their social growth but for their cognitive growth as well: "I think the most important thing I have learned is that it is not enough to challenge students without grouping or to group them without challenge. They desperately need both to be successful. Challenge without opportunity to work with others of similar ability isolates the child and can cause difficulty in relating with peers. Grouping without challenge results in arrogant students with too much time on their hands."

What impressed Vangie Altman the most (she's the Gifted and Talented Coordinator and Gifted Teacher at the middle school in the Campbellsville Independent Schools) was their enthusiasm. Teaching in SCATS last summer she noted: "Although I teach Journalism students at Campbellsville Middle School, the students at SCATS were unique. They were very eager to learn the entire process of

The Practicum Goes International

During the summer of 2000, Annie Desaulniers came with a group of Mexican professors from TEC de Monterrey (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey – Campus Ciudad de México) to Western Kentucky University. That summer she completed her practicum for the Endorsement in Gifted Education. She reflects, "I truly loved this amazing experience (I taught French as a Second Language), and I always remember it with a lot of pride and joy actually." After spending the last ten years in Mexico, Annie currently teaches French as a Second Language at Université du Québec à Montréal in Canada. The online nature of the endorsement does indeed make it available to all!


Corey Alderdice

"I also learned not to assume anything about curriculum for GT students. I always do some form of preassessment because I never know what knowledge they bring to the classroom." — B. J. Henry

creating a newspaper from start to publication. In my Journalism classes at my middle school, the children mainly want to just take pictures and complete gossip pages. I was amazed to see how the children at SCATS were truly like little sponges wanting more and more information about the newspaper process." Nancy Binder, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator and GT Coordinator for a Warren County Elementary School, agrees about their passion for learning: "I saw truly gifted kids – curious, wanting to discuss issues, thoughts, etc. with their peers, and loving to learn, wanting more of anything, willing to try different things." Nancy did part of her practicum, Mysteries in American History, in the Super Saturdays program this past winter.

Teachers may say they understand that children who are gifted and talented are exceptional children – that they learn differently from the norm. But until they have those children in their classrooms, that's just an idea. And when they have those children in class with others who are also gifted and talented, they realize how very exceptional they are as learners – how the pace, complexity of content, and depth of discussion vary greatly from a typical classroom. That's why the practicum proves so valuable.

Contact Julia Roberts if you are interested in pursuing the Endorsement in Gifted Education. With three of the four classes taught online, the endorsement is readily available to all. It can be part of a Master's Degree, Rank I, or even done separately.

Leadership Institute XI: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

Kentucky young people in fourteen school districts are developing their leadership skills in new ways, thanks to their educators attending Leadership Institute XI in January. Julia Roberts and Tracy Inman of The Center shared many practical strategies that develop communication and problem solving skills. Perhaps the most important concept stressed was the debriefing of an exercise. This discussion of what is learned and why it is learned greatly separates developing leadership skills from simply doing leadership activities.

John Baker, Education Coordinator for the Center for Leadership Excellence here at Western, shared several ideas with the group including "A Leadership Primer" based on General Colin Powell's philosophy. These leadership lessons contained powerful messages such as "Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt, to offer a solution everybody can understand," "Keep looking below surface appearances. Don't shrink from doing so (just) because you might not like what you find," and "Never neglect details. When everyone's mind is dulled or distracted the leader must be doubly vigilant." John also emphasized how critical discussion is when exploring these lessons or after completing activities such as the Helium Stick exercise he did with the group. For example, in his classes he incorporates video clips that embody leadership. For us, he shared parts of *Remember the Titans* and discussed it in terms of character, ethics, and values exemplifying to the group the power that comes with discussion. He will lead several of those discussions this summer with middle schoolers when he teaches a leadership class for SCATS.

> ***"Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible."***
>
> **— General Colin Powell,**
> **Chairman (Ret), Joint Chiefs of Staff**

Patty Meacham of Todd County Schools came away with several ideas. She emphasized the importance of "networking with other participants through group activities." She remarked, "I think sometimes we tend to forget to stress leadership to our students. It helps to hear what other schools are doing."

Leadership XII will be held November 29 – 30, 2007. Contact The Center for more information.

Why Cluster Group

BY JULIA ROBERTS

Why cluster group children is a frequently asked question. Perhaps a more pertinent question would be: Why not cluster group children? Benefits are numerous, and the drawbacks nonexistent if implemented appropriately.

What is cluster grouping? Putting four to eight students who have high ability in a content area in one classroom forms an instructional cluster. Students are grouped for their interest and advanced ability in mathematics, reading, science, or history. The key to successful cluster grouping rests in placing the cluster with a teacher who is experienced and skilled in differentiating instruction, a teacher who wants to include the cluster in his classroom. To cluster without differentiating learning experiences misses the whole purpose for cluster grouping.

If the goal of school is for all children to learn on a daily basis, then we must organize learning environments to facilitate young people making continuous progress. The purpose of clustering is to promote student achievement. Grouping children together who are performing at high levels has benefits. The teacher has a cluster of advanced learners rather than a single one in a subject area. A teacher is more likely to address the learning needs of a cluster than of the isolated child who needs learning experiences that are above the level of instruction which other children in the class are ready to learn. The teacher can match instruction to individual readiness within the class and within the cluster. One recommendation for classrooms is to "share information about student strengths and interests with other teachers so that superior and more advanced services, plus some efficiencies of effort, might be achieved by practices such as cluster grouping or enabling children to join activities that meet their interests and needs in other classes" (Robinson, Shore, & Emmert, p. 243).

Who wins when cluster grouping is used? Children benefit when they have ongoing opportunities that intellectually stimulate them to go beyond grade level learning. Please remember that, if all children are ready to learn "it," they should have the opportunity to do so. On the other hand, if only a few children are ready to learn the more advanced content, they should not have to wait. In addition, children need intellectual peers, and the cluster puts them with other children who share their interests and have similar levels of readiness in a specific content area. Remember, children who make good grades with little effort learn that bright means easy, and many don't acquire the skills and habits to approach intellectually challenging tasks.

Some educators voice concern that clustering will remove role models from their classrooms. Research on role modeling states that children do not find role models among others who are significantly different from themselves (Schunk, 1987). New leadership emerges in the classroom. Achievement goes up for all who have instruction matched to their level of readiness rather than their age. No one loses when children are clustered for learning purposes.

Preparation must be made for clustering as the grouping happens before the school year begins. Rather than "sprinkling" the advanced readers or the accelerated math students among all of the teachers, the cluster is identified and placed with a teacher who is ready and willing to differentiate.

Clustering helps children learn at the level at which they are ready to learn. What a bonus that the learning is occurring in a classroom!

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The Mission of The Center

We are committed to encouraging excellence by providing educational opportunities and resources to three populations: gifted and talented students, educators working with gifted students, and parents of gifted students.

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For the Alumni Association

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Our deepest appreciation goes to the following people who, through their generosity, have allowed us to do what we do best: provide opportunities and services to young people who are gifted and talented, their educators, and their parents. Thanks for making it possible.

Superintendent Dale Brown: A Champion for Gifted Children

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has recognized the contributions of Warren County Superintendent Dale Brown in several ways. First in 2006, he was honored with the Administrator of the Year Service and Advocacy Award from the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE). Then, this past February, he was named Kentucky School Boards Association 2007 F. L. Dupree Outstanding Superintendent. He has been recognized on the national level as well for his many contributions to gifted children. The National Association for Gifted Children named him the Administrator of the Year at their annual conference held in North Carolina in November 2006. He has certainly been a leader for Kentucky's young people who are gifted and talented.

Dale is to be commended for his role in spearheading the task force that led to the white paper *Kentucky's Future: Mining Untapped Treasure – Children and Youth Of the Commonwealth Who Are Gifted and Talented* (www.wku.edu/kage). Since the coming year is a budget year for the General Assembly, the task force is redoubling its efforts to educate legislators concerning needs and advocate for increased monies for gifted education (advocating for $25 million annually). Dale, father of Super Saturdays participant Darren Brown, has also made great strides in the identification and servicing of gifted and talented children in his own district.

The Center, KAGE, Cumberland Trace Elementary School, and SOKY-KAGE held a reception in March in his honor to recognize his accomplishments and leadership in the field of gifted education. We hope that many will follow his lead!

Dale Brown is a new member of The Center's Board of Advisors.

Corey Alderdice

Truman Scholar and SCATS Alumnus

Lee Branstetter Makes a Difference

BY GRETCHEN LIGHT

Lee Branstetter was part of the first summer camp here at Western in 1983. He was in the middle of moving from Caverna to Glasgow Middle School, and the program couldn't have come at a better time for him. For the first time in his life, he was with kids a lot more like him than those in his public school classes; they shared his interests and were serious about learning. Through The Center, he had the chance to explore interests that, despite his public school teachers' best efforts, he couldn't explore in his regular classes.

One of the greatest influences was his interaction with the faculty here, Jim Wayne Miller specifically. His class in Creative Writing had a lasting impact on him. Writing was "taking a lark" for him, but it provided him with the opportunity to interact with a professor who was also a poet. He gave Lee a glimpse of what poetry was supposed to be about: the power of words. The importance of clear and effective communication has impacted him throughout the rest of his life, be it in dealing with colleagues or with students at Carnegie Mellon where he is teaching.

His math classes also had an enduring impact. Lee confesses that he never had a natural gravitation towards mathematics. It wasn't his favorite subject in middle or high school; in fact, it was something that he at times struggled with. Yet, he came into contact with a teacher here, Dallas Wheat, who was passionate about math and inspired him to decide just how serious he wanted to be with it as well. "In many walks of life, our advances as a civilization have been driven by mathematical tools," says Lee, "and I wanted to do something that contributed to the greater good. I decided that math was the way. There's such potential in math." Meeting the charismatic math professor at the summer camp was "one of those transformative moments" that set his path for life.

Lee attended Northwestern University for the first year of college thanks to a partial scholarship. Yet, since he was the oldest of four boys, it was still going to be a hardship for his family if he were to continue. He began searching for alternatives. Other schools of the same caliber that were less expensive were one option, but he was eager to find scholarships that would allow him to stay at Northwestern. He came across the Truman Scholarship and applied to be part of the 1989 class of recipients. It would provide the money to cover half his tuition at Northwestern plus an additional two years of graduate school. The degree of selectivity was daunting – it is a financially generous program focusing on merit so it attracts many applicants from top schools. Though it seemed like a long shot, he applied. In the spring of 1989, he received notice that he was one of the recipients.

The application process itself impressed him. It made him think seriously about his future; as a sophomore, he needed to map out his life plans and credibly argue how he was going to use the money to prepare him for the needs of the public. Though it is difficult to stick to plans, Lee says he's done well in sticking to his. He is now an associate professor of economics and public policy at the Carnegie Mellon Heinz School where he educates the economic leaders of tomorrow and does research in areas such as international economics and technological innovation. The Truman Scholarship indeed helped establish him on his path of public service.

"We need to keep getting bright, ambitious young people going into government work," says Lee. The "public sector will never be able to compete money wise, but in earlier generations, both Republicans and Democrats saw public work as a noble, higher calling." One of the important functions of the Truman Scholarship is to remind people of the public sector and remind students that they need to consider committing themselves to it. Commenting on the next generation, Lee said, "Our kids need to set aside the cynicism regarding government work that seems to be the product of the national discourse and reclaim that higher calling." Truman believed in this fully, and so does Lee.

PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN believed passionately in education, especially since he didn't hold a college degree himself. Instead of being remembered by a memorial or a statue, he wanted to create a scholarship for college students who intended to give back to the community by working in public service upon graduation. Within a few years after his death in 1972, The Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation began its mission of "finding and recognizing college juniors with exceptional leadership potential who are committed to careers in government, the nonprofit or advocacy sectors, education or elsewhere in the public service; and providing them with financial support for graduate study, leadership training, and fellowship with other students who are committed to making a difference through public service" (www.truman.gov). Truman Scholars greatly impact all aspects of society. For more information, visit www.truman.gov.

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CALENDAR

June 10 – 22, 2007
The Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students

June 12 – 13, 2007
Administrators Institute

June 24 – 29, 2007
The Advanced Placement Summer Institute

June 24 – July 14, 2007
The Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth

July 9 – 12, 2007
The Vertical Team Institute

August 23, 2007
Dedication of the Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky

September 10 – 11, 2007
Junior Great Books Workshop

October 23 – 24, 2007
Berta Education Series: Dr. George Betts

October 27, November 3, 10, and 17
Fall Super Saturdays

November 29 – 30, 2007
Leadership Institute XII