

# Footnotes

## English Department News and Notes

### Dr. Mary Ellen Jones Retires after 44 Years at Wittenberg



Thursday, October 8, Wittenberg University gathered to celebrate the remarkable tenure of English professor and American Studies Director Dr. Mary Ellen Jones. While Jones' career spanned a notable 44 years in Wittenberg classrooms, her accolades outside of teaching would take most of a lifetime to achieve.

Current Chair of the English Department, Dr. Robin Inboden, opened the ceremony by noting the event marks "a significant passage in the life of our English department." Yet those of us who've had the unique pleasure of knowing Jones over the years can agree no tribute to her would be complete unless two items were present: uproarious stories and Greek food.



Photo courtesy of Dr. "Mac"

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Please send news and notes to English Department Chair Robin Inboden, at rinboden@wittenberg.edu, or mail to Patti Birt, English Department, Wittenberg University, P.O. Box 720, Springfield, OH 45501. This issue of *Footnotes* was edited by Matt Wickiser '10 with contributions from Robin Inboden.

### Summer Screenwriting Institute Adapts to Change, Brings Hollywood to Wittenberg

The good news was that Lauren Schmidt '00 had just landed a coveted new job; the bad news was that it started on the day she was to begin the first Wittenberg Summer Screenwriting Institute. But with creativity and commitment, the Institute has offered students an experience perhaps even superior to that originally planned.

Emmy-Award-winning producer Mike Hissrich remained committed to two weeks with the students; Lauren joined via computer video chats and two extended weekend sessions. Playwright Dan Stroeh '01, who had withdrawn from the project earlier in the spring for health reasons, was serendipitously able to contribute several days in the crucial early stages of writing. Associate Professor of English Michael "Mac" McClelland pulled everything together with flexibility and grace, and students just couldn't get enough: they often wouldn't leave at the end of the daily three-hour sessions.

In addition to the dedicated faculty of the Institute, students enjoyed video chats with Hollywood insiders actor Paul Adelstein (*Private Practice*), producer Alex Graves (*West Wing*, *Fringe*), producer Jesse Alexander (*Lost*, *Heroes*), NBC Manager of Drama Programming Charlie Andrews, and writer/producer/creator Aaron Sorkin (*The West Wing*, *The American President*, *Charlie Wilson's War*).

Schmidt is a writer/producer for Ron Howard's *Parenthood* on NBC (debuting 2010), and Hissrich produces NBC's *Day One*, also debuting at midseason.

## 43 English Majors Walk in 2009 Commencement

After a morning filled with clouds, sun, and uncertainty, Wittenberg's May 16, 2009 commencement went forward in a glorious Commencement Hollow. The Class of 2009 included 43 English majors, many of whom also completed minors in journalism or creative writing. Eight of our majors also completed another major, including those in philosophy, religion, physics, Spanish, and theatre.

The English Department's Class of 2009 also boasted an unusually high number of students completing departmental honors theses (in many cases connected to University Honors): eleven students produced honors theses (minimum fifty pages) on subjects ranging from Virginia Woolf to Shakespeare; several wrote creative theses in fiction or poetry.

That morning, English graduates and their families packed the Faculty Dining Room to enjoy Commencement Brunch with a number of faculty members. Professors enjoyed meeting parents, grandparents, and siblings of students and sharing stories of growth and success. After a brief shower at the end of the commencement ceremony itself, graduates rejoined their families and continued to celebrate their achievements.

## Jones continued

Guest speakers for the afternoon included Dr. Cynthia Richards, who read Jones' own account of hearing about President JFK's death while abroad in Greece on a Fulbright teaching fellowship; Dr. Michael McClelland, who read a hilarious and heartfelt letter from former colleague Dr. Dick Veler; D'Arcy Fallon, who read a letter from a 1967 student and mentee of Jones, Peggy Fox, and Steve Shumaker, City Prosecutor of Springfield and one of Jones' many favorite students over the years.

Professor Emeritus J. Arthur Faber presented a letter from one of Jones' closest friends, former professor Harvey Damaser, followed by 2007 graduate Mallory Adams commenting on Jones' infamous upper-level class, *Westward Ho!* Dr. Scot Hinson had the pleasure of reading a letter from the eminent author and close friend for years, Gus Lee. Dr. Rick Incorvati held the honor of concluding the ceremonies by delivering a letter from former chair of the English department, Dr. Terry Otten.

In between letters faculty gave their own kind words at the departure of their longtime friend and colleague, with much laughter and a subtle hint of tears shared by all in Ness Auditorium. A reception followed the tribute, with a luscious spread of Greek food and conversations. Dr. Jones' radiant personality and engaging passion for higher education will continue to echo through Wittenberg's halls, and we wish her the best in her post-retirement pursuits of reading, writing, and cheering fervently for Blue Devils basketball.

## Congrats to 2009 Literary Award Winners!

English 101	<i>Dicko Sow</i>
Sophomore	<i>Laura McLaughlin</i>
Junior	<i>None</i>
Senior	<i>Ronnie Ross</i>
Poetry	<i>Emily Lewis</i>
Fiction	<i>Katrina Ostrander</i>
Non-Fiction	<i>Sara Gillespie</i>
Playwriting	<i>Dan Zeleznik</i>
Creativity	<i>Stephanie Harland</i> <i>Jesse Steele</i>
Excellence in Literary Studies	<i>Andrea Ipjian</i> <i>Ronnie Ross</i>
Koppenhaver Award	<i>Justin Blackwood</i>

## Fall 2009 Colloquium Schedule

### Thursday, September 24

Dr. Ty Buckman  
*Harington's Spaniel: Waggishness, Sprezzatura, and the Explanatory Limits of Materialism*  
Ness Auditorium 4:15-5:30 p.m.

### Thursday October 8

Dr. Mary Ellen Jones  
*A Retirement Celebration and Tribute*  
Ness Auditorium 4:15-5:15 p.m. Reception Following

### Thursday, October 29

Paul Tough, New York Times Magazine and NPR  
*True Stories: Writing Long-Form Journalism*  
Ness Auditorium 4:15-5:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, November 10

*Joseph O'Neill, Award-Winning Author of Netherland Q and A*  
Ness Auditorium 4:15-5:30 p.m.

## Dr. Buckman Entertains and Informs with “Waggish” Presentation

Dr. Ty Buckman kicked off this year’s colloquium series with a presentation of his work on Renaissance author Sir John Harington and the authorial self-representation implied by the design of his luxurious translation of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* in 1596. Although few in the room had read the work, Dr. Buckman’s presentation, titled “Harington’s Spaniel: Waggishness, Sprezzatura, and the Explanatory Limits of Materialism,” made his argument accessible, as he supplied generous passages from Harington’s writings and ultimately “read” the elaborately-designed title page of the edition, which featured, among its classical columns and icons, a picture of Harington’s fervently-loved spaniel admiring the portrait of Harington himself. The presence of the dog in Harington’s title page contributed to Harington’s self-presentation of sprezzatura, or a studied air of casual achievement valued among courtly writers in the Renaissance.

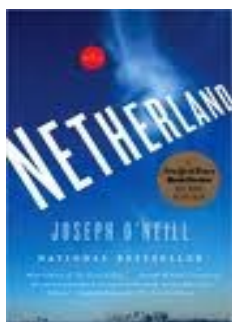
Dr. Buckman also provided insights into the genesis of the project and some of the scholarly pursuits and methods that contributed to the paper, a version of which he had presented earlier this year at “Exploring the Renaissance 2009: An International Conference” in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

## Irish author Joseph O’Neill soon to arrive at Wittenberg

Irish literary success Joseph O’Neill, most popular for his 2008 New York Times Top Ten Book, *Netherland*, will arrive on campus Tuesday, November 10, to speak as part of the Fall Colloquium and 2009/2010 Wittenberg Series.

O’Neill was awarded the 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award, and also nominated for the Man Booker Prize and the Pulitzer Prize. He has received other various awards in non-fiction, journalism, and poetry. *Netherland*, his most acclaimed work, tells the story of a Dutch immigrant in New York City post-September 11, who looks to the game of cricket as a way to transcend cultural barriers.

The department colloquium will begin at 4:15 p.m. in Ness Auditorium, and O’Neill will speak again at 7:30p.m. for the entire campus in Bayley Auditorium.



## Schmidt Wins Recognition as Outstanding Young Alumna

Lauren Schmidt Hissrich '00 was recognized with the Outstanding Young Alumna Award at Wittenberg’s Alumni Award Brunch held during recent Homecoming festivities. The award recognizes professional achievement and also contributions to Wittenberg. Schmidt, who designed and taught the innovative Summer Screenwriting Institute along with her husband, television producer Mike Hissrich, English and creative writing professor Mac McClelland, and Dan Stroeh '01.

Dr. Robin Inboden wrote an introduction in which she recalled Schmidt’s earliest stories, shared when she was a student in Inboden’s Common Learning class. She was impressed then with the maturity of her writing and perspective on her characters’ lives, traits that persist in Schmidt’s writing for such shows as *The West Wing*, *Private Practice*, and the upcoming *Parenthood*. Due to Inboden’s illness, Dr. McClelland graciously delivered the introduction in her stead.

Schmidt, for her part, movingly thanked the English Department, saying that they had helped her believe in her own future as a writer.

Schmidt is the third English major alumni to be recognized with a young alumni award in the last ten years. Dan Stroeh '01 and Jonathan Faber '94 have previously been so recognized.

## Class of 2009 Alumni News and Notes

**Jordan Moore '09** is attending the University of Pittsburgh in the fall to receive a Master's in Library and Information Science.

**Dan Zeleznik '09** lives in Pomona, California, where he’s taken an Americorps position at Cal Poly's Pomona campus. Dan’s in charge of an after-school tutoring program for local youth (very similar to Witt's chapter of the America Reads program). He plans to continue to develop his writing with the hope of publishing down the road—or who knows, maybe producing, since he’ll be within driving distance of L.A.!

**Rachel Morton '09** is spending the next year or two teaching English in Japan through the JET program.

**Anna Reilly '09** attended the NYU Publishing Institute and now lives in New York City.

**Justin Blackwood '09** is pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the University of Iowa.

**Whitney Marshall '09** plans to pursue an M.A.T. and a master's degree in English.

**Stephanie Maxwell '09** is studying for a degree in library and information science at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

**Andrea Ipjian '09** will be doing Teach for America for the next two years. Last summer she trained in Los Angeles, CA at the Summer Institute, and is currently teaching high school English this fall.

Following that she will pursue a JD or PhD.

**Ronnie Ross '09** is teaching high school English at Highland School in Warrenton, VA which is about 45 minutes southwest of D.C.

**Drew Woellert '09** has begun his first year of law school at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

### Other Alumni

**Sally Karg '65** enjoyed teaching for 29 years--journalism and various English classes in junior high, middle school and high school.

**Ted Dieffenbacher '67** continues to live overseas for most of the last 26 years, accompanying his wife, who is a US diplomat. Presently he works in the area of student internships at the University of Papua New Guinea, but has mostly worked in international schools along the way, most recently (prior to PNG) as a high school English teacher at the International School of Kenya.

**Carol R. Anderson '68** received her Certificate to Teach English as a Foreign Language from The New School in 2006 and is now the Director for Career Development and Placement at Milano-The New School for Management and Urban Policy, New York City. She is currently preparing a class of university-educated immigrants to take the TOEFL in order to pursue graduate study in the US. They are from Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, South Korea, Dominican Republic, Turkey, and Greece. She reports that she spends more time teaching information synthesis, academic writing, and critical thinking than grammar or pronunciation.

**Mitchell Ayer '69** is a senior partner in the global law firm of Thompson & Knight in the Houston, Texas office. He is board certified in oil, gas and mineral law and also commercial bankruptcy. He is married to Kathy Hein Ayer '69. They have two

children, three grandchildren, two Newfoundlands, and one cat.

**Kristin (McLaughlin) Culp CFRE '72** has been named Vice President of Advancement for Clark State Community College, here in Springfield. After several jobs in local nonprofit agencies, she came to Clark State 15 years ago, and now oversees development, marketing, public relations, and legislative relations, as well as serving as Executive Director of the Clark State Foundation, which is one of the strongest community college foundations in the country. She also recently completed a term on the national board of the Council for Resource Development, a 1200-member professional organization for community college development officers.

**Joan Berkey '73** received a second bachelors degree in Historic Preservation (Goucher College, 1981) and last year (2008) published her first book, Early Architecture of Cape May County, NJ.

**Ron Janke '74** is an environmental lawyer in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Colleen Shay Murray '86** spent ten years working in and around the Ohio Statehouse as a legislative aide in the Ohio Senate and later working as a legislative affairs representative for both the Association of Independent Colleges and the Ohio Hospital Association. She has been married to Patrick R. Murray (Wittenberg class of 1989) for fifteen years, and they are currently raising their twin twelve-year-old daughters to be independently thinking young persons. Colleen also does a great deal of volunteer work with public school and public library issues. She notes, "I am convinced that my English degree and my entire experience at Wittenberg continues to shape who I am."

**Todd Sweda '88** is the Assistant Headmaster of Gilmour Academy in Gates Mills, Ohio.

**Margaret Williams Blount, Wittenberg Class '88** has received her M.A. in English & American Literature at Washington University in St. Louis and, having spent the last 6 years at home with her two sons, has recently returned to the world of higher education and communications as Associate Director of Admissions/ Director of Recruitment at Randolph College (formerly Randolph-Macon Woman's College) in Lynchburg VA.

**Keith Phipps** edits and writes for "The A.V. Club" section of *The Onion*, popular news parody publication.



**Shuly Cawood '91** is currently a writer/editor with the non-profit organization IntraHealth International, and lives in Johnson City, TN.

**D. Harlan Wilson, Ph.D. '93** is an English professor at Wright State University-Lake Campus in northern Ohio and also has a few new books out. His books include *Blankety Blank: A Memoir of Vulgaria* (novel), *Technologized Desire: Selfhood & the Body in Postcapitalist Science Fiction* (cultural theory and literary criticism), and *Peckinpah: An Ultraviolet Romance* (novella).

**Mimi Hadi '93** is an optometrist currently working for Regional Vision Consultants in Moorestown, NJ.

**Karen Gerboth '93** is the director of university communications, the university editor and the editor of the Wittenberg Magazine. On the personal side, she and her husband, John, also an English major and Wittenberg class of 1993, are the parents of Erin (5) and twins Lauren and Abby (2 ½). John graduated law school in 2007, and the family moved to Springfield where he is a lawyer with Martin, Brown, Hull and Harper LLC.

**Erin Voight '95** received her M.Ed. from BGSU in '02 and now teaches AP English at Rocky River High School in Rocky River, OH. She took the 08-09 school year off to be at home with her daughter, Genevieve, who was born in August 2008.

**Jen Godreau (Berke) '95** is busy raising her daughters (Claire 4, and Sloane 3) while enjoying the warmth of Southwest Florida. She works from home as managing editor for Eli Research Inc., a medical coding newsletter publisher. During her seven years with the company, she has written Pediatric Coding Alert, Otolaryngology Coding Alert, Family Practice Coding Alert, Pediatric Coding Survival Guide - and more than 2,000 pages of coding material.

**Jill-Anne Fowler '96** loves living in Florida as a teen volunteer coordinator at The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast. She coordinates teen volunteers from several different high schools who work with patients and families and recently helped revise a volunteer program curriculum that is used by hospices all over the country!

**Phyllis Eberts '00** is the coordinator in the University Communications Office at Wittenberg.

**Carrie Wheat '99** is a professor in the English Department at the University of Miami in Florida.

**Deborah Cassell '99**, a master's graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, is the editor of *Confection & Snack Retailing*, a BNP Media publication based outside Chicago. Cassell also writes, directs and performs in the Woman's Club of Evanston, Ill.'s spring benefit show, which annually raises more than \$30,000 for local charities. For this year's program, she penned songs about the horrors of working in a cubicle and the perks of wearing granny panties!

**Joe Snider**- has landed in Delray Beach, Florida with his wife (who actually is a cousin of a friend of his from Wittenberg!). After a lengthy internship and brutal testing, he is now a licensed architect, providing consulting services on building projects that are trying to be green. He founded his own company and is slowly building that. He also is branching out in to providing sustainability consulting for businesses and governments. He has a monthly gig now writing a 500 word column for a local magazine which he is trying to use as a stepping stone to more writing about the green world.

**Tom Haushalter '02** completed his M.F.A. in poetry at Columbia University and worked until recently as a publicist with Penguin/Putnam. He has published poems in *The Greensboro Review* and the *New Orleans Review*, among others. Tom and his wife have recently moved to bucolic Vermont.

**Amanda Barth '02** recently returned to the east after three years as a development officer at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. She now works at the College of William & Mary, where she completed her M.Ed. in Higher Education – Policy, Planning and Leadership in 2006—and is the Associate Director of MBA Admissions at the Mason School of Business.

**Elizabeth Ingenthron '02**, is beginning her second year of study in a Ph.D. program for Interdisciplinary Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

**Ted Trautman '07**, after spending two years in Kyrgyzstan with the Peace Corps, is now in New York City enjoying an internship at *Harper's Magazine*.