Volunteerism on Staten Island

Bonnie Fritz, Assistant Professor Emerita, Counseling, College of Education

Georgiana State University will always hold a very meaningful place in our hearts. The special bonds we formed with Georgia State students, faculty and staff continue with us “up north” in Staten Island, known as New York City’s Borough of Parks, at the College of Staten Island (CSI) where emeritus Bill Fritz is president.

We feel at home here in many ways because Staten Island shares the value of service to community we found at Georgia State. Perhaps the best example of this spirit occurred in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy when we were able to join neighbors across the island working alongside our dedicated elected officials of both parties.

During Sandy, the storm surge poured onto the eastern shore of Staten Island, taking victims and decimating homes, property and the lives of thousands. It crippled this beachfront community of longtime residents and bustling shops, as well as many other parts of New York City.

I found my volunteer role as a front-line responder. A friend of mine from Atlanta, Nell Jones, came to New York, and together we worked out of a distribution center near one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods on the island, Midland Beach. We went door to door, visited with the families whose lives and homes had been instantly uprooted, and helped to provide residents with basic food items and cleaning supplies. My little Smart car was able to navigate the streets filled with debris, allowing us to provide for those in the hardest-to-reach areas in the immediate aftermath of the storm.

On campus, we worked with many response units such as CSI’s social work program and Student Life. Hundreds of student volunteers sprang into action, helping with the cleanup and distribution of food, as well as providing solace and relief to members of our college community, many of whom were directly affected by the surge.

Bill, along with other members of the college administration, worked with elected officials, the Board of Realtors and local faith-based organizations to arrange the setup of an international volunteer coordination center. When CNN’s Anderson Cooper donated 128 turkeys in appreciation of one of our student volunteers, Bill and I joined our college team and delivered the turkeys to multiple support centers and shelters serving those with the greatest need.

Bill’s major role in storm recovery also took a different turn. Before the storm hit, Bill and a team of scientists at the college had modeled storm surge impact to New York harbor at the college’s High Performance Computational Center. They could not have anticipated that Mother Nature was crafting her recipe for a brutal new storm that had many of the same ingredients as their “worst-case” scenario.

A week before they were scheduled to present their findings to the Geological Society of America (GSA), Mother Nature hurled her fury at New York with little rain but an immense storm surge. New York was unexpectedly flooded from the bottom up. Bill’s team had projected water-level impact accurate to within inches, validating the methodology with a sudden surge of reality and creating scientific data of interest to the GSA and community leaders.

Continued on p. 4
Phonographs: A Look Back

Dennis Thompson, Professor Emeritus, Educational Psychology and Special Education, College of Education

I have had an interest in early phonographs and recordings ever since an uncle acquired a 1919 Columbia Grafonola when I was 11 years old. I began my collection by visiting thrift stores in my hometown of Youngstown, Ohio, where for five cents I could acquire a 1920s-vintage copy of a Carlтан Caruso. Caruso had recorded his music in Milan. Caruso’s efforts became an immediate success (which is why, contrary to common belief, his records are not particularly rare today). Caruso was also one of the first celebrities to make record sales the status of an artist was an early incentive for others of the era to follow. In the early 20th century, cylinder records began to fall into decline, and Berliner’s disc became the dominant format. By 1901 his company had become known as the Victor Talking Machine Company, and in 1929 it merged with RCA to become RCA Victor. In 1925 the technology for making records improved, and major change when it transitioned from acoustical to electrical recording. Until that time, all records were made by collecting sound by means of a large amplifying horn in a cramped studio. With the advent of electrical recording, microphones and amplifiers using vacuum tubes came into use and the frequency response more than doubled. For the first time, entire symphony orchestras could be recorded, along with live performances such as full-length operas, right from the studio.

Artists whose careers stretched back into the 19th century came out of retirement to take advantage of the new technology. Until that time, technology’s limitations, which make them very rare today. The phonograph was invented by Thomas Edison in 1877. A recording is a physical medium containing sound. The recording is made by applying a stylus to a rotating cylinder or disk, causing the sound to be etched into the medium. The stylus then plays back the sound by following the etchings. The recording is played back by a phonograph or record player. The phonograph was first developed in the late 19th century as a way to reproduce music. The first phonographs were mechanical devices that used a stylus to scrape against a tinfoil cylinder. The tinfoil cylinder was made by rolling a sheet of tinfoil around a mandrel, or cylindrical core. When the stylus was moved back and forth along the tinfoil, it caused vibrations in the tinfoil that produced sound. The vibrations were then picked up by a microphone, which converted them into electrical signals that could be used to reproduce the sound.

BOOK REVIEW

Faculty Retirement: Best Practices for Navigating the Transition, edited by Clair A. Van Ummersen, Jean M. McLaughlin and Lauren J. Duranteau (Stylus 2014)

This book presents models from 15 colleges and universities identified by the American Council on Education through a competition funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, recognizing their innovative and effective ways to help faculty transition into retirement. It offers clear messages and “best practices” guidance for institutions — human resources personnel, senior administrators and department chairs — as well as for faculty members. The 15 institutions broadly represent three Carnegie institutional classifications (doctoral/ research universities, master’s large universities and baccalaureate).

It is clear from the institutional experiences reported in the book that retirement from college or university teaching or research differs from retirement from other callings. For example, at the threshold of retirement, teachers may experience anxiety over the possible loss of intellectual engagement, contributions to the community and ties to colleagues and students; and cognitive recognition and emotional resonance resulting from being deeply invested in an institution. Most teachers are drawn to the profession out of a love for teaching, non-economic choices. Institutions can address this anxiety and profit from the human capital those teachers represent by recognizing the value of retired faculty members to the academic community and fostering the continued engagement of those who wish it.

One of the strengths of the book is its inclusion of specific, practical steps faculty members and institutions can take to prepare for transitioning into retirement. For faculty, these include such steps as seeking out a retired faculty member to serve as a mentor through the transition, joining retired teacher groups and staying engaged with the institution through events, and using facilities such as the library and fitness center. For institutions, these include providing financial planning assistance, developing transparent communications about transition policies and programs, offering part-time teaching opportunities to interested faculty and sponsoring retiree groups.

A number of forces, legal, demographic and economic, have interacted to raise awareness of the need for examining retirement practices in higher education and were the impetus for this volume. First, federal law outlawing discrimination in employment, including retirement, became the law of the land. Second, the Baby Boomers began in 2008, and the Great Recession that began in 2008 affected retirement plans. Both of these forces have led to many universities taking action to transition into retirement for many in the academy. For those seeking insight, this book is more than helpful. Of course, we should all be concerned about transitioning into retirement for many in the academy. For those seeking insight, this book is more than helpful.
Volunteerism on Staten Island  
continued from page 1

The team became integral to the planning for future events. Bill presented his five-point plan to rebuild and strengthen New York to the city and state, gaining national attention for the college’s research in the New Yorker, on Huffington Post, WABC-TV and the Weather Channel as a panel presenter at Pratt Institute, and as a keynote speaker for Crain’s Rebuilding New York conference. The college has also hosted a planning forum focused on rebuilding with resiliency and been active in the governor’s planning group, where Bill introduced the practice of warning signs similar to those posted along northwestern coasts.

Two years later, the island is still punctuated by stark reminders of the devastation, and the commitment Bill and I feel toward renewing and protecting our many diverse communities grows. The work we valued at Georgia State now continues at CSI and across New York as we rebuild for a more secure future.
2014 Upcoming Events:

We will send all emeriti invitations with complete information about each event closer to the event date. Updated information will also appear on the Emeriti website, emeriti.gsu.edu.

**SEPTMBER**

**Author Series**
Wednesday, September 10 • 11 a.m. • Library South
8th Floor, Colloquial Room

Start the new academic year with a book conversation with the next featured Georgia State faculty author. Dr. Glenn Eskew will talk about his recent book, “Johnny Mercer: Southern Songwriter for the World.” He will be joined by Kevin Fleming, University Library music archivist, who will present items from the Johnny Mercer Archive.

**CURVE Event**
Wednesday, September 10 • 12:30 p.m. • Library South
8th Floor, Colloquial Room

Emeriti will enjoy a light reception and presentation of CURVE: Collaborative University Research and Visualization Environment, followed by the official grand-opening ceremony.

**OCTOBER**

**Benefits Presentation**
October 2014 • Details to come

**DECEMBER**

**Emeriti Holiday Party**
Dec. 7 • 1 p.m. • Rialto Theater, SunTrust Suite

After the holiday reception, guests are invited to attend the 17th annual Georgia State Music Department Holiday Concert. Tickets can be purchased at www.rialtocenter.org or by calling 404-413-9849.

**Annual Address by Provost Palm**
Oct. 8 • 1 p.m. • Location to be announced.

Emeriti will enjoy a light reception and hear Provost Risa Palm’s annual university update followed by the State of the University Address by President Mark Becker.

**NOVEMBER**

**Author Series**
Date TBD • 11 a.m. • Library South, 8th floor Colloquium Room

Emeriti Happenings

Emeriti listen intently at the CDC tour
Bill Fritz gives a presentation on storm recovery
CURVE
Timing for the most recently featured book discussion by a Georgia State author couldn’t have been better. At the same time commemorations for the 150th anniversary of the Civil War in Georgia were being planned, David O’Connell, professor emeritus of French, described his study of Wilbur Kurtz, the transplanted Northerner who became Georgia’s preeminent artist-historian. Kurtz was obsessed with authenticity and technical detail in the subject matter he found most interesting: the antebellum South, the Great Locomotive Chase of 1862 and the Civil War. As an authority on Atlanta history, Kurtz was selected by Margaret Mitchell to be technical adviser and artistic director for the movie version of “Gone with the Wind.” O’Connell proposed the idea of gathering much of Kurtz’s artistic accomplishments into a new local museum, allowing a wider audience to know and appreciate his work.

Seventeen emeriti submitted to multiple ID checks and a car search on May 20 to visit the Center for Disease Control (CDC) headquarters on Clifton Road in Atlanta. Led by two retired-scientist docents, the group gathered at the CDC David Sencer Museum for an introductory video and tour of two levels of the museum. Exhibits illustrated how CDC scientists used detective work, technology and science to crack mystery diseases such as Legionnaires’ disease and the 1950s polio epidemic. With visitor access to dangerous materials labs highly restricted, the group was nonetheless able to get an idea of that scene through a video of scientists working during the 9/11 anthrax scare. A highlight of the trip was arranged by emeritus Glenn Abney, whose neighbor, Bill Mavin, director of the CDC Emergency Operations Center, volunteered to take the group to that nearby building. Standing in the space often seen on TV during a crisis, Georgia State emeriti watched CDC workers monitoring the MERS outbreak in the Middle East and an Ebola outbreak in Africa. It was quite a finish for a highly informative afternoon.