

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Travis professorships recognize exceptional faculty

Four of Oakland University's professors were selected for professorships through The Doris and Paul Travis Program Endowed Fund, recognizing outstanding accomplishments in teaching, research and/or professional service in the arts.

"These are faculty identified for their particular artistic and scholarly accomplishments," explained Ron Sudol, dean, College of Arts and Sciences, who recommended the recipients to OU President Gary Russi. "As a group, they represent one of the areas at OU that has a long tradition of strength. The fund enables them to pursue advancement in their field."

The award is named after Doris Eaton Travis and her late husband, Paul. Doris was a former Ziegfeld Follies girl and had a long career as a stage and film actress. She attended the University of Oklahoma and graduated with a degree in history at age 88. In 2004, at the age of 101, she received an honorary doctorate of humanities from Oakland University in recognition of her accomplishments and service within the scope of the arts, sciences, professions and public service.

Travis professorships are awarded every three years from the areas of music, theatre, dance and art. Each receives an annual salary supplement of \$5,000 and a faculty development fund of \$1,700 per year for three years. The professors can use the funds for activities such as attending a conference, participating in a workshop, or bringing in an expert to work with students.

The Travis professors are:

Gregory Cunningham, associate professor and director of bands

Greg Cunningham conducts the Oakland University Wind Symphony, co-conducts the Oakland University Symphonic Band, and teaches conducting and instrumental literature courses at the undergraduate/graduate levels.

In addition to his primary responsibilities as a conductor, Cunningham remains an active participant in all aspects of Oakland University's undergraduate and graduate instrumental music education and applied programs. Cunningham concurrently serves as the music director and principal conductor of the Pontiac Oakland Symphony, a regional semi-professional orchestra "in residence" at Oakland University.

"He does a tremendous job as primary conductor of OU's ensembles," said Sudol. "In addition to his Oakland responsibilities, as the director of the Pontiac Oakland Symphony he leads the symphony, made up of students and professional musicians, several times a year. It is a tremendous opportunity for our students to stretch their abilities under his baton."



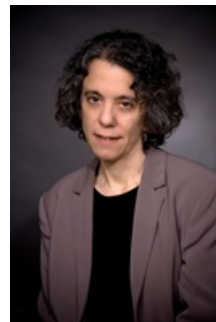
Gregory Cunningham

Andrea Eis, associate professor and chair, Department of Art and Art History

Andrea Eis was instrumental in the development, proposal and implementation of the Studio Art major at Oakland University. The studio art program, now in its fourth year, is one of the fastest growing programs on campus.

She also worked with the School of Education and Human Services to develop the K-12 Art Education certification program that began this year. Eis is co-director of the concentration in Film Aesthetics and History, and teaches film studies and practice along with studio art. She has also taught for The Honors College and the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies. She is a chair of the General Education Committee and a member of the Foundations of Excellence Task Force and the First Year Experience Council.

"Andrea Eis is a well established artist in her own right, and has worked very hard in developing the studio arts program and enabling students to succeed in the program," said Sudol. "The program has enjoyed phenomenal growth. She is exactly the kind of person Mr. and Mrs. Travis had in mind when they created the fund."



Andrea Eis

Eis is spending the first few months of 2008 in Athens, presenting at a conference, and working on her photograph and video project.

Gregory Patterson, associate professor of Dance, dance program director and artistic director of Patterson Rhythm Pace Dance Company

Patterson has been teaching at Oakland for fifteen years. After graduating from the University of Michigan's graduate program, he has developed a noteworthy career in dance performance, teaching and choreography.

Patterson has been dancing professionally for over twenty-five years during which time he has been a member of Harbinger Dance Company, Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, Ann Arbor Dance Works, and Rigmorle Dance Company. He has also performed as a guest artist with both the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and the Doug Elkins Dance Company from New York.

"Greg Patterson has been doing a great job with the dance group, doing all the instruction and choreography," said Sudol. "He is very creative, and he recently assisted the music theatre students with the 'Steel Pier' production, which included a great deal of dancing. This was the area that was closest to Mrs. Travis' heart."



Gregory Patterson

Karen Sheridan, associate professor of theatre

Karen Sheridan, associate professor of theatre in the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance. She is originally from Chicago where she studied theatre at Loyola University. After graduating, Sheridan moved to Paris and studied mime with Etienne Decroux. She attended the Goodman School of Drama and earned her MFA in Acting in 1986.

Sheridan performed in a number of Chicago and world premieres. When not in the theatre, she was teaching at both her alma maters and at Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. In 1990, Sheridan was cast in the national tour of Into the Woods whose 169 performances brought her to 39 states.

"Karen Sheridan is one of the foremost mimes in the country," said Sudol. "She has performed all over the country in comic roles, and she's a great instructor of mime. Karen is also a very talented director. Anyone who has seen Oakland student



Karen Sheridan

productions has seen the wonders she's worked with students."

SUMMARY

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