



# the challenge

*Magazine of The Center for Gifted Studies*

More than 200 educators from all over the state attended a professional development seminar on “Defensible Differentiation: What Will It Take to Get It Right?” conducted by Dr. Carol Tomlinson this past February. Dr. Tomlinson, a prolific writer and master teacher, is the author of more than 200 articles, book chapters, books, and other professional development materials and is recognized widely for her expertise and her down-to-earth presentations on differentiation.

Thanks to the generosity of Bowling Green couple Denny and Carol Wedge, this seminar was free to educators. With professional development state funds slashed by forty percent, the vision of the Wedge Visiting Professorship in Teacher Education is especially appreciated. This endowed gift has made an annual professional development opportunity available for educators since 2003. The Professorship brings recognized educators like Dr. Tomlinson to WKU in order to provide professional development for faculty and public school personnel and to give stu-

## Wedge Professorship Brings Noted Differentiation Expert, Carol Tomlinson, to WKU



dents the opportunity to meet authorities in the education field.

Participants are indeed grateful for the opportunity to learn from such masters in the field. Warren County Elementary Instructional Supervisor Judy Glass commented on the experience: “Over sixty school leaders from Warren County

attended the recent Carol Ann Tomlinson (the guru of differentiation) training at Western Kentucky University to learn more about ‘what’ would characterize high-quality learning. Dr. Tomlinson delivered her message quite effectively, that we ‘cannot have high-quality schools that effectively develop productive and engaged learners in the absence of responsive classrooms.’ Our leadership has been revitalized by this professional development opportunity, and we are grateful to have been privileged participants.”

Dr. Tomlinson is currently the William Clay Parrish, Jr. Professor at the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. An award-winning educator (Dr. Tomlinson was named

the Outstanding Professor at the Curry School, earned an All University Teaching Award, and is a former Virginia Teacher of the Year), she provides research-based practical advice and strategies that encourage all children – including the gifted and talented – to make continuous progress.

Dear Friends of The Center,

Funding for gifted education is diminishing across the country at an alarming rate, and this loss of funding is occurring at a time when our states and country need to be developing talent to its highest levels. Of course, resources are required to offer appropriately challenging services to children who are gifted and talented. Decision-makers must hear from you about how important it is to ensure that quality educational opportunities are provided in your community and state as well as in the country, and those opportunities must challenge our gifted children to reach their potentials.

President Obama has recommended eliminating the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Student Education Program, the only program at the national level targeted to gifted education. The Javits provides funding for the National Research Center for the Gifted and Talented, which has been so important in focusing research on the needs of high ability children. The Javits Program funds

demonstration projects such as the GEMS (Gifted Education in Mathematics and Science) Project that The Center for Gifted Studies and the Warren County Schools are implementing. The Javits Program focuses on children from underserved populations who are gifted, including children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Kentucky's funding for gifted education is at the lowest point in the last twenty years. For the coming year, funding has dropped to a little over six and a half million dollars. As the White Paper on Gifted Education states, the needs of gifted children (needs created by strengths rather than deficiencies) are every bit as

intense and important as the needs of any exceptional children. These needs will not be addressed unless there is funding to increase the number of specialists in each district to recognize and address the needs of children who are gifted and talented.

One example of the reduction of gifted education funding is in California. That state has not eliminated the funding for gifted education, but it has allowed districts to spend that money as decision-makers choose. Many educators have chosen to spend the funds outside of gifted education. Many people, including educators, believe the myth that gifted children will be okay, so they choose to spend resources in other ways when given a choice. Of course, this has always been the danger of block funding.

What can you do as friends of gifted children? Speak to decision-makers in your local school district. Educate your state legislators, your governor, and members of the state board of education about the need to fund gifted education at a level to develop talent in your state.

Communicate with your members of Congress to encourage them to support funding the Javits Gifted and Talented Program. The budget decisions in Congress will be made soon, so make your contacts right away.

Gifted children need your advocacy! Don't depend on others to speak out. Get involved.

Sincerely,



Julia Link Roberts  
Executive Director



## Letter from Julia

### *The Mission for 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.

### *The Vision for The Center*

Becoming an internationally preeminent center is the vision of The Center for Gifted Studies. This vision includes expanding services in five areas: (1) offering educational programs for gifted children and youth, (2) providing professional development opportunities for educators, (3) enhancing communication and advocacy for gifted children, (4) conducting research and developing curriculum to remove the learning ceiling, and (5) building a testing and counseling component for gifted children and their families.

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challenge

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# Bonjour!

## The Center Travels to France

BY HARPER LEE

From March 27 to April 5, Drs. Julia and Richard Roberts, Harper Lee, and 20 others, both students and adults, spent nine days in France, exploring the cities of Caen and Paris and the picturesque countryside of northern France.

"The trip was just fantastic. It was one of the most enjoyable trips I've ever taken. There's not a lot that we missed the entire time we were there because it was just jam packed with great things," traveler John Gallagher from Prospect, KY, described.

Beginning in Caen, the group traveled to the beaches of Normandy to view the site of the D-Day invasion. Walking through the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach, travelers felt honored and moved to be in a place of such historical significance. In Caen, the group paid a special visit to the Peace Memorial. Regarded as the very best World War II museum in France, the Peace Memorial chronicles the events leading up to the D-Day invasion.

"For me, the most memorable moments were at the American Cemetery," adult traveler Louie Korfhage from Central City, KY, explained. "The experience of watching my son and filling him with the spirit of what that area is about – it was very moving for me."

From Caen, the group took a day trip to Mont St. Michel, a stunning Gothic cathedral built on a rocky, tidal island off the coast of Normandy. After a brisk walk up 900 steps to the cathedral entrance, the group learned about Mont St. Michel's architecture and history on a special guided tour that covered almost the entire structure from the expansive basement crypts to the sunny balconies overlooking the sea. Travelers strolled through the one-street village leading up to the cathedral, purchasing souvenirs and sampling warm strawberry crepes.

"I really enjoyed the time we got to explore by ourselves – like at the museums and coming down from Mont St

Michel, going to all the little shops there," traveler Gabe Smith described.

Following Mont St. Michel, the group stopped at the famous Bayeux Tapestry. A fascinating artifact, the Bayeux Tapestry is actually an epic piece of embroidery, 20 inches high and roughly 230 feet long, recounting the 1066 Norman invasion of England. The group learned that the origins of the tapestry remain a mystery; and, sadly, the final panels of the tapestry are missing.

Travelers then bid *adieu* to the countryside and arrived in Paris stopping first at the *Musee d'Orsay*. Formerly a railway station, the Orsay is now home to an extensive collection of modern art, including Impressionist paintings by Monet, Degas, Renoir, and Cezanne. Later, travelers made an evening visit to the famous Louvre Museum, learning about the history of the building itself and about some of its treasures. The group saw the "Mona Lisa" and the "Winged Victory of Samothrace," a third century statue of the Greek goddess of victory, one of the most famous and beloved statues in the world.

"I was amazed that we were in the same room with the 'Mona Lisa.' I just kept picturing Da Vinci's hand in the candlelight putting the little detail on the painting," traveler Katie Baxter from Taylorsville, KY, said.

Following the Louvre and the Orsay, the group took a day trip to Monet's charming home at Giverny on the banks of the Seine River. Everyone spent the entire morning walking through Monet's garden, enjoying the blooming spring flowers, snapping pictures on the bridge over Monet's precious lily pond, and walking through the brightly colored rooms of his home. That afternoon, the group visited the *Musée de l'Orangerie*, a museum designed specifically for the permanent display of eight water lily murals. Standing in a uniquely constructed oval room in the museum, the



**ANGELLA HUDDLESTON FOSTER** (SCATS 1992; VAMPY 1993 and 1994) is finishing a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance Choreography at University of Maryland - College Park. She is also teaching dance movement classes as well as a lecture course about the history and philosophy of concert dance in the Western world. She and her husband, Ben, live in Maryland just outside D. C. where he works for a government agency. She still keeps in contact with fellow VAMPY camper Brytt Deye Brooks; they were bridesmaids in each other's weddings.

*"I still think about my time with you all at SCATS and VAMPY frequently, and I am still so blessed at how well you all cared for me while I was there."*

**KRISTI HENZEL** (SCATS 1986; VAMPY 1987 and 1988) has completed her third year of a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. After completion of residency in 2010, she plans to pursue a spinal cord in-

jury fellowship and then begin an academic career in rehabilitation research.

**KELSEY CURD LADT** (SCATS 2003 and 2005) graduated this spring *summa cum laude* at age 14 from the University of Kentucky with a B. S. in Biology with departmental honors. This summer, Kelsey will return to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, where she has been offered a one- to two-year postbaccalaureate medical research position. Kelsey spent 12 weeks performing research at the NIH in 2008 and received an Exceptional Student Award for her work. Kelsey's next educational goal is to obtain a M.D./Ph.D. combined degree. She will start applying this summer for fall 2010 admission. After receiving her combined

degree, Kelsey will pursue a career as a physician scientist.

**JON MORRIS** (VAMPY 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989) is working on an MBA at Yale after finishing an internship in Houston last summer in Commodities Training. In 2005, he earned a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and Art History from Rice University. He continued his studies at MIT where he focused on Mechanical Engineering. He then served in the Peace Corps, staying in Thailand for five years at a small all-Thai commune in the mountains working as a translator.

**ASHLEY FARRIS TRIMBLE** (VAMPY 1994, 1995, and 1996; Counselor) finished a Ph.D. in Linguistics at Indiana University in the summer of 2008 and began a postdoc at the University of Iowa in the fall. There she is studying speech perception and language acquisition in children with cochlear implants. Ashley married Mike Trimble in June of 2007; her VAMPY roommate Meredith Kerley Graham was a bridesmaid.

# Alumni Update

group was surrounded by Monet's water lilies and felt as if they were walking through his gardens just as they had been that morning.

"I loved Monet's garden. All the flowers were so beautiful. It was just so peaceful and quiet there. France is a beautiful country, and I hope to come back some day," Burkesville traveler Fran Smith explained.

In addition to viewing great works of art, the group climbed to the top of the Eiffel Tower for a truly breathtaking view of Paris and explored Versailles on a guided tour that highlighted the palace's history and artistry. The group also visited the famous Chartres Cathedral, one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in France. Chartres is thought to be home to one of the most complete collections of medieval stained glass windows in the entire world. Travelers were awed by the lively blues, deep reds, and tangy greens that streamed in from the stunning windows. And, on their final night in Paris, travelers returned to the Eiffel Tower in the evening just in time to see it glitter with thousands of tiny lights.

"I loved seeing the Eiffel Tower at night," five-time traveler Brenda Adams said. "When it lit up with all these sparkling



diamonds, that's when I knew I was really in Paris."

Since 1987, The Center has been offering eighth graders and high school honors students the opportunity to experience new cultures and international travel firsthand. Each year, twenty-some students and adults travel abroad with The Center's Travel/Study program to a selected city of cultural and historical significance. The group spends a week immersed in the culture and language of that country. Challenging and exciting, the Travel/Study program is designed to

enrich further the lives and minds of participants while fostering cultural awareness and appreciation. Past groups have traveled to China, Italy, England, and Russia.

"This trip has been a dream come true, and I now have the courage to follow other dreams," Russellville traveler Sarah Fox described.

Join The Center as we travel to London next spring April 2-11, 2010.



**View a slideshow about The Center's trip to France at [www.wku.edu/gifted](http://www.wku.edu/gifted).**



Clinton Lewis

# Hundreds of Kentucky 7th Graders Recognized

For twenty-seven years, hundreds of gifted and talented 7th graders have traveled to Western's campus to be recognized for their academic prowess in the Duke Talent Identification Program's (TIP) Talent Search. This year 1,300 of the 2,870 Kentucky students taking the tests qualified for state recognition. Many of them and their families attended the Kentucky Recognition Ceremony in Diddle Arena May 29 where students received medals acknowledging their accomplishments.

Scottie-Beth Fleming (see box) key-noted the event. Scottie-Beth, an aerospace-engineer-to-be who has interned with NASA, emphasized the importance of not wasting talent. She explained to the honorees, "There are thousands of other smart kids out there in the world just itching to push you out of the way. Don't give up on your dreams when they become difficult!" She encouraged the 7th graders that they could "become anything they want ... if they set a goal and then do whatever it takes to achieve the goal."

The Talent Search is the largest program of its kind in the nation, representing participation from 6,000 junior

high and middle schools in the Duke TIP 16-state region. Over 1.5 million students have completed the Talent Search since its inception in 1980. The Talent Search identifies academically talented 7th graders based on standardized test scores achieved while attending elementary or middle school. Candidates are identified and invited to complete either the SAT or the ACT. Duke TIP then provides the participants with comparative information concerning their academic abilities and resources for unique educational opportunities. This year, of the 67,438 participants nationally, 24,204 students (36%) were invited to attend State Recognition Ceremonies and 2,024 students (3%) were invited to the Grand Recognition Ceremony. Two Kentucky seventh-graders earned a perfect score on one or more sections of the SAT or ACT: Mary N. Lee from Lawrenceburg and Valerie Y. Sarge from Lexington.

A special thanks goes to Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and TIAA-CREF for sponsoring the event.

For more information about Duke TIP, go to their website: [www.tip.duke.edu](http://www.tip.duke.edu).

## Profile: Duke TIP Speaker Scottie-Beth Fleming



Duke TIP speaker Scottie-Beth Fleming has had a long and happy relationship with The Center. She participated in Super

Saturdays, SCATS, and VAMPY plus traveled to England, France, and Italy with The Center's Travel/Study program. Through The Center, Scottie-Beth learned that even though her giftedness set her apart, she was not alone. Rather, the world was full of possibilities, opportunities, and young people like herself.

When describing The Center's effect on her life, the Scottsville, KY, native says: "Oh, my gosh! It's unbelievable. Having a place to go in the summer where the students were just as motivated as I was and just as intelligent and willing to learn – it made me realize that I really can do something else if I just work harder. The Drs. Roberts were so good to me and to my family."

Now 23, Scottie-Beth will graduate in December from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta with a degree in Aerospace Engineering and plans to complete a master's degree in the same field. Scottie-Beth has a pilot's license and loves to fly in her free time. She is currently doing her fourth co-op with NASA at the Johnson Space Center where she has worked with power systems, imaging analysis, mission control, and thermal systems. Scottie-Beth said she loves every minute of her work and that she has found a home in Houston.

"I want to be an astronaut," she explained, laughing, her warm personality bubbling over. "I know everyone says that they want to be an astronaut, but I really do."

For Scottie-Beth Fleming, the sky is the limit!

Kentucky native, VAMPY alumnus, computer whiz, husband, father, author, media professional, entrepreneur, rugby player – there



aren't enough days in the week for all of Drew Curtis's talents and titles.

As an entrepreneur, Drew (VAMPY 1987 and 1988) created and founded Fark.com, a quirky news aggregator site he dreamed up in the late-nineties after purchasing the domain name – Fark.com – on a whim. The word 'fark'

explains, laughing. "We don't host any stories. We're basically a list of links to articles that are interesting. We re-headline the articles to make them a lot funnier. Sometimes the headline is a thousand times funnier than the actual article. It's not really a complicated idea – it's just linking out."

Drew is sitting in the lobby of the Hampton Inn in Horse Cave, KY, where he will be meeting with the entire Fark.com team over the next couple of days. Fark.com is a totally online endeavor, so the Fark.com team doesn't have a physical office. Drew has employees based in Seattle and New York.

"When I was growing up, 'gifted' was just starting," he explains. "I was in the first test magnet class that they ever came up with in Lexington. They were really trying to figure this gifted stuff out. I thought it was great and not just for the challenge of it. The more important thing for me was finding other kids who were in the same position I was in. That was, far and away, the most valuable thing I took away from VAMPY: knowing that there were other kids who were acing stuff and didn't understand why or were thinking about things other kids weren't thinking about."

Very often, gifted children have a hard time 'fitting in,' and very often, it is their giftedness that sets them apart. For young people who are gifted and talented, age-mates are only one set of peers; intellectual-mates are another. Over the past 25 years, many gifted young people, like Drew, have found a wealth of peers as well as friends through VAMPY.

"In sports, even though you come from different backgrounds, you are fighting for a common goal, and you form a unit," Drew said. "And the same thing happens at VAMPY. You form a team, and there's no opponent *per se*, but you're all going through the same thing."

VAMPY has been Drew's past, but it will also be his future, both as a business person and as a father. Gifted education is critical to enriching Kentucky's precious talent pool, and The Center is critical to gifted education.

"You need to challenge kids to get them to think," Drew said. "If you've got a kid who's acing the curriculum, he's obviously not being served by the educational system, and you need to push him ahead. I have a five-year-old and a two-year-old. And it kind of tickles me that in six or seven years, I'll be sending them to The Center – because it'll still be there, and it'll still be a good thing. I'm definitely sending them."

## Center Alumnus Drew Curtis: *"It's not news – it's **FARK!**"*

BY HARPER LEE

doesn't have a definition. But for Drew and Fark.com readers it has come to mean information that is packaged and published like news but is not really newsworthy. Fark.com received 50,000 page views in its first year and in the next, one million. Now, Fark.com receives 2,000 or so news submissions from its readership every day. Among regular visitors to Fark.com are media giants, CNN and Fox News. Drew has also published a book on non-news: *It's Not News, It's Fark: How Mainstream Media Tries to Pass Off Crap as News*.

"The best short description of Fark.com I've heard is 'What if the Daily Show ran the Drudge report?'" Drew

Cracking jokes, crunching chips, sporting a well-loved grey sweatshirt, and reminiscing about his fraternity days, it's hard to imagine him as a suited businessperson or a weathered media expert.

But Drew is both. Between chips, he is candid about the first business he had that failed as well as the lecture he has been invited to give at the Poynter Institute, a prestigious school of journalism in Florida. While there, he will also be visiting a close friend from VAMPY. For Drew, VAMPY was a powerful academic experience. But more importantly, VAMPY was a life-changing social experience.



# AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

## Brought to WKU by The Center

BY HARPER LEE

In the spring of 1972, 15,000 feet above North Vietnam, WKU alumnus Major Dan Cherry shot down a North Vietnamese MiG-21 piloted by Lieutenant Nguyen Hong My. Thirty-six years later, the two were reunited in Ho Chi Minh City and became friends. A year later, on April 20th, The Center for Gifted Studies and the Western Kentucky University Office of the Provost commemorated Dan and Hong My's unique journey from enemies to friends by a

planting an oak tree in their honor near the Guthrie Bell Tower on WKU's campus. Lowell Guthrie, CEO of The Center's business partner Trace Die Cast, participated in the tree planting with Dan and Hong My. That evening, the two gave a joint presentation in which they recounted their first "dogfight" experience and their historic reunion and friendship. The pair spent a busy evening speaking, signing Dan Cherry's book *My Enemy, My Friend*, and smiling for photos.

Today, Dan Cherry and Hong My don't just seem like friends; they seem like good friends. Old friends even. Both grandfathers and former fighter pilots, they are quick with jokes and smiles, handshakes, good stories, and instructions. "We were just soldiers," Hong My said, "doing the best job we could for our respective countries. I don't think Dan Cherry and I were ever enemies. We were just soldiers."

Dan hopes to share with others the sense of closure and peace of mind his friendship with Hong My has brought him. "Our hope is that our reconciliation can somehow help other Vietnam veterans," Dan said. "Many of them have had great difficulty bringing closure to their war experiences, so maybe our unique friendship can help them put the war behind them and enable them to move on with their lives in a positive way. We also hope to be an inspiration to our two countries to move toward better relations. We hope that in the future the evidence of U. S.-Vietnam relations is in fields of education, cultural exchange-



Clinton Lewis

es, and economic development initiatives rather than sad reminders of the war."

Julia Roberts' service on the Aviation Heritage Board was the catalyst that brought Hong My to campus. She immediately recognized the potential impact the story of their friendship could make



Clinton Lewis

on friends of The Center. Fellow Aviation Heritage Board member and member of The Center's Advisory Board, Bob Pitchford, took delight in the events: "Western's campus provided a most appropriate venue for this phase of Hong My's visit. As he walked among the pillars of the Guthrie Bell Tower, I watched him study the historical images of military service and couldn't help notice that he was impressed with the honor paid to those past warriors. In contrast, the gentle significance of the young tree ceremony made a lasting impression as well. On this day, Hong My's smile was matched by Western's sparkle."

For more information, go to [www.aviationheritagepark.com](http://www.aviationheritagepark.com).



**View a slideshow about Dan Cherry and Hong My at [www.wku.edu/gifted](http://www.wku.edu/gifted).**

Just briefly, veteran science teacher Kathi Matthew pauses to rest. She sits proudly amidst the cheerful remnants of a busy and successful Super Saturdays class – pencils, paper, projects, crayons, and magnets are strewn across table tops and chairs. Her last student, a plucky little red-headed girl, waves goodbye as she follows her mother out the door. Her classroom is now empty, but Kathi is still wearing her white lab coat. She seems unwilling to let go of her final Super Saturdays class.

“It’s my kid fix!” she exclaims. “I taught elementary school for years, and I really like working with kids. I wasn’t planning on becoming a professor; it just happened. I really love the classroom. If I have sore feet and I’m tired at the end of

every Super Saturday, then I go, ‘I must have done it right!’”

After sixteen years as a professor of education at Western Kentucky University, Kathi is leaving to take a new position at Black Hills State University in South Dakota. Kathi said that she has taught the Super Science class at Super Saturdays for twelve of her sixteen years.

“I absolutely love it,” she says. “On Saturdays, before the kids come in, I keep thinking to myself, ‘The future of Kentucky is walking through those doors in just a few minutes.’ That’s the way I think. I look at them in awe.”

Kathi understands what it takes to meet the needs of gifted young people. Not only does Kathi challenge her stu-

dents, but she also exposes them to material they might not cover in a regular classroom. Kathi spent most of her class time focused on physical science. Physical science, she said, is an area with one of the lowest levels of understanding in Kentucky. Her Super Science students have tackled electricity, motion and force, states of matter, and magnetism.

“I love the looks in their eyes when they finally get something,” she explains. “You get that a lot with Super Saturdays. Last week, I said to my students, ‘Did you know that if you take big rocks and you rub them together, then you rub those littler rocks together, then you rub those even littler pebbles together, you can get sand?’ They were like, ‘Really?’ I love it! That’s what kept me coming back.”

Kathi is thrilled to be moving back to her home state of South Dakota and trying something new, but she said she hates to leave Super Saturdays.

“I’ll be about an hour from Mount Rushmore. I’m really excited,” she says. “But I know I’ll miss Super Saturdays. And I’m thinking I might just have to do something along the same lines when I get there. The Drs. Roberts are wonderful for having started this program. I want to take what I’ve learned here and see if I can do some more good up there.”

She smiles. She is still wearing her lab coat. Thank you, Kathi.

➤ *2009 was Winter Super Saturdays’ 7th year and Super Saturdays’ 17th. A terrific success, 472 students represented 43 districts and 2 states.*

# Kathi Matthew: A Legacy of Learning

BY HARPER LEE



Harper Lee





# Chad Snyder: A Super First Class

BY HARPER LEE

First-time Super Saturdays instructor Chad Snyder knew coming in that the students in his Chemistry of Detective Work class would be

gifted. But when he discovered that his class was full of aspiring lawyers, astronauts, and paleontologists, he knew he would have to deliver a challenge. Still, he was shocked by how quickly his class of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders caught on to college-level chemistry.

"I've really enjoyed Super Saturdays," the WKU professor of chemistry explains as he gathers up goggles and test tubes in the WKU chemistry lab his class has been using. "I was surprised that the kids were as quick to catch onto the chemistry that was involved. I knew



that I wanted to give them something challenging. And I was just surprised at how well they caught on."

Chad had his students work with thin layer chromatography, a technique for identifying unknown compounds that is typically taught to college juniors. After seeing how well his Super Saturdays students performed with the advanced material, Chad said he would expect more from college chemistry students in the future.

"I gave my Super Saturdays students a CSI situation," Chad describes. "They had to use thin layer chromatography to identify an unknown poison used in the mock crime scene. It took them about an hour to learn it, and they took off for about three or four weeks with it."

Gifted young people need experiences like Super Saturdays. Super Satur-

days provides students the opportunity to expand their knowledge, hone their interests, and explore new material – all in the company of an experienced, motivating teacher and like-minded, enthusiastic peers. Chad said that some students in his class came in with mixed feelings about science but left loving it.

"The initial response of two of the fourteen students to my class was 'This is boring. I don't like this. I'd rather be somewhere else,'" Chad says, laughing, the box of beakers he's holding rattling gently. "It was actually kind of funny because they were so honest. But after three weeks had passed, the two that said this actually changed their minds.

They were having fun. Super Saturdays made them think differently about science."

Even while clearing away his first Super Saturdays class, Chad is already looking forward to teaching Super Saturdays again. He has begun to search for fresh, rigorous material, and he encourages parents and students to give Super Saturdays a try.

"At Super Saturdays, kids get a chance to make use of science in a more tangible setting," he says. "They learn about things in a regular class; they see things on television, and they are interested in doing them, but they don't really have the equipment or the instrumentation. At Super Saturdays, they've got the chance to do something hands-on, and that makes it more real for them. Super Saturdays encourages students to grow in their interests."

➤ *Fall Super Saturdays will be held October 17 & 24 and November 7 & 14.*

Leadership expert Mariam MacGregor led a two-day workshop in December for The Center's Leadership Institute XIII called Building Everyday Leadership in Students: Promoting Attitudes and Actions for Respect and Success. Twenty-five Kentucky educators attended, and each left with practical, real-world strategies designed to encourage leadership potential in students.

Middle school counselor Melissa Wassom said, "The Center for Gifted Studies' Leadership Institute always surpasses my expectations. It is packed with innovative, practical ideas and activities that I can use directly with my students. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to enhance my students' leadership skills!"

For the past 17 years, Mariam has been engaging young leaders in classroom and community settings. Mariam has worked with college student leaders at Syracuse University, Santa Clara University, and Metropolitan State College of Denver. She has served as a school counselor and coordinator of a leadership program at an alternative high school. Two of her books, *Building Everyday Leadership: Promoting Attitudes and Actions for Respect and Success* for adult facilitators and the companion teen book *Everyday Leadership: Attitudes and Actions for Respect and Success* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2007), provide an organized curriculum for teaching leadership to teens.

Following her workshop, Mariam took the time to answer a few questions on leadership.

Leadership Institute XIV is scheduled for December 3 and 4, 2009. John Baker, Education Coordinator at The Center for Leadership Excellence at Western Kentucky University, will be presenting.



Harper Lee

## The 2008 Leadership Institute

BY HARPER LEE

*If you were going to give an educator just one piece of leadership advice, what would it be?*

Have a definition, know how you're defining leadership, and be able to express that to your students and to your peers as professionals. And think about the things that you do in your class or with your colleagues – do they all play back into that definition of leadership?

*What is your definition?*

I actually believe that leadership is doing the right thing no matter what the circumstance. This includes when people are pressuring you to do something

that compromises that. It also means that you do what you can to strengthen the group that you're a part of whether that be a family or a community or a classroom or your friends. You strengthen and contribute to the positive that group can do. It means your goal is long term; it's not a one time deal. But your leadership behavior and your leadership roles all connect in a sustainable way.

*How do you feel about leadership education in schools?*

I think we just aren't doing meaningful things. Kids can be on student council or they can be captain of a football team, but no one takes the time to ask them what it means to be in those positions. Student council, for example, how do you make it more than just planning a prom? For kids who are always-joiners, that's going to be fine but not for kids who are sometimes-joiners who need to be drawn into something more meaningful. It's the same with service projects. We just aren't making the connection between the actual volunteer process and what they are learning as individuals and what they can do in their community or as a citizen leader.

### ***Why is it important to identify students as gifted in leadership?***

Well, there are a couple reasons. One reason is we started to see that minority students in particular were demonstrating leadership skills as a marker for giftedness. At the alternative school, my very bright students who were involved in gangs were excellent leaders. They could exhibit these leadership behaviors, and people would follow them. So when you start to cultivate those leadership behaviors for bright kids, they have the ability to change that whole culture because they are doing things for good.

For gifted kids, I think, we also need to help them understand that giftedness and being bright don't only mean book smarts. There are other ways to be gifted, and being a fine leader is one of those ways. I think gifted kids need to see the fun in being a leader. They need to recognize that people do count on

them; they do rely on them. Leadership doesn't demand that they get the right answer on a particularly difficult question. It demands that they work with others so that others can rely on them and count on them. It builds on those really just human skills.

### ***Why do you feel it's important for educators to come to workshops like the Leadership Institute?***

I think there is a tendency for adults to use the word *leadership* or to refer to students as leaders without letting students see what those leadership traits are. Teachers need to recognize their responsibility as role models and know that they need to act as leaders in classrooms, in hallways, and in communities. Students are watching what they do because they are their teachers. Those are the really subtle things we can do as citizen leaders to create sustainable leadership behaviors.

Have a definition, know how you're defining leadership, and be able to express that to your students and to your peers as professionals. And think about the things that you do in your class or with your colleagues – do they all play back into that definition of leadership?

—MARIAM MACGREGOR

## **DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER SERVES ON WORLD COUNCIL**

Dr. Julia Link Roberts has been elected to a four-year term on the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC). Composed of seven people, the Executive Committee can only have one representative from a country, and no country has a guaranteed seat on the committee. Julia has previously been one of three U. S. delegates for the WCGTC.



Retired WKU Dean J. T. Sandefur, who was instrumental in supporting Julia and The Center in the early years, commented: "I was quite impressed when Julia first expressed her strong feeling that a gifted education studies program was needed at WKU. In the intervening years Julia has made the need felt, not only at WKU, but in the state and nation. Now that she has been elected to the Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, it is well mer-

ited recognition for her creative contributions and her leadership skills. I am indeed proud of her accomplishments."

The WCGTC is a global non-profit organization whose primary goal is to provide advocacy and support for gifted children. It is a diverse organization networking the globe with an active membership of educators, scholars, researchers, parents, educational institutions, affiliated federations, and others interested in the development and education of gifted and talented children of all ages.

The WCGTC headquarters is at the University of Winnipeg in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. In August, Julia will attend the World Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"I am both honored and thrilled to be serving on the Executive Committee," Julia said of her new role. "Gifted children need and deserve all the support we can provide. When we invest in gifted children, we invest in the best possible future."

For more information on the WCGTC, go to their website: <https://world-gifted.org>.



**Kathy & John Abbott**  
Louisville, KY

**Lisa & Jay Allen**  
Bardstown, KY

**Susan & John Allpress**  
Russellville, KY

**Elizabeth & Mohammad Amin**  
Louisville, KY

**Katie & Robert Augustyn**  
Westport, CT

**Judith Austin**  
Horse Cave, KY

**Beate Bachmann**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Donna Baxter**  
Fort Thomas, KY

**Amber & Gavi Begtrup**  
(VAMPY 1996, 1997;  
Travel to Paris and London)  
Washington, DC

**Barbara & Robert Begtrup**  
Nashville, TN

**Marilee Benson**  
Bardstown, KY

**Karen & Gary Bickett**  
Owensboro, KY

**Nancy & Michael Binder**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Stacy & Chris Boone**  
Bardstown, KY

**Edie & Ron Brassell**  
Franklin, KY

**Dorothy & Joe Brothers**  
Elizabethtown, KY

**Martha & Doug Brown**  
Winchester, KY

**Jacquelyn Byrne & Michael Manes**  
Oneonta, AL

**Cheryl & Michael Canty**  
Flatwoods, KY

**Jackie & Bill Capp**  
Andover, MA

**Beth & Dick Chapman**  
Nashville, TN

**David Coffey**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Megan & Bryan Coffman**  
Lexington, KY

**Carolyn Cooper**  
St. Louis, MO

**Sonia & William Cordero**  
Pikeville, KY

**Laura & Stuart Couch**  
Elizabethtown, KY

**Ann & Raymond Cravens**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Patricia Creager & Greg Lamb**  
Central City, KY

**Susan & Paul Dempsey**  
Knoxville, TN

**Ruth Denhardt**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Sheila & Bob Depp**  
Owensboro, KY

**Christine & Henry Dietzel**  
Somerset, KY

**Janice & Tom Donan**  
Bardstown, KY

**Frances & Barry Edwards**  
Glasgow, KY



**Darlene & Warren Eisenstein**  
Glasgow, KY

**Diane & Ilan Esrey**  
(Super Saturdays 2002, 2003, 2004;  
SCATS 2004, 2005; VAMPY 2005,  
2006, 2007, 2008)  
Louisville, KY

**Mark Evans**  
Louisville, KY  
Matching Gift: AEGON USA  
Investment Management, LLC

**Marjorie Farris**  
Richmond, KY

**Mary Ann & Jim Flueck**  
Lexington, KY

**Michael Flueck**  
(VAMPY 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992)  
Brownsburg, IN

**Marleen & Terry Flynn**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Doris & Jim Ford**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Kathy & Bill Francis**  
Louisville, KY

**Caroline Freeman**  
Germantown, TN

**Leanne & John French**  
Louisville, KY

**Daniel & Loretta Fusting**  
Versailles, KY

**John Gallagher**  
Prospect, KY

**Meg & Donnie Gatten**  
Sturgis, KY  
Matching Gift: Alliance Coal, LLC

**Joanna Gaunder**  
(VAMPY 1990)  
Venice, CA

**Sharon & Frank Gieselmann**  
Utica, KY

**Lisa & Daniel Gillen**  
Macon, IL

**Ruthene Glass**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Ellen & Tim Gott**  
(Counselors)  
Bowling Green, KY

**Scott Grant**  
(VAMPY 1995, 1996, 1997)  
Hot Springs, AR

**Nancy & William Gravely**  
Glasgow, KY

**Sharon Grimes**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Sarah & John Grise**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Anne Guillory**  
(Teaching Assistant)  
Louisville, KY

**Tish & Tommy Gumm**  
Glasgow, KY

**Phyllis & John Gump**  
Richmond, KY

**Carolyn & John Hagaman**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Connie & Chuck Haine**  
Claremont, CA

**Sue & Bill Hamilton**  
Pflugerville, TX

**Jane & Randy Hansbrough**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Dana & Kerry Harvey**  
Lexington, KY

**Martha & Robert Haynes**  
Bowling Green, KY

**JoNell & James Henderson**  
Clarkson, TN

**Amanda Hines**  
(SCATS 1983, 1984)  
Bowling Green, KY

**Ione Hines**  
Hardinsburg, KY  
For SCATS or Super Saturdays

**Renita & Bill Hines**  
Calhoun, KY

**Dawn & John Hitron**  
Louisville, KY

**Margaret Holbrook**  
Owensboro, KY

**Gwen & John Hornsby**  
Mandeville, LA

**Regena & Wimpy Hudson**  
Scottsville, KY

**Bea & Harold Isable**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Sherron Jackson**  
Frankfort, KY

**Judy & Lee Johnson**  
Alvaton, KY

**Romanza & Ralph Johnson**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Tina & Bert Johnson**  
Benton, KY

**Ann & Tom Johnston**  
Lexington, KY

**Mary Johnston**  
(VAMPY 2003, 2004, 2005;  
Counselor)  
Lexington, KY

**Sarah & Harvey Johnston**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Pat & Nick Kafoglis**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Dawn & Jim Kammerling**  
Louisville, KY

**Scott Kellie**  
(VAMPY 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995)  
Louisville, KY

**Monica & Jonathan Kern**  
Lexington, KY

**Heather & Bruce Kessler**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Laurie & George Kwok**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Mary Ellen & Charles Lamar**  
Owensboro, KY

**Patricia & Greg Lamb**  
Central City, KY

**Harper Lee**  
(SCATS 1995, 1996;  
VAMPY 1997, 1998; Counselor;  
Teaching Assistant)  
Bowling Green, KY

**Laura & David Lee**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Sue & Young Poe Lee**  
Harlan, KY

**Melissa & Christopher Lind**  
Nashville, TN

**Mimi & Charles Link**  
Elkton, MD

**Jolene & Gerald Lord**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Mary Lyon & John Hollis**  
Battletown, KY  
*Matching Gift: Arch Chemical*

**Dixie & Pete Mahurin**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Therma & Bo Marcol**  
Glasgow, KY

**Donna & Carl Martray**  
Macon, GA

**Diane & Jim Matherly**  
Bay City, MI  
*Matching Gift: Dow Chemical*

**Barbara McClard**  
Scottsville, KY

**William McLean**  
Lumberton, NC

**Beth & Kelly McMasters**  
Crestwood, KY

**Daksha & Prabodh Mehta**  
Elizabethtown, KY

**Kristina & Jason Meredith**  
Leitchfield, KY

**Jennifer & Karl Miller**  
(SCATS 1983)  
Round Rock, TX

**Doris & Jack Mills**  
Owensboro, KY

**Thomas Moody**  
Franklin, KY

**Lyda Moore**  
Bardstown, KY

**Scott Nass**  
(VAMPY 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991;  
Counselor)  
Los Angeles, CA

**Linda & Tom New**  
Memphis, TN

**Amber Norris**  
(SCATS 1995, 1996; VAMPY 1996,  
1997, 1998; Counselor)  
Memphis, TN

**Jan & Ron Peeler**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Gene Pickel**  
Kingston, TN

**Linda & Wynn Radford**  
Hopkinsville, KY  
*In Honor of Paulette Abren & Mike  
Beck of Christian County Schools*

**Nne & Tony Ragland**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Mary & Allen Ralph**  
Scottsville, KY

**Jeff Ream**  
(VAMPY 1992)  
Chicago, IL

**Harriet & Dell Renfro**  
Glasgow, KY

**Pat Richardson**  
Louisville, KY

**Julia & Dick Roberts**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Donna Rogers-Beard**  
St. Louis, MO

**Kimberly & Charles Ross**  
Hendersonville, TN

**Angela & Martin Rowe**  
Harrisburg, IL

**Elizabeth & Gregory Rush**  
Frankfort, KY

**Reba Rye & G. F. Bessinger**  
Frankfort, KY

**Martha & J. T. Sandefur**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Amber Cann Sapp**  
(SCATS 1988, 1989, 1990; Travel to  
London and China; Counselor)  
Crestview Hills, KY

**Madhavi & Murali Santapuram**  
Glasgow, KY

**Jo Jean & Jack Scott**  
Alvaton, KY

**Kim & Mike Simpson**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Janet Skees**  
Louisville, KY

**Diane Skinner**  
Villa Hills, KY

**Janet Smith & John Roberts**  
Louisville, KY

**Joyce Ann & Jim Spiceland**  
Salisbury, NC

**Beth & Joe Stamps**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Eliza Kendrick Strickland**  
(VAMPY 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995;  
Travel to Russia)  
Washington, DC

**Kathy Strunk**  
Nashville, TN

**Grace & Yoo Suh**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Janet & Brad Tassell**  
Bowling Green, KY  
*In Honor of Pat Tassell*

**Mary Nancy Todd**  
Bardstown, KY

**Suzanne Vitale**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Carol & Denny Wedge**  
Bowling Green, KY

**Debra Weiner & Hillel Weinberg**  
Falls Church, VA

**Claudia & Kendrick Wells**  
Louisville, KY

**Mary Ellen Wiederwohl**  
(SCATS 1987, 1988)  
Louisville, KY

**Lucy, Max, & John Max Wilson**  
(VAMPY 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006;  
Gatton Academy 2008; Counselor)  
Hickman, KY

**Judy & Joe Wismann**  
Louisville, KY

**Lori Wittlin**  
(VAMPY 1987, 1988, 1989)  
Arlington, VA

**Jean Wolfenbarger**  
Dandridge, TN

**Donna & David Wooden**  
Leitchfield, KY

**Linda & Stuart Yeoman**  
Bowling Green, KY



## Florence Schneider Hall Featured in National Magazine

Western Kentucky University's Florence Schneider Hall, home of The Center for Gifted Studies and the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky, was featured in the November 2008 issue of *American School & University 2008 Architectural Portfolio*. The magazine, which hosts an annual competition honoring outstanding education facilities, showcases projects selected by a jury comprising American Institute of Architects (AIA) members and school administrators. This is the 26th year the competition has been held. The jury chose to feature Florence Schneider Hall because it is an example of "great spaces for learning that are well-designed [and] multi-faceted." It applauded the project's outstanding design for revitalizing and refreshing the Western Kentucky University campus.

Originally constructed in 1928, Florence Schneider Hall's classical architecture and prominent site have always made it a focal point of campus and a logical choice for the proposed academy. When the historic building was selected as the new home for The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy, the University hired RossTarrant Architects to design a major renovation and restoration project that would create a new, state-of-the-art residential learning and working environment.

Executive Director Julia Roberts said, "Schneider Hall is a beautiful combination of tradition and up-to-date features. I am proud that it is the home of The Center for Gifted Studies and the Gatton Academy."



You're getting ready to step  
in a new direction. Find  
your footing. Be sure of your  
direction. Follow your passion.  
Ride the wave of change if  
there are opportunities.

—DAVID LAIRD  
Commencement Address

## Graduate Earns Prestigious Department of Defense SMART Scholarship

Rachel Bowman, from Murray, has been named a recipient of the Department of Defense (DoD) SMART Scholarship, a nationally-competitive award valued at over \$250,000. The SMART Scholarship (Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation scholarship) was established in 2006 by the DoD to support undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields and to increase the number of civilian scientists and engineers doing research in DoD laboratories. Rachel is the first WKU student to be awarded the SMART Scholarship.

Rachel's award will pay for full tuition and books at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she has chosen to pursue her bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. Also included in the award is a monthly living stipend, annual summer internships at a DoD laboratory, and a guaranteed career position upon graduation with a baccalaureate degree.

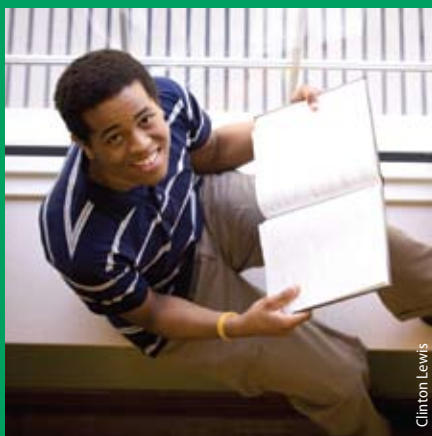
"I'm excited to receive the SMART scholarship because it allows me to focus on my studies at MIT while also getting a hands-on learning experience during the summer as an intern with the DoD," Rachel said. "Once I graduate, I will be able to give back to the country while also pursuing an area I am truly passionate about."

"My preparation from the Gatton Academy is the reason I was able to pursue the SMART scholarship," Rachel explained. "By allowing me to take advanced courses in math and science and do research, the Gatton Academy and WKU have given me the excellent foundation I needed to receive and maintain the SMART Scholarship."



# ACADEMY NAMED TO *Newsweek*'S 2009 LIST OF "THE PUBLIC ELITES"

Each spring, *Newsweek* recognizes the top 5 percent of public schools as measured by the Challenge Index ratio devised by *Washington Post* Education Columnist Jay Mathews. This year, *Newsweek* recognized 1,500 high schools from across the country, but made a separate listing of public elite high schools. Top-performing schools were excluded from the regular list of high schools because of their exceptional quality. Only 16 high schools in the country made this public elite list, and one of them is the Gatton Academy. Though 15 Kentucky high schools appear on *Newsweek*'s list of top-performing high schools, the Gatton Academy marks the first occasion in which a Ken-



tucky high school has been recognized as a member of The Public Elites.

The Gatton Academy now finds itself among the nation's most distinguished high schools. Schools such as

the Bronx High School of Science (New York), Illinois Math Science Academy, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, and Thomas Jefferson High School (Virginia) make perennial appearances on the list. These schools, along with the Gatton Academy, are members of the National Consortium of Specialized Secondary Schools of Math, Science, and Technology (NCSSSMST).

Thus far, 86 of Kentucky's 120 counties have had a student in the Gatton Academy. After all, the Gatton Academy is Kentucky's school for advanced learners with interests in pursuing STEM careers. None of this would have been possible without the vision and tireless efforts of the Kentucky General Assembly.

## Kentucky Association of School Superintendents Visit Western and Schneider Hall

The Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) held its 2009 summer meeting in Bowling Green, and visiting WKU was part of the agenda. Thanks to last year's planning of then-Executive Director Blake Haselton and the leadership of current Executive Director Wilson Sears, superintendents from around the state toured Schneider Hall on June 5 seeing the working offices of The Center extra busy in the summer and the residential side of the Gatton Academy. This visit afforded the opportunity for the superintendents who have had students from their districts admitted to the Gatton Academy to see it for themselves firsthand. For those superintendents who have not had students attend, the tour provided a perspective so they can better inform gifted students of their options.

KASS is a statewide, non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to responding to the unique needs of Kentucky's 174 superintendents in their pursuit of successful schools and academic excellence for the children of Kentucky. They plan to return to Bowling Green next summer.

For more information about KASS, go to their website: <http://kysupts.org>.

## Center Board of Advisors Member Speaks at Academy Graduation

The second Gatton Academy graduation was held on May 16 at Diddle Arena on Western's campus. Fifty-five seniors who made up the first group to complete the two-year program walked the line. A very special person with ties to both The Center and WKU delivered the graduation address. David Laird, senior vice president for Strategy and Business Development at Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's HealthCare in Louisville, serves on The Center's Advisory Board and is a WKU alumnus.

Dr. Larry Laird, David's father, was one of the first Challenge Award winners; The Center has honored people who have made lasting contributions to the education of Kentucky's gifted and talented populations with a Challenge Award. This WKU psychology professor made timeless contributions from offering the first psychology class in gifted education to leading summer programming for gifted young women, from conducting intelligence testing for children to serving as the National Association for Gifted Children's president. It is very fitting that his son, David, continues his father's mission by serving on the Advisory Board for The Center of Gifted Studies.

# LINDA BANDY: SO MUCH MORE THAN A COLLEAGUE

BY JULIA ROBERTS

Sixteen years at The Center for Gifted Studies is more than half of the total years in the history of The Center. That is the length of time that Linda Bandy was an office associate for The Center before she retired in December. During that period of time, Linda was a pleasant voice that often responded to callers and a helpful individual who worked with consultants and teachers requesting materials for Super Saturdays, VAMPY, SCATS, the AP Institute, the Vertical Team Institute, and any of the other programs offered by The Center. Linda was ready and willing to do whatever was needed to make a program work well or help an individual find whatever information was requested. She supported the work of The Center in myriad ways. Julia Roberts said, "How easy it was to work with Linda. She gave her best effort to anything that she was asked to do and willingly contributed her ideas that could be incorporated into our plans. She was an integral member of our team at The Center."

Linda's smile and willingness to do whatever needed to be done were tremendous assets to The Center. Julia Roberts appreciated Linda's knowledge of the needs of The Center amidst the routine of each year – when to order the buses for the AP participants to come to and from the Nashville airport, what to buy as supplies that are frequently needed by Super Saturdays teachers (often finding them at a bargain price), and how to process various forms that are needed prior to each event. Of course, those are only a few examples of the many ways that Linda was ready and willing to prepare for The Center's various programs. Several programs would occur during the same time period, making summertime especially busy at The Center.

Linda remembers the celebration of the twentieth year for The Center as a wonderful time. She and husband Bob were in

charge of the cotton candy machine, and they thoroughly enjoyed the fun of the day. They also appreciated the milestone event that a twentieth year celebration marked for The Center. Staff members at The Center appreciated the willingness and enthusiasm that Linda brought to such activities.

Linda began at The Center in 1992, experiencing office locations in Tate Page Hall, Jones-Jaggers, and Schneider Hall. "Moving The Center from Tate Page Hall to Schneider Hall was one of my most memorable occasions," Linda stated. "Since the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science was Dr. Julia's dream for so many years, we at The Center were overjoyed when the Gatton Academy opened, and we moved to that beautiful workplace. I was so proud and loved to give a tour of our offices to all who visited us."

When reflecting on her years at The Center, Linda said, "Needless to say, The Center will always be a part of my life, I have learned so much, and I feel I have grown because of my association with The Center. We are more of a close family

rather than co-workers, and I will always love Drs. Julia and Richard Roberts for making The Center for Gifted Studies the success it is." The love and respect is reciprocated. Julia Roberts remarks, "I won't be surprised if she helps us register participants as they check in for the Advanced Placement Institute. Linda knows what a busy time that is."

Linda is the grandmother of Scott and Rachel Bandy who have participated in numerous classes in Super Saturdays. While we at The Center are excited that Rachel and Scott now have a full-time grandmother, we certainly do miss Linda, our teammate, colleague, and friend.



“What can brown do for you?” is a slogan that UPS has made familiar. As an advocate, you need to hear that on two levels: one as a catchy advertisement, and, more importantly, two as a great idea. Ask yourself: what can *blank* do for you and your advocacy organization to extend advocacy for gifted education making it both relevant and important in your state? Then fill in that blank with a hot topic that legislators, educators, and citizens are discussing: What can interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) do for you? Rewording UPS’s slogan can refocus advocacy for gifted children in states across the country as well as at the national level.

If you haven’t heard of STEM, you will. Just google *science, technology, engineering, and mathematics*, and you’ll come up with over 54 million hits! From STEM scholarships from the National Science Foundation to the STEM Education Coalition made up of advocates from over 100 educational and professional groups, the nation’s eyes are on those four education and career areas. The STEM Caucus explains that “STEM education is responsible for providing our country with three kinds of intellectual capital:

- Scientists and engineers who will continue the research and development that is central to the economic growth of our country,
- Technologically proficient workers who are capable of dealing with the demands of a science based, high technology workforce; and
- Scientifically literate voters and citizens who make intelligent decisions about public policy and who understand the world around them.”

([www.stemedcaucus.org](http://www.stemedcaucus.org))

STEM careers will create our future – certainly a worthy advocacy goal.

You may ask “Why STEM?” and “Why STEM right now?” Those questions can be answered by acknowledging that developing STEM talent is critical right now if the United States is to remain globally competitive. Nations that are globally competitive are focusing on the preparation of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians who can match or outperform similar professionals in other countries. So even if the word *gifted* is not stated in the discussion of the STEM areas, this interest in STEM creates an interest in gifted young people as they are disproportionately represented in fields that are needed to stimulate the economy plus they take leadership roles in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Momentum comes and goes. Right now momentum for STEM is high, and you don’t want to miss opportunities to boost interest in young people who are gifted in mathematics and science while leaders in your state are speaking out about ways to nurture talents and develop capacity. Various groups within the United States and your state are speaking out about the need to teach high-level math and science in elementary, middle, and high schools. Identifying those groups in your state is a great way to find others who share your interest in developing the talents of gifted children. It is the ideal time to identify

## Partner with STEM to Enhance Opportunities for Gifted Children

BY JULIA ROBERTS & TRACY INMAN

Originally published in *Parenting for High Potential* (2008, September)





old friends who are concerned about the economic future of your state and to make new ones among individuals and groups who are very concerned about the daunting possibility that the United States may not remain in a leadership role in STEM areas.

The first question to ask is who else in your state is vitally interested in developing talent in STEM disciplines. Which groups are placing a priority on STEM areas and for what reasons? The governor's office; your legislators; a state task force focusing on STEM; professional organizations of engineers, mathematicians, and scientists; institutions of higher education – these are all possibilities. Are there schools in your state with a focus on mathematics and science, with one of those perhaps being a statewide residential school? Knowing who else is interested in developing talent in your state is incredibly important. All states have STEM initiatives, and you can learn more about these initiatives at the website for the National Governors Association [www.nga.org].

Has your organization developed a white paper on STEM and/or gifted education? The Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented issued a White Paper on STEM in 2006

Perhaps this would be the time to issue a white paper on gifted education and tie it to the critical role of gifted young people in the economic future of your state. See Colorado's (<http://74.54.42.226/~cagtkids/documents/WhitePaperFinal.pdf>) or Kentucky's ([www.wku.edu/kage/white-paper.html](http://www.wku.edu/kage/white-paper.html)) for ideas. The Colorado Association has "the promise" available on the front page of their website: "The promise is that gifted education will continue to enrich our world and nation with intellectual manpower as we face a changing future. The promise is that all children, including those that are identified as gifted, will achieve to their fullest potential. Gifted individuals account for

the broad majority of new inventions, patents, research and development breakthroughs, and advances in technology" ([www.coloradogifted.org](http://www.coloradogifted.org)).

*Tapping America's Potential*, made up of leading American businesses and technology associations, includes a Business Roundtable section on its website ([www.tap2015.org](http://www.tap2015.org)). There they emphasize the critical role that scientists and engineers play: "Scientists and engineers drive innovation and technological change. They create the knowledge and develop the technologies that define modern life. A degree in science or engineering opens the door to many career paths. The jobs of the future will require creativity and technical understanding. Science and engineering deliver both."

Concern about the potential of losing the U. S.'s competitive edge is being voiced nationally as well as at the state level. *Tapping America's Potential: The Education for Innovation Initiative* (2005) calls on the country "to double the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates with bachelor's degrees by 2015" (p. 1). During a time when an economic downturn is the topic of frequent discussion, the importance of STEM fields takes on new significance. "Past economic studies have estimated as much as 85% of measured growth in U. S. income per capita is due to technological change" (Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century, p. 1). The tie between innovation and economic prosperity is both obvious and important.

What can you and your organization do to take advantage of the current interest in STEM?

1. Identify the STEM initiatives in your state.
2. Become familiar with the national and state reports that call for STEM initiatives and that focus on innovation and creative ideas.

3. Contact individuals and organizations that are working to increase public interest in STEM and begin dialogue with them.
4. Include a strand on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in your conferences, and disseminate that information to organizations that share your interests.
5. Build and maintain partnerships with individuals and organizations working to enhance capacity in STEM fields.

So what can STEM do for you as you advocate for children who are gifted and talented? STEM can provide opportunities to elevate the development of top talent and abilities to a level of primary importance. Emphasis on STEM does not mean that you are not interested in developing talents and abilities in the arts, history, language arts, etc. What it means is that you are taking advantage of the current momentum in the STEM disciplines. Numbers count in advocacy, and voices that join together are most likely to be heard. Partnering with groups that share your organization's goal to develop intellectual capital compounds your potential to advocate. Don't miss opportunities to develop new partnerships that can be long lasting!

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## RESOURCES

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# Project GEMS: The Lighting of a Fire

BY ALLISON BEMISS & DAVID BAXTER



As one of seven federal Jacob K. Javits grants funded in 2008, Project GEMS (Gifted Education in Math and Science) is more than just a \$2 million five-year grant. This partnership between The Center for Gifted Studies and Warren County Public Schools is a talent development initiative serving students with an interest and/or potential in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The identification process casts a broad net, specifically targeting students from populations that are underrepresented in STEM careers.

At the heart of Project GEMS is the GEMS Academy, a magnet school serving 120 Lost River and Cumberland Trace Elementary students in grades three through six. (There are six elementary schools involved in the grant.) Beginning in August, identified students at each grade level will spend one day per week at the magnet school, a brand new facility equipped with a state-of-the-art laboratory and a research library. The school will be located in the Academic-Aquatic Center adjacent to the Warren County Board of Education. Students participating in the GEMS Academy will have opportunities to do the following:

- Address authentic, contemporary issues through problem-based math/science units;
- Collaborate with professionals in the STEM disciplines to develop community partnerships;
- Utilize various technologies to gather information, evaluate data, and disseminate their findings; and
- Work in cluster groups with others who also have a talent or interest in science and mathematics.

Teachers in those two schools plus those in Bristow and North Warren will benefit directly from professional development in problem-based instruction. This type of inquiry learning encourages critical thinking, questioning, investigation, and reflection. Science units developed by the College of William & Mary and mathematics units from the University of Connecticut will provide the core curriculum for the program – both curricula were developed through previous Javits grants. Teachers in these four schools are already building valuable relationships with each other and recognized experts in the field of problem-based learning.

Of the six elementary schools involved in the research grant, Richardsville and Oakland will serve as the control groups. They will have access to current, relevant assessment data in the areas of science and mathematics. These data should help them identify students who have high interest or talent in math and science.

William Butler Yeats once said, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” Kindling this thirst for learning often requires moving beyond the traditional boundaries of textbooks and curricula. The goal of Project GEMS is to ignite that spark in students, providing them with opportunities to engage in hands-on, minds-on units as they explore real-world problems in math and science and develop job skills critical to the 21st century.

# The Center Teams with WKU, Creates Opportunity for Creativity

April 18th was a great day to be creative at the Kentucky Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament. Hosted by The Center for Gifted Studies, more than 60 teams from schools in fifteen Kentucky counties participated. Students in elementary, middle, and high school divisions traveled to Western Kentucky University to compete for spots in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals on May 27-30 at Iowa State University where teams from across the United States and more than 20 countries would compete.

"We were so pleased to be at WKU. I just cannot say how welcome we felt," Kentucky Odyssey Director Joan Coates said. "We enjoyed it so much. We were so happy with the wonderful job that they did. It worked out beautifully. Everyone had an excellent time."



Kevin Kappes, a member of the Gatton Academy's Odyssey of the Mind team, agreed saying that his team had its fair share of challenges but more than its fair share of fun.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international program. It provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Young people must participate as a team member. Team members solve problems that range from building

mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their creative solutions to competitions at the local, state, and world levels.

At WKU, outside of the competition rooms, the evidence of creativity was abundant. Sophisticated scenery featuring intricate mosaics, carefully pieced together with bottle caps,

## Associate Director Tracy Inman Wins Award

Tracy Inman was recognized for her contributions to the field of gifted education at the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education's annual conference in February. Tracy received the Michael Caudill Educator Award. She is a recognized leader for gifted education in Kentucky who has extended her advocacy from the local level to the state and national levels through her willingness to serve on com-



mittees and boards, make presentations, and work with other educators who are seeking greater understanding of gifted children and youth. She and Julia Roberts have published two books through Prufrock Press: *Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Best Practices for the Classroom*, now in its second edition, and *Assessing Differentiated Student Products: A Protocol for Development and Evaluation*. A doctoral student, Tracy serves as the chair for the Advisory Committee for the National Association for Gifted Children's parent magazine, *Parenting for High Potential*.



rolled through the hallways. Fluorescent-colored wigs were combed and adjusted, PVC pipe was located for last-minute set repairs, and a girl wearing a skirt made entirely of window blinds gave instructions to her teammates.

"I would encourage any student to be a part of Odyssey of the Mind because it encourages students to be creative in ways they don't even realize they are capable of," Joan said. "Odyssey of the Mind pulls the very best out of students. They learn to work together, to respect one another's ideas – they just learn a lot."

Each team in the Kentucky state tournament created a solution to one of five problems. The problems included the following: building vehicles for a NASA-sponsored "Earth Trek" problem; humorous performances involving a mechanical animal creature and its "Teach Yer Creature," a classics problem involving "The Lost Labor of Heracles"; building structures weighing 18 grams (approximately the weight of two paper clips) that can handle "Shock Waves" while weights are placed on them; and a team-created "Superstition" with a humorous skit that explains how the superstition came to be. The team's final score was a combination of their Long Term Solution, style points (which is part of their skit), and Spontaneous Problem Solving. Odyssey of the Mind is a program for students looking for ways to flex their creative talent and be a part of a team.

"An Odyssey of the Mind team is one of the greatest groups to work with," Kevin said. "Not only are random ideas and solutions expected, they're encouraged! Finally, there was an outlet for all of the random ideas I have – and not only me, but six other people who are the same way. When you have a group of seven people all like that, you know that whatever happens, it's going to be fun and interesting."

For more information on Odyssey of the Mind, go to [www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com).

# SCATS, VAMPY ALUMNA REFLECTS ON ODYSSEY

BY AMANDA BEERS

(SCATS 2002, 2003; VAMPY 2004, 2005; Counselor 2008, 2009)

Head Coach, Gatton Academy Odyssey of the Mind team



Eight years have flown by since I first was introduced to Odyssey of the Mind. In seventh grade I merely thought of it as an interesting new extra-curricular. Little did I know that I was about to embark on an epic adventure that would shape the rest of my life, an odyssey to remember.

Even after half a lifetime of trying to explain Odyssey of the Mind, the words still escape me. By definition it is an international creative problem solving competition, with participants ranging from the primary level to the collegiate level. However, to label

Odyssey of the Mind as merely another competition would be an injustice. Odyssey of the Mind has taught me that through triumph and failure, in the midst of tears or laughter, friendship matters and the opportunity to learn from our peers is precious.

Through my involvement as a coach and participant, I have been fortunate enough to develop friendships with individuals from across the nation, as well as from every corner of the world. These international relationships form some of my fondest memories of my high school years and spurred within me a desire to travel the world that has shaped my multiple collegiate study abroad experiences. If I would have to pick the ultimate lesson I have learned from Odyssey of the Mind, it would be that laughter is the international language that can break down all barriers.

After graduating from high school, I knew that I could not simply abandon a program that had taught me so much. After the completion of my second year as the head coach of the Carol Martin Gatton Academy Odyssey of the Mind program, I would like to think that I have helped 20 wonderful kids learn a few of the life lessons that are the core of the Odyssey of the Mind program. However, I know the truth is that they have taught me so much more than I could ever teach them.

# A Fitting Challenge

BY HARPER LEE

Marcus Dukes has always had a knack for making things fit. “When I was very young,” Marcus explained, “I remember cutting pictures out of magazines and piecing them back together in interesting ways, forming large collages.” Now a graphic designer for University Publications at Western Kentucky University, Marcus continues to cultivate his talent for fitting things together beautifully and artistically as the chief designer for The Center’s biannual magazine, *The Challenge*. A WKU alumnus, Marcus earned a BFA in graphic design and began interning in University Publications during his senior year of college.

“I started working on *The Challenge* as a student volunteer, under the supervision of the director of publications, Tom Meacham,” Marcus said. “There were other student designers available, but, for some reason, Tom picked me out to begin developing a look for this new publication. It was such a great opportunity. I was glad he trusted me with something this important.”

That first issue of *The Challenge* came out in 1997. Now, over a decade later, Marcus’ hard work, talent, admiration for The Center, and love of art and design continue to make him a great fit for The Center for Gifted Studies.

“I can’t imagine *The Challenge* without Marcus! The best part is that we let Marcus do his thing; we never prescribe colors or layout. The Center is all about talent development, and we wouldn’t



dream of squashing Marcus’s creativity. Julia and I eagerly await each new *Challenge* to see the color palette and design. We’re never disappointed,” explained Tracy Inman, editor and chief writer of *The Challenge*.

Since becoming a full-time part of the University Publications staff in 1999, Marcus has designed a WKU water tower; countless brochures, t-shirts, posters, and newsletters; the *WKU Scholar* magazine, and two WKU-themed Pepsi machines. For The Center, he designs the development brochure, various advertisements, and anything else we ask him to do – including our three displays we use at exhibits. But his favorite project, he said, is *The Challenge*.

“I’m proud to be a part of something so meaningful,” Marcus said. “The Center is so great to work with. I think about *The Challenge* a lot ahead of time. I want to give something a little new to readers as they turn the page. I want them to want to turn the page and see what’s next. I’m part of that. I’m part of the team. If it doesn’t look good, people won’t want to read it or keep it on a coffee table.”

Marcus believes that form follows function. It is his strict adherence to that philosophy that makes all of the various elements of *The Challenge* – color, type, photography – fit together in an appealing and reader-friendly way. To organize all of the information and images of *The Challenge* into a cohesive whole, Marcus is constantly looking for ways to streamline his design and eliminate non-essential elements. He wants *The Challenge* to be simple but powerful.

“I experiment with many layout arrangements to find the best solution,” Marcus said. “I want to establish a rhythm and unity through repetition of visual elements — color, shape, size, placement, type. I want to give readers a clear hierarchy to guide them through the content. And I place a high priority on the details. Details are not details. The details can make or break a publication.”

In the future, Marcus hopes to expand both his skill set and his portfolio by learning more about computer programming languages, animation, and creating more designs for the web. But, he said, he is also very happy at WKU and that he is looking forward to discovering how *The Challenge* will grow and change in the coming years.

“I’m always pushing to strengthen The Center’s visual identity,” Marcus said. “I want *The Challenge* to evolve, but I want each issue to look like it is part of the same family. I help The Center communicate its message to the world, and I want each issue of *The Challenge* to be a little better than the one before.” And each one is!

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