

## Grant opens door to African American history

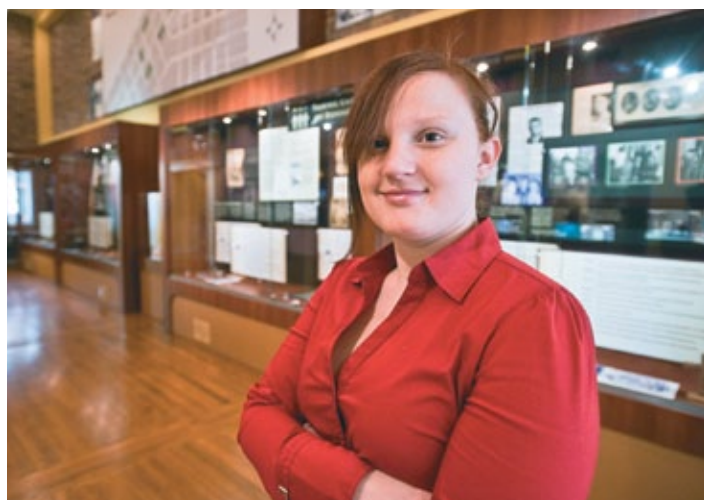
A nearly \$100,000 matching grant secured through the Institute of Library and Museum Services will open the door to a number of opportunities for USI students interested in museum studies. The grant is a collaboration between USI and the Evansville African American Museum. USI was one of only 15 institutions awarded grants totaling more than \$1.5 million. More than 41 institutions applied. **Dr. Tamara Hunt**, professor and chair of history, wrote the grant.

The Evansville African American Museum recently hired curator **Brittany Westbrook** through the grant funding. Westbrook comes to the museum from the National Museum of African American History and Culture, part of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The grant also will fund five semesters of paid internships through summer 2013. The interns will work with the curator to organize, archive, and catalog museum information. The intern for spring 2012 is history major **Kristen Larrick**.

"For students going into museum studies, this internship is a great opportunity to get an inside view into museum planning, interviewing, and organizing," said Hunt. "They are able to work with a museum that's just starting out, which will give them real insight into how museums grow and develop."

Two spring 2012 courses, Introduction to Historic Administration and Introduction to Archives, include a service component tied to the grant. Students are developing and administering a public survey to gauge awareness of the museum and have begun work on a resource guide for African American history in the Evansville area.

With the help of USI's Center for Education Services and Partnerships, a special section of History 130: Issues in American History will be offered in summer 2012. Ten high school students will work with the USI intern on a historical geography project to map changes in the historical African



*History major Megan Milligan gained valuable experience as an intern at the Evansville African American Museum in 2009.*

American community of Baptistown. The project will continue in summer 2013. Students will study how the area has changed from both a historical aspect and in the interest of city planners and other organizations. They will work to uncover trends such as shifting locations of education, entertainment, commercial, and professional services through a series of mapping projects and oral interviews.

"It's a way of collecting memories before they're lost," Hunt said. "Not only are we increasing the knowledge of the students, we're raising the visibility of the history of the African American community and the museum for the public."

Also through the grant, the Division of Outreach and Engagement and History Department offered two workshops on preservation and archives in spring 2012.

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## Dean's Message

We are at an exciting moment in the development of the College of Liberal Arts and are about to move from a College with state and regional recognition to a College that is a player on the national and international stage. As an institution, we are young with a history of continuous growth and change which has put in place a dynamic, creative, and optimistic team. We are dedicated to students and adult learners who are engaged in our community, region, and state with a reputation for quality programs and effective use of resources.



Michael Aakhus

Our new strategic plan developed out of reflection on who we are and what we value, which allows us to tell a compelling story that will secure the necessary resources to shape a future with global possibilities. One of our great assets has always been our stewardship of Historic New Harmony, which through its historical and visionary roots gives us recognition worldwide. The "Boatload of Knowledge" that arrived in New Harmony with Robert Owen represents a tradition of experimentation and innovation which we embrace.

This spring, we will send Dr. Leigh Anne Howard of the Communications Department and Dr. Casey Harrison, director of the Center for Communal Studies, to the New Lanark (Scotland) World Heritage Site, the birthplace of Robert Owen's initial social experiments. The Liberal Arts team will begin the process of developing exchanges for students and faculty and we will work to sustain those contacts in the years to come.

Also this spring, Robert Jeffers will lead his Cathedral Tour of Europe which continues to attract a growing number of students, and Dr. Margaret Skoglund will take students to Turkey with the opportunity to visit the city of Istanbul, one of the world's great culture centers.

This summer, the College will send students to Ghana, West Africa, with Dr. Joseph Uduehi of the Art Department, and a trip is planned to the University of Delhi, India.

The College will continue to support travel that enhances student learning. We look forward to a bright future that engages our students in a complex and diverse world with opportunities to experience countries and cultures first hand.

We also would like to welcome the Department of Social Work, which joined the College in July of last year. Liberal Arts programs in criminal justice, psychology, and sociology intersect well with the social work curriculum, and the departments will complement one another.

## New master's degree offered

The College of Liberal Arts began offering a Master of Arts in Communication degree program in fall 2010. The degree program prepares students for careers or advancement in advertising, public relations, human resources, media management, and non-profit organization leadership, or serves as a springboard for a doctorate in communications. The degree can be completed in two years of full-time study. The program is comprised of 36 semester hours: nine required hours in theory/methodology, 21 elective hours in content courses, and six hours of directed research with thesis and capstone project options. A variety of delivery methods for courses will be offered, including night and weekend classes, distance education, and hybrid offerings. In the Report on the 2007 President's Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development, regional employers indicated that a master's degree in communication was the second highest need in terms of graduate education. **Lauren Rickelman '11**, director of development for the Visiting Nurse Association, was the program's first graduate in December. The addition of a master's degree in communication brings USI's graduate offerings to 11 programs. For more information, contact **Dr. Karen Bonnell**, interim director, at 812/464-1968 or [kbonnell@usi.edu](mailto:kbonnell@usi.edu), or go to [www.usi.edu/libarts/comm/ma-c/](http://www.usi.edu/libarts/comm/ma-c/).



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*The LA Story logo was designed by USI graphic design student M. Eric Hill '03.*



## Faculty spotlight: Amie McKibban

People often ask Dr. Amie McKibban, “What is a community psychologist?”

“My response is multifaceted,” she says. “I am a behavioral scientist and a practitioner, trained to find solutions to community issues by asking how I can keep healthy people healthy, rather than the standard approach of asking why unhealthy people are unhealthy. The field is action-oriented, taking a multidisciplinary approach to creating change.”

“It’s a bottom-up approach,” she says. “That is, finding ways to create opportunities for people to empower themselves, and thus sustain positive change within a setting or community. This is in contrast to a standard top-down approach, where an expert comes in and tells people how to change. The change itself is driven by the very people that change will affect.”

McKibban, assistant professor of psychology, joined the College of Liberal Arts in fall 2009. She holds Bachelor of Science degree in education and Master of Science degree in experimental psychology from Emporia State University, and a Ph.D. in community psychology from Wichita State University.

She discovered a love of teaching as an undergraduate, while tutoring a student in an introductory psychology course. “That experience led me to pursue a degree in secondary education with an emphasis in psychology and special education,” she says. “I quickly learned I loved teaching. The profession lent itself well to my desire to make meaningful connections and influence students who were perceived as the underdog.”

As part of her bachelor’s degree, she was required to take a research methods course in which she conducted a primary research study on life structure and happiness. The study was a success and subsequently published, and McKibban learned that she loved research.

“That was a pivotal moment, ending with the decision to continue my education and obtain a master’s degree. While completing this degree, I continued to teach psychology courses and present research on happiness, as well as attitudes toward individuals in the gay and lesbian community, at local, regional, and national conferences. I found my calling.”

After completing her master’s degree, she accepted a position as a program coordinator for a teen pregnancy prevention



*Amie McKibban has led Safe Zone Workshops to provide areas on campus where individuals affected by homophobia and sexual violence can go for support and assistance.*

program in Lyon County, Kansas. “I greatly enjoyed the more applied community-wide approach to behavior change, but I missed teaching and the university environment.”

The following year, she accepted a one-year position in the Psychology Department at USI and subsequently decided to complete her Ph.D. The community psychology doctoral program at Wichita State offered a way to fulfill her desire to teach as well as use her research skills to influence measurable change in community settings.

After completing the Ph.D., she returned to USI to teach courses in introductory psychology, social psychology, human sexuality, and community psychology. “Here at USI I have been able to explore my passions and create change,” she said. “My research has focused on sexual health, community redevelopment in underserved areas, and program development with regard to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. In staying in line with the practitioner side of my training, I have been working to begin a Safe Zone program with the vision of fostering social justice for and with the local LGBT community, through support, education, and visibility.”

“In doing so, I continually serve within the community as a change agent while fulfilling my passion as an educator.”

## Williams is teaching award winner



Williams

Dr. Steven Williams, associate professor of sociology, is the recipient of the 2011–2012 H. Lee Cooper Core Curriculum Teaching Award honoring a faculty member whose work in University Core courses has been especially creative and successful in furthering UCC goals. Williams teaches hundreds of Core Curriculum students in Principles of Sociology and Introduction to Gender

Studies each year. Williams joined USI in 2000. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Alberta and a Ph.D. from Carleton University, and he is a member of the Pacific Sociological Association, North Central Sociological Association, International Association for the Study of Popular Music, National Women’s Studies Association, and Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association. The award is named in honor of H. Lee Cooper, long-time friend and supporter of USI. It includes a generous stipend, a plaque, and additional monies for travel and related faculty development.

## Excavation site open to the public



*Sarah Swallows, left, and Katie Bickett were among students working with Dr. Mike Strezewski, right, in last year's archeological field school.*

**Dr. Michael Strezewski**, assistant professor of anthropology, will conduct another archaeological field school May 9 through June 8, 2012, in New Harmony, Indiana. Strezewski and his students will continue the excavation of the Harmonist kiln site, located at the corner of North and West streets in New Harmony, where Harmonist potter **Christoph Weber** manufactured redware pottery from 1815 to 1824. "We located one of the fireboxes in 2010," Strezewski said. "This year we will focus on exposing more of the kiln itself and exploring some deposits of discarded sherds." About a dozen students will be working at the site, which will be open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except Memorial Day. USI has been investigating the kiln site since 2009. In 2008, USI partnered with the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites on an excavation at New Harmony's Community House No. 2.

## In memoriam



**Gries**

**Larry F. Gries**, instructor in English, died December 9, 2011, at VNA Charlier Hospice Care Center. Gries was a graduate of Reitz Memorial High School and St. Edwards University, Austin, Texas. After a summer in Paris, France, pursuing a master's degree in arts and communications, he continued at Notre Dame University, graduating in 1975.

He taught at Hendricken High School in Warwick, Rhode Island, and designed sets for the Jazz Festival in Newport. He worked for the Arts Council in San Antonio, Texas, for several years before beginning his 13-year teaching career at John Marshall High School. He was an instructor at USI for 14 years, teaching English and creative writing. He was passionate about teaching, always pushing his students to open their minds to new ideas. Memorial contributions may be made to the Monks of Norcia Foundation, 511 Kearsarge Mountain Rd., Warner, NH 03278 and to Covenant House, Times Square Station, PO Box 731, New York, NY 10108.

## USI students' teaching exam scores are among state's highest

USI's students in English, Modern and Classical Languages, and History received some of the highest score in the state on the Praxis teaching test, Indiana's state licensing test, in 2011. On the Praxis test for French, USI scored highest. The University's scores in English language, literature, and composition placed USI in the top 15 out of 43 institution of higher learning in Indiana, and ahead of seven public institutions. USI students in social science secondary education outscored all but one public institution and placed ninth overall.

## Faculty conduct nationwide study on Habitat homeownership

A team of six USI faculty and staff conducted a nationwide study to research the impact of homeownership on families living in homes built by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) Women Build. The HFHI Women Build program empowers women to learn new construction skills, make connections with other women in the community, build self-esteem, and help other women in need.

Members of the team included **Dr. Ronda Priest**, chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice Studies; **Dr. Matt Hanka**, assistant professor of political science and director of the Master of Public Administration Program; **Dr. Marie Opatrny**, associate professor of social work; **Dr. Iris Phillips**, associate professor of social work; **Dr. Mohammed Khayum**, dean of the College of Business; and **Dr. Katherine Draughon**, executive director of USI's Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment.

Under the auspices of USI's Center for Applied Research, the team developed and implemented a research plan that gathered perceptions of HFHI Women Build homeowners across the United States. The research examined the perceived social and psychological impact of homeownership, satisfaction with the HFHI experience, and perceived social capital impact. Questions about the affiliates' experiences with the program were also addressed.

"The survey questionnaire allowed Habitat homeowners to share different aspects of their experience, both during and after the homeownership process," Opatrny said. "In addition, the inclusion of open-ended questions gave homeowners an opportunity to share their experiences and voice suggestions to Habitat and future homeowners."

HFHI was most interested in how the study results could be used to bring positive changes to the nonprofit housing program.

"This national study revealed that the perceived quality of the neighborhood is a strong indicator of family improvement and self-esteem," Priest said. "Our recommendation to cluster-build will improve the quality of life of the Habitat homeowner and work to improve and stabilize neighborhoods and communities across the country. We have already seen these changes start to take effect locally."

## Students conduct research in India

Last summer, two of three USI students conducting field research in India were from the College of Liberal Arts. The students were in India for two weeks with a Society for Development Studies (SDS) project on social and economic empowerment in resource-strapped communities. The Liberal Arts students on the trip, **Amy Brown** and **Chanse Ford**, conducted field research and analysis under the guidance of SDS faculty and **Dr. Niharika Banerjea**, USI assistant professor of sociology. Banerjea's research interests include globalization, urban and community sociology, and South Asia. Brown, a 2011 graduate in sociology, completed minors in anthropology, biology, and psychology. Ford, a junior in political science, is pursuing minors in journalism and economics. Brown is from Evansville and Ford is from Beech Grove, Indiana. A non-government organization, SDS is based in New Delhi but has an international network. **Dr. Vinay D. Lall**, director general of SDS, visited USI in January to discuss the community empowerment model.



*Sitting (L to R): Dr. Niharika Banerjea, Dr. Vinay D. Lall, and USI student Daniel "D.J." Horstman. Standing: SDS faculty with USI students Chanse Ford (center) and Amy Brown (right).*

## Retirements

**Dr. Guillermo Latorre**, professor of Spanish, **Dr. Carol W. MacKay**, associate professor of French, and **Dr. Thomas M. Rivers**, director of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program and professor of English, will retire effective July 1, 2012. **Dr. Margaret Skoglund**, associate professor of art, will retire effective August 1, 2012. All will receive emeritus/emerita titles in retirement.



Latorre



MacKay



Rivers



Skoglund

## Howard receives service award



Howard

**Dr. Leigh Anne Howard**, associate professor of Communication Studies, is the recipient of the 2011 Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award acknowledging distinguished community service among USI faculty members.

Howard has been an innovator in developing community-based projects for her courses, implementing service learning projects every year since joining the USI faculty in 2000. Since 2001,

she has facilitated a partnership between students in her performance studies classes and the K-12 students at the Boys and Girls Club's Fulton Square Unit. The project enables USI students to study and apply performance theory by working with Smart Moves, the club's drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention program.

She has served as director of the Veterans Oral History Project, an affiliate of the National Veterans History Project organized by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, since 2003. She organized Debate-A-Palooza during the presidential election of 2008, and she has served on many committees at the University, college, and department level. She also has served as a mentor for other faculty members planning service projects in their areas of study.

"Dr. Howard's record is an excellent example of engaged teaching, research, and service—a true model for how a faculty member at an 'engaged' campus should work," said **J. Wayne Rinks**, chair of the Department of Communications.

The Sydney L. and Sadelle Berger Faculty Community Service Award is made possible by the Bergers' son Charles and his wife Leslie. Selected by the USI Faculty and Academic Affairs committee, the award winner is given a plaque and a stipend.



The cast of *RENT*, a USI theatre fall production, gather for a group photo. *RENT*, directed by Eric Altheide, assistant professor of theatre, was chosen to advance to the regional competition of the American College Theater Festival (ACTF) in January. The musical closed USI Theatre's fall season with sold-out shows for each performance, including an added performance that sold out in five hours.

## Support the College of Liberal Arts and USI students with a charitable gift.

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- Donald E. Pitzer History Scholarship
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## Pitzer wins Hoosier Historian Award



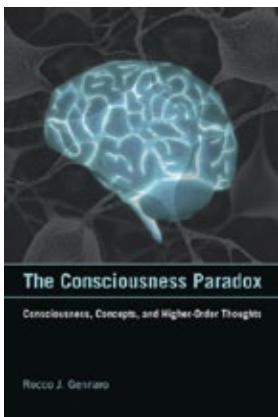
L to R: William Bartelt (IHS board member and former USI instructor), Dr. Donald E. Pitzer, and Connie Pitzer.

The Indiana Historical Society (IHS) presented its 2011 Dorothy Riker Hoosier Historian Award to **Dr. Donald E. Pitzer**, professor emeritus of history and director emeritus of the Center for Communal Studies, at its annual Founders Day Dinner in December in Indianapolis. The Dorothy Riker Hoosier Historian Award is given annually to a historian who has made significant

## Alumni accomplishments

**Chris Dickens '08** (English) been awarded a 2012 MacDowell Colony Fellowship from the nation's leading artist colony. Dickens served as an intern and as associate editor for *Southern Indiana Review*, USI's literary magazine, under the supervision of Ron Mitchell, *SIR* editor and instructor in English, and was winner of the Billy Joe Below Creative Writing Intermediate Award, given in honor of her father by Leisa Belleau, instructor in English. Since graduating *cum laude* from USI, Dickens received his Master of Fine Arts degree from University of North Carolina-Greensboro, published fiction in *Epoch*, won *The Florida Review* Editor's Award for nonfiction, and is currently at work on a memoir

## Genarro published by MIT Press



*The Consciousness Paradox: Consciousness, Concepts, and Higher-Order Thoughts* by **Dr. Rocco J. Gennaro**, chair of the Department of Philosophy, was recently published by MIT Press. Gennaro received his Ph.D. in 1991 from Syracuse University and taught at Indiana State University for 14 years before joining USI in 2009. His primary research and teaching interests are in philosophy of mind/cognitive science, early modern history of philosophy, metaphysics,

and applied ethics. He has published seven books and over 20 articles and book chapters in these areas.

contributions to either the field of historical scholarship or the affairs and activities of the IHS.

Pitzer joined the history faculty in 1967, two years after the University opened. He directed its Center for Communal Studies from 1976 to 2007 and was the first chair of the History Department when USI became a separate state university in 1985.

He was a founder of the Communal Studies Association (CSA) in 1975 and served as its first president and executive director. The CSA granted him its first Distinguished Service Award in 1994, and named the award in his honor. He has contributed to scholarly and intentional community-related publications, including *America's Communal Utopias*. His latest book, *New Harmony Then and Now*, recounts the ideals and heritage of the Harmonist and Owenite founders of New Harmony, Indiana, and features the color photographs of **Darryl Jones**.

USI's **Dr. Darrel Bigham**, director emeritus of Historic Southern Indiana and professor emeritus of history, and **William Bartelt**, former adjunct instructor in history, received the Hoosier Historian Award in 2002 and 2003, respectively. The award has been known as the Dorothy Riker Hoosier Historian Award since 2005.

"about his family's relation to horseracing, motorcycle gangs, and senility."

Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke has selected **Steve Schaefer M '08** to serve as chief of staff. Schaefer holds a Master of Public Administration degree from USI. He formerly served as director of special projects for U.S. Representative Larry Bucshon and vice president of public policy for the Chamber of Commerce of Southwestern Indiana. Schaefer is married to Lisa J. Schaefer '98, former assistant director of Alumni and Volunteer Services at USI. The couple have a two-year-old son, Leo.



**Dr. Michael Omolewa**, a pioneer of adult education and leading education historian, discussed social justice and education initiatives at USI in February. Omolewa is former Ambassador of Nigeria to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). His visit to USI was sponsored by the Department of Social Work's Center for Social Justice Education.

### March 1

RopeWalk Visiting Writers Reading Series: Kiki Petrosino, 5 p.m., Carter Hall D, University Center West. 812/464-1916 or [www.usi.edu/ropewalk](http://www.usi.edu/ropewalk).

### March 5-9

Spring recess.

### March 15

RopeWalk Visiting Writers Reading Series: Maurice Manning, 5 p.m., Carter Hall D, University Center West. 812/464-1916 or [www.usi.edu/ropewalk](http://www.usi.edu/ropewalk).

### March 16

Liberal Arts Faculty Colloquium with Dr. Andrew Buck, 3:30-5 p.m., Kleymeyer Hall, Liberal Arts Center. 812/461-5343.

### March 20-April 1

"Pride and Prejudice" adapted by Jon Jory and "All's Well that Ends Well" by William Shakespeare, Mallette Studio Theatre. 812/465-1668 or [www.usi.edu/theatre](http://www.usi.edu/theatre).

### April 1-29

42nd Annual USI Juried Student Exhibition, McCutchan Art Center/Pace Galleries, Liberal Arts Center. 812/228-5006.

### April 11

Distinguished Scholar Lecture: Dr. W. Robert Connor, director of National Humanities Center: "Why Literature? The Long Term Effects of Studying Languages and Literature," 7 p.m., McCutchan Art Center/Pace Galleries, Liberal Arts Center. 812/465-7026.

### April 13

Liberal Arts Faculty Colloquium with Sarah Bielski, 3:30-5 p.m., Kleymeyer Hall, Liberal Arts Center. 812/461-5343.

### April 14-May 26

Juan Angel Chavez, Artist in Residence, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art. Opening reception 5 p.m. April 14. 800/231-2168 or [www.usi.edu/nhgalleries](http://www.usi.edu/nhgalleries).

### April 14-21

Saturday Art Workshop for Ages 6-14, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Technology Center. 812/464-1989 or [www.usi.edu/outreach](http://www.usi.edu/outreach).

### April 16

Academic Foreign Language High School Bowl, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Carter Hall, University Center West. 812/465-7026.

### April 28

College of Liberal Arts Spring Commencement, noon, Physical Activities Center (PAC). 812/464-1930.

### May 16-September 3

Women's Manuscripts from the John Lawrence Collection, McCutchan Art Center/Pace Galleries, Liberal Arts Center. 812/228-5006.

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For more information, call the College of Liberal Arts at 812/464-1855 or go to [www.usi.edu/libarts](http://www.usi.edu/libarts).

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