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PROFILE: 25 YEARS AT UD FOR THE ‘COMMISH’

By Alex Orlowski

Currently in his 25th year at UD, Dean Lovelace reflects, “The only thing special about me is that I’m still on the battlefield, pushing for justice.” Although Lovelace’s many years serving the UD community are a testament to the passion he has for his work, his numerous accomplishments since 1983 speak to the sheer amount of influence he has contributed to both UD and the greater Dayton region.

Lovelace began working in the area of responsible neighborhood development in 1983 by joining Strategies for Responsible Development at UD with Brother Phil Aaron, S.M. He was elected to the Dayton City Commission 10 years later. Now in his fifth consecutive term as a city commissioner, Lovelace also serves the University of Dayton as the director of the Dayton Civic Scholars program at the Fitz Center and chairs the Dayton Community Reinvestment Institute. Throughout his time as a city commissioner, Lovelace has championed key legislative initiatives in the fields of poverty reduction, living wage and Earned Income Tax Credit, anti-predatory lending, and race relations resolutions.

Lovelace has also been a key player in the annual CityLinks Conference held each spring at the University of Dayton, serving as chair of the planning committee. This year’s 23rd conference, scheduled for April 22, is themed “Divided we Fall, Challenges in Greater Dayton.” Lovelace anticipates workshops focusing on first-tier suburbs, the challenge of reducing crime, the state of the local economy, and community-building techniques. Helen Jones-Kelley, director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, will be the keynote speaker. Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., will offer a plenary session.

In everything he does, Lovelace works with the philosophy that individuals and communities need the technical help necessary to determine their futures for themselves. However, he also has come to understand the immense amounts of time and effort necessary to organize others and rally them around a common cause, and dedicates himself to the task. When he does take some time off, he can be found at Cityfolk events or Gilly’s nite club soothing his mind with the sounds of jazz musicians.
Dayton has a great deal to look forward to this spring. In addition to warm temperatures and budding trees, spring 2008 will bring the grand opening of Daybreak’s Opportunity House, located at 605 S. Patterson Blvd. The Opportunity House will be a comprehensive homeless youth service center with 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week access to caring adults.

Centrally located and near Sinclair Community College and the Job Center, the Opportunity House will house an emergency shelter and 24 efficiency apartments for young adults gaining independent living skills. Eighteen of the 24 apartments can accommodate moms with their babies and toddlers. The facility will also contain computer labs, counseling rooms, meeting spaces, administrative offices, and indoor and outdoor recreation spaces. Daybreak expects to serve approximately 500 youth per year in the emergency shelter and independent living facility. “The Opportunity House will allow Daybreak to do everything that they have been doing for the past 33 years, better and with greater efficiency in a more modern space,” said Susan Darcy, development and communications director for Daybreak.

She said the organization looks forward to serving better the youth with whom they work. Many programs will experience minor technical and logistical changes, but the core values will remain the same. For example, life skills have traditionally been taught in a one-on-one atmosphere between the client and case worker. This attention to the client will continue; however, the new facility will also allow for skill development sessions in groups. While the Wayne Avenue facility served Daybreak well, “it was never possible to execute significant group programming … there simply was not enough space. The new facility will allow for group sessions which will augment the individualized learning,” Darcy said.

Throughout the conceptualization and building of the new facility, Daybreak has continued to support the education of UD students through the Semester of Service program. Hosting one student each term, Daybreak caseworkers have facilitated nonprofit and social work experiences for UD students with the independent living program. Semester of Service students accompany caseworkers on home visits and assist young adult clients with job searches, resume writing, interview skills and tutoring.
Funding for the Opportunity House has come from several sources: county and state funding as well as low-income housing tax credits. However, the majority of monetary support has been provided by individual donors who acknowledge the high caliber at which Daybreak works toward their critical mission of eliminating youth homelessness in the Miami Valley. “The generosity of the Dayton community has been overwhelming,” Darcy said. “In fact, it gives me chills when I think about it.”

Congratulations to Daybreak and thank you for your commitment to our Dayton community and UD students!

**SEMMESTER OF SERVICE ORIENTATION DRAWS REFLECTIONS**
*By Danielle Kusner*

Seven undergraduate students, sophomores through seniors, will be completing 450 hours of service this semester at six of the Fitz Center’s partnering agencies: Adventure Central, Salvation Army Booth House, Dakota Center, Daybreak, Dayton Christian Center and East End Community Services.

Students are drawn to Semester of Service with a variety of motivations. Many express a deep desire to serve. Karen Roth, a junior psychology major who is working at the Dakota Center, says, “School opened my eyes to social injustices. I wanted to get my hands dirty and have real-world experiences instead of just learning by the books.” Others participate in Semester of Service as a means to discern their career directions and ways to contribute to society after graduation. Allison Kretz, a senior sociology major who is working at Daybreak, will be attending law school next fall with a focus on public interest law. She says, “I felt inconsistency with my self and education if I were to graduate in sociology yet have had no direct interaction with clients.” All Semester of Service students say they are looking forward to their engagement and interpersonal contact with the community members at their service sites.

New Semester of Service students participate in a week of orientation activities designed by coordinators Jana Strom and Brother Edward Zamierowski, S.M., to break down stereotypes and prepare them for issues they will likely face in working with underprivileged populations. Nathan Krawetzke, a junior history and religious studies major who is working at East End Community Services, said, “The humanity of the people we’re reaching out to in Dayton was clearly more visible in going to Booth House during orientation week; it gave faces to the facts.” During the week, the students also form a sense of identity and support as a community that will be sharing similar experiences of full-time service learning. Expressions like “humbling,” “made me less judgmental” and “gave me a great sense of urgency about this work” describe the appreciation of the Semester of Service group for the challenges of their orientation week.
CIVIC SCHOLARS FINDING UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

By Linda Potyrala

The Dayton Civic Scholars Class of 2008 has distributed the result of its class project, Beyond Brown, to students and faculty at the University of Dayton as well as to sponsors of the publication. The guidebook, which was funded in part by the Office of the President and Enrollment Management, has been receiving great responses, including a feature story in the Flyer News in January. Beyond Brown is meant to guide students to recreational, dining and shopping opportunities in the downtown Dayton area, thereby increasing the visibility of the urban area. By increasing the visibility of downtown, dollars spent by students will increase revenues, having an economic impact that benefits both the student population and the downtown Dayton district. Beyond Brown is available as a free download at http://artssciences.udayton.edu/leadershipincommunity/beyondbrown.asp.

The Class of 2008 also spent a few hours with Lisa Warren, assistant director of the Career Services Center, for an informative afternoon session. Warren greeted the Dayton Civic Scholars and offered them approaches for creating professional résumés. For those who would not immediately need a résumé because graduate school is on the horizon, Warren presented some professional presentation strategies that are useful in any context. She also highlighted the services offered by the center for future job-seeking assistance. Some of these services included the Career Services Web site, the Hire a Flyer network, career fairs as well as individual counseling and coaching sessions to help students maximize their experiences during time spent at the University of Dayton.

After listening to the Dayton Civic Scholars, Warren had some excellent ideas about how to represent the program on a résumé or in the graduate school interviews. “I’m very impressed,” Warren said, “because you have been part of a start-up program and these skills are transferable to business or community development or city government or wherever you choose to go.”

The Class of 2009 met with Brother Ed Zamierowski, S.M., in January to continue its studies with the Bonner Leadership modules. They are currently working on their speakers series project and are narrowing down the list of potential speakers. The students are also heavily involved with service hours and several internships.

The class of 2010 met with speaker and writer Tawan Perry in January and discussed, along with Dean Lovelace, principles of leadership. Perry stressed the importance of mentorship programs. These members are also involved with their service hours and in focusing their project for the future implementation.
FITZ CENTER WELCOMES LINDA POTYRALA

By Suzette Pico

UD alumna Linda Potyrala recently joined the staff of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community as program assistant for the Dayton Civic Scholars. She has experience in writing, editing, training and board development and fundraising for nonprofit organizations. She has edited book manuscripts for American University Press and the North American Center for Marianist Studies. Potyrala has written articles for Manufacturing and Technology Magazine, National Parks and Recreation Magazine, the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the Dayton Daily News, the Catholic Telegraph, and the city of Kettering. She has also coordinated programs for the city of Kettering.

Originally from the Cleveland area, Linda graduated from UD in the '80s with a bachelor's during the winning basketball seasons of Don Donoher and was involved in Christmas on Campus, Flyer Radio, the Flyer News and UD public relations office. She spent a year in Rockaway Park, N.Y., as a Marianist volunteer in Brooklyn Heights. She and her family have been involved in Marianist Family Retreats in Cape May, N.J., and at Governor's Island in Ohio. She is currently studying leadership development through political science. Her goal is to help students in the DCS program realize their full potential in learning, leading and serving through the Marianist model.

Erin Fuller moves to city hall

By Don Vermillion

The Fitz Center will greatly miss the services of graduate assistant Erin Fuller. She provided staffing support for the Neighborhood School Centers project, arranging most of the logistics for neighborhood planning meetings as well as providing support for Neighborhood School Centers Oversight Council meetings. Additionally, Fuller assisted Dean Lovelace with the Dayton Civic Scholars program, serving as a mentor for students and as a program planner. Fuller also was the graduate assistant for the annual Leadership in Building Communities seminar, which this year focused on the Carillon Neighborhood.

Erin began work in January with the city of Dayton in the city commission office as a legislative aide. In that role, she will research issues facing the city commissioners and provide staff support for the overall work of the city commission office.

Erin is a lifelong resident of Dayton. She graduated from Stivers High School and received her undergraduate degree from the University of Dayton. She plans to complete her Master’s in Public Administration from UD in May 2008. The Fitz Center is proud to have Erin Fuller move on to an important community position and wishes her well at city hall.

Above: Linda Potyrala is the new program assistant with the Dayton Civic Scholars.

Below: Erin Fuller is serving as legislative aide in the office of Dayton City Commission.
RIVERS INSTITUTE CONCLUDES PLANNING SEMINAR

By Emily Klein and Tim Shaffer

The Saturday morning meetings of the Rivers Institute Learning Community and Seminar concluded with the final session at the beginning of January. The outcome of the seminar is a 35-page document that captures the work of the group for the entire semester. The document is centered around three desired outcomes: learning and undergraduate research on the river, bringing UD to the river, and bringing Dayton as a community to the river. A program forecast and action plan are developed around these three objectives.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the document is the program forecast. Participants “dreamed big” in terms of the possibilities for future Rivers Institute programming. The forecast includes endeavors such as expanded opportunities for undergraduate theses and service learning centered on the river; a University of Dayton River Center that would be the hub of the University’s activities along the river; an expanded River Stewards program and a Rivers Institute Club; a mobile Rivers Institute laboratory and multiuse space; and a community outreach program. In the coming weeks and months, the Rivers Institute administrative committee will be finalizing the action plan document; establishing a steering board composed of students, faculty, staff and community members; and presenting the plan and budget to the University and Dayton leadership.

Last year, the Faculty Development Committee awarded the Rivers Institute a $10,000 Academic Engagement and Excellence grant funded by the Office of the Provost. The grant was matched by the College of Arts and Sciences. These grant monies were used to launch the six-month Rivers Institute Learning Community and Seminar during both the fall and winter semesters. The successful program has engaged a group of more than 40 students, faculty, staff and community partners in a creative envisioning process. All participants have had the opportunity to develop relationships and work in an especially collaborative environment.

Rivers Institute personnel would like to sincerely thank the Office of the Provost and the College of Arts and Sciences for the financial support of the seminar and facilitator David Ramey of Strategic Leadership Associates for his outstanding facilitation of the planning.

With the seminar report as a foundation, the Rivers Institute is looking to put into action ideas that are designed to educate, engage, challenge and encourage the University community as well as the broader community to reconnect with the wonderful natural world of the river here in our urban setting.
NSC SITE COORDINATORS SELECTED FOR PRESENTATION AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

By Lindsey Bungenstock

As students began their new semester, the Neighborhood School Centers site coordinators were already preparing for the rest of the school year. One major project is a presentation for the upcoming Coalition for Community Schools 10th Anniversary National Forum 2008. The forum, “Community Schools for All,” will be held in Portland, Oregon, April 30-May 2. Due to the design of public school/agency/university partnership involved in the Neighborhood School Centers project, the site coordinators have been selected to present a workshop to the participants of the conference.

Additionally, each of the schools’ student activities has been very successful. This past December, Kiser Neighborhood School Center hosted a Christmas off Campus for 50 kindergartners. Nearly 60 UD students and volunteers helped to set up and monitor games, crafts and physical activities. This program also enabled some of the eighth-grade students to contribute; chosen for their regular attendance and good behavior, many of the eighth-grade students were role models at the event, volunteering their time to make the program a success.

Cleveland School had Parents’ Night Out on a Friday night in January. From 5-9 p.m., parents dropped their children off at the school for arts and crafts, pizza, basketball and the interactive video game Dance, Dance Revolution. About 15 students from 4 to 14 years old attended. Twelve UD students from the UD service organization Gamma Epsilon Lambda helped with the event.

Fairview School is concentrating on its new program, Girls Club. It is a collaboration of the site coordinator, Tashira Collier, one of the UD interns, Julie Salomone, and Fairview School teacher Ms. Howard. The club will meet every Friday from 3:30-5:30 p.m. It includes weekly activities such as candlemaking, cooking, dancing lessons and a visit from downtown YWCA staff. The moderators of the club plan to address important issues for young girls including skin care, body image and media influences.

Edison School is finding creative ways to spend the winter season. Since the weather has kept the Edison High Flyers Community Service Club indoors, the students are spending their time fundraising to help the community. One fundraiser, for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, is called “Pennies for Patients.” It encourages youth to collect spare change to benefit children fighting leukemia and lymphoma. The Edison students are also involved with the Heifer International program. They are collaborating with the Edison Leadership Academy to raise money to purchase a goat for a Sub-Saharan African family.
FITZ CENTER INSTRUCTORS BRING EXPERIENCE, OPPORTUNITY TO THE CLASSROOM

By Jordan Rowan Fannin

Students enrolled in this semester’s Cities and Social Justice course have hit the jackpot. Between Don Vermillion — director of public projects for the Fitz Center, with his 25 years of public service including county administrator for Montgomery County and city manager of Miamisburg — and Brother Ray Fitz, S.M. — Father Ferree Professor of Social Justice and his 23 years as president of the University of Dayton — these instructors have amassed nearly 50 years of experience working with issues of growth, development and the challenge of justice in cities.

Vermillion and Fitz bring a distinctive, hands-on perspective to this class, which they have been teaching since 2004. The course focuses not only on reading scholarly texts dealing with national issues, but also prioritizes connecting those ideas to Dayton and the surrounding region, as well as to students’ own lives, values and choices.

The connection between sound scholarship and community activism is strengthened further through individual and team projects, which will get these students out into the community and enable them to interact with city leaders from 25 surrounding jurisdictions. Through these projects, students will have the opportunity to meet community leaders, as well as to work with nonprofit groups like Habitat for Humanity and public entities like the city of Dayton Planning and Community Development Department.

While students will learn valuable professional skills through experiential learning, such as problem solving and policy analysis and synthesis, both instructors also emphasize that the projects help build interpersonal and collaborative skills that are key to success in their future fields. Additionally, a distinguished group of speakers will address the class, ranging from professionals and civil servants working in Dayton to former Governor Bob Taft and Jon Husted, speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives.

Above (left to right): Don Vermillion and Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., team-teach the Cities and Social Justice course.