Why Go into Politics? Some Alumni Answer That Question

Secretary of the Senate
Pat Flahaven Retires

Why Go into Politics? Some Alumni Answer That Question
Angelique Wickland
Ventura Village Neighborhood (Minneapolis, Minn.)
Black and white photographic triptych
Each photo is 10 x 10".

These photographs by student Angelique Wickland were selected by the Metropolitan State Art Exhibition Committee for a 2008 Art Purchase Award. The Award is given to encourage the growth and development of student and alumni studio artists and to elevate the profile of the arts on campus.
My first seven months as Metropolitan State University president have brought the opportunity to tell our impressive story to numerous community and business leaders, state legislators, foundation executives and the MnSCU Board of Trustees. We have a unique history of innovative programs, community engagement and outstanding support for adult learners and other nontraditional students. I especially enjoy sharing the personal stories of our students and alumni. Those stories put “flesh” on what makes this institution so special, on the role of our faculty and staff in transforming lives, and on the incredible contribution Metropolitan State is making to the region and to our shared future.

Oddly, Metropolitan State is moving into a period of strategic growth and development even as Minnesota struggles to deal with an economic downturn. Our spring semester enrollments are up 9 percent over one year ago. And our chancellor expects us to grow to 20,000 students by the year 2020. Our current enrollment growth has enabled us to weather reductions in state funding without layoffs, program closures or significantly reduced services. We are “tightening our belts,” of course, where we can do so without disadvantaging students.

At the same time, our strong enrollments and our cost-effectiveness put us in a relatively healthy fiscal position.

What accounts for Metropolitan State’s enrollment growth?
A number of factors come to mind. Our faculty has worked hard to expand the range of courses and degree programs we offer online, and one in three students is enrolled in at least one online course. We also continue to develop new programs that meet emerging needs. Examples include a computer forensics major, an urban teacher education program and a graduate nursing program for people whose undergraduate degree was in some other field. And our popular individualized major enables study in any field needed (for example, terrorism studies, health and spirituality).

Metropolitan State is the most affordable university in the Twin Cities. Our students recognize that in tough economic times, Metropolitan State offers both a high-quality education and a good investment.

A fourth factor in our enrollment growth is Metropolitan State’s success in serving a diverse student body. Thirty percent of our undergraduates are students of color. As of 2008, our students of color have graduation rates comparable to our white students. That is nationally noteworthy, and it makes me very proud of our students, faculty and staff.

Finally, I would like to share a campus event we hosted in January as part of our American Democracy Project. On Inauguration Day, more than 300 Metropolitan State students, faculty and staff gathered on the Saint Paul Campus to witness and celebrate the inauguration of President Obama. We noted the historic significance of the event—a 200-year tradition of the peaceful transfer of power, and a moment in time when we stepped over a racial barrier. Democrat, Republican, Independent or other—we all celebrated together. As we did so, three bald eagles circled outside the Great Hall window.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

Sincerely,

Sue K. Hammersmith, president
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In support of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, Buzz magazine is printed on a 30 percent recycled paper by Bolger, Minneapolis, which is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
10 ways to be part of the alumni community

Graduation doesn’t mean good-bye. Metropolitan State graduates automatically become members of the Alumni Association, and we hope you stay in touch. Here are 10 ways you can do that.

1. Career Link—an online career development tool through which alumni can volunteer to be a networking contact for those who are in a job search, or to search for jobs themselves. Find out more online at www.metrostate.edu/career/.

2. Library Privileges
   - Five books checked out for 28 days
   - Five CDs/DVDs checked out for 14 days
   - Five inter-library loans per month
   - Access to all Metropolitan State online databases when visiting the library
   - Remote access to many online databases through www.elm4you.org/databases
   - Research assistance provided by professional librarians in-person or via e-mail (library.services@metrostate.edu) or telephone 651-793-1614

3. Travel with other alumni. The Alumni Association is offering a trip to Washington, D.C. over the Fourth of July holiday.

4. Discounts—there are alumni discounts for insurance, hotels and car rentals.

5. Events—events are scheduled throughout the year. Two this spring include the Celebrating Excellence dinner and the College of Management dinner.

6. BuzzAlum—join our word-of-mouth marketing campaign. A BuzzAlum shares information about Metropolitan State with prospective students and receives rewards for doing that.

7. Noteworthy—send the Alumni Relations Office the news about your accomplishments and we’ll include it in the alumni magazine.

8. Volunteer—there are many ways to support Metropolitan State through volunteer activities. Each year we are in need of volunteers for commencement, Grad Expo and for a variety of opportunities with school children through our Center for Community-Based Learning.

9. Update your contact information on the alumni Web site. It’s easy to do online or with a phone call or letter. If we have your current contact information, you’ll be sure to receive details on alumni activities.

10. E-newsletter—join the thousands of our alumni who each month receive our e-newsletter message about all the ways to be part of the alumni community.

The best way to find out about alumni opportunities: check out our updated Web site at www.metrostate.edu/msweb/community/alumni/index.html.

Hope you’ll stay in touch!

alumni.relations@metrostate.edu

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS
FRONT ROW (L–R) Earlsworth Letang ('05), Kathy Burnham ('92), Robert J. Hernz ('93), David Therkelsen ('74); BACK ROW (L–R) Lynda Zimmerman ('02), Virginie Sanchez ('05), Ruby Lee ('93), Nancy A. Wolf ('07), Dr. G. George Wallin ('82), Basha Shaik ('07). Not pictured are James Lukaszewski ('74), Caroline Lowe ('02) and Alpha Mshihiiri ('02).
Patricia Duffy

When Patricia Duffy enrolled in a college course a few years ago as a senior citizen, she triggered a startling comment from a young male classmate. “What's an old lady like you doing in class?”

Her classmates and the professor were appalled. But instead of criticizing him, Duffy responded evenly. “Maybe I didn’t have the same opportunities you did. My parents couldn’t pay for my education. I’m from a family where there was a lot of illness and we kids had to work as soon as we were able to. This is the first opportunity I’ve had to attend college full time.” She added, “I hope you and I can grow together.”

She later invited the young man to chat over coffee. They became pals and he later apologized to Duffy in front of the class for his comments.

Now, at age 64, Duffy has made many friends in her college classes the past several years. In fact, she considers that befriending part of her ministry. At the same time, she has succeeded academically; Duffy was selected fall semester outstanding student in the university's First College, graduating with a 3.96 GPA.

“I was ecstatic,” said Duffy, when she learned she received the outstanding student award.

More importantly, she’s counting on what she learned from her college course work to help make a difference in the lives of others, particularly the elderly. As it is, many of her classmates aren’t likely to forget this intense, 4’11” dynamo who has battled disabilities that would have thwarted most people from completing college.

Because of vision difficulties, she requires special equipment that enlarges print on books or articles. A volunteer from each class takes notes for her on a specially designed laptop computer. With no hearing in her left ear and minimal hearing in her right, she dons a receiver that boosts the volume from microphone-wearing instructors. Compounding matters, Duffy’s car was rear-ended this past spring, causing painful neck and spine herniations that require therapy seven days a week.

But don’t dare call her “disabled.”

“Disabled” is something society labels you with,” said Duffy, an expert lip reader. “I can do everything it takes to be a successful student; I just need the right equipment.”

Duffy centers herself with a self-designed “Wheel of Life,” which lists various activities like “Friends/Social Life,” “Spirituality/Faith” and “Education/Lifelong Learning” that underscore the need to achieve balance in her busy life. She also follows the spiritual counsel of her beloved grandmother, who died years ago. In fact, Duffy acted out a favorite adage of her grandmother’s at the end of several Metropolitan State classes. “She used to say, ‘When you cross someone's path and you’re not sure you’ll meet them again, make certain you leave them with a little bit of wisdom, a whole lot of love and something sweet for the journey.’ ”

So Duffy offers each classmate a handmade bookmark inscribed with this quote from Gandhi: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Then, before students exit, she offers them a warm hug and presents a silver “LOVE” box with two chocolates inside.

“It’s surprising how much impact that has had on my classmates and instructors,” she said, recalling their touching comments and notes. “They don’t forget you.”

Ultimately, Duffy—whose individualized major focused on leadership service, health and spirituality—intends to assist the elderly. That’s a departure from what she did for
about 40 years in New York City, where she worked as a senior executive secretary, administrator and a self-taught computer technician and instructor.

After arriving in the Twin Cities, she attended Normandale Community College, from which she graduated with academic honors in 2005. She was local and regional officer for the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and attended a Summer Honors Institute in UCLA for the academically gifted.

Even with a crammed schedule, Duffy volunteers 70 or more hours monthly for organizations benefiting the elderly, including Little Brothers—Friends of the Elderly and Lutheran Social Service. She recently completed a Metropolitan State internship for the Minnesota Network for Abuse in Later Life.

“One of my passions is journeying with people in the end stages of life,” said Duffy, who has also volunteered for Loaves & Fishes and Habitat for Humanity. “There is a great need to be with those who have no one to be with them in their last days. The most important thing you can do is help them come to a place of inner peace and acceptance.”

“I would like to eventually direct a special center for the elderly, where they are cared for in a holistic, family-type environment rather than an institutional setting,” said Duffy. “Too many facilities give the elderly three meals and a bed and they are then pushed into a corner for the rest of the day. That has to change. We must give the elderly the respect they deserve.”

Jennifer Edel

Jennifer Edel was selected as the fall 2008 outstanding student in the School of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. In January, Edel became the coordinator of training and community partnerships for the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches’ Community Justice Project. The project recruits volunteers to mentor Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility offenders. While she was a student, Edel had interned for the project and was a volunteer mentor.

Edel received her associate degree in 2006 from Anoka-Ramsey Community College. In 2004, she graduated with academic honors from Spring Lake Park High School, where she was active in mentoring students and participating in a health care program, the student senate and a creative writing group. During high school, she also earned certificates as an emergency medical technician and first responder.

Edel is a member of the Minnesota Community Corrections Association and plans a career in criminal justice. She also intends to pursue a master’s degree in forensic psychology.

“I was very surprised and happy to win the outstanding student award,” said Edel, who majored in criminal justice.

Peter Fiske

Peter Fiske, a WCCO-TV community relations representative, was chosen top undergraduate student in the university’s College of Arts and Sciences. He was also selected to speak at Metropolitan State’s fall commencement at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Commencement was not the first event in which Fiske has played a key role. As part of his work at WCCO-TV, he was a field producer for the 2007 and 2008 Holidazzle Parade broadcasts. He was also a co-coordinator for WCCO’s WE Power at the
Chris Hirdler

Chris Hirdler overheard doctors tell his family a devastating, life-changing message: Chances are Chris will never walk again.

His first reaction: I’d rather die than not walk again. Hirdler’s follow-up response: I’ll show them I will walk again.

He underwent thousands of hours of grueling physical therapy to prove the doctors were wrong. Not only has he managed to walk again since breaking his neck in June 2005, he has redirected his life. A self-described party animal in his teens and early 20s, a more purposeful Hirdler graduated with academic honors on Dec. 16.

“If you had told me three years ago that I’d be getting a bachelor’s degree, I would have laughed at you,” said Hirdler, who majored in alcohol and drug counseling. At the same time, he is willing to present himself as Exhibit A of what can happen if you drink alcohol to excess.

Back in spring 2005, the New Prague resident often quaffed six-packs of beer while driving his 1996 Ford Contour. That recklessness was despite knowing that alcoholism ran in his family for several generations. In March of that year, he received a DUI, temporarily losing his license.

“Like a lot of addicts, I told myself I would never drink again after that,” said Hirdler, a 2000 New Prague High School graduate who lettered in football and basketball. “But after appearing in court and getting my fine, I went out and got drunk the very next night.”

On June 11, 2005, he was again drinking heavily at his family’s lake cabin in LeSueur County. He dived off the dock into shallow water and his head slammed into the lake bottom, fracturing his neck. His fiancée Amanda dragged the unconscious Hirdler from the water and he was airlifted to North Memorial Hospital, Robbinsdale. He couldn’t move any of his limbs.

After overhearing the doctors’ initial verdict, Hirdler was quickly motivated to show them they were mistaken; he would walk out of the hospital. He endured punishing rounds of therapy in the morning and evening, sleeping for hours after each session to recover. Slowly, he gained some function in his fingers, hands and legs. Humbled, he relearned how to go to the bathroom, brush his teeth, shower, dress and feed himself.

“The doctors were amazed when they saw me slowly getting my functioning back,” said Hirdler, 26. “They said only a small percentage of people who did what I did would ever walk again… .”

The accident not only caused a physical transformation in Hirdler, but a mental, emotional and even spiritual one. He enrolled at Metropolitan State in fall 2006 determined to graduate and make a difference in the lives of others. Hirdler graduated with a 3.95 GPA and was selected outstanding student in the university’s College of Professional Studies. He is the first in his family to graduate from college.

He has already secured a job as program assistant technician at The Haven, a Shakopee intensive outpatient treatment facility, where he earlier interned. He will be assisting men with chemical dependency issues.

As much as his college degree and job mean to him, Hirdler has circled another date this summer that is even more significant. On June 27, he and his fiancée will be getting married.

“I’m just so excited that I will be able to walk down the aisle,” said Hirdler. “It’s very special to me because I’ve been through so much and had to relearn how to walk. My fiancée has always been there for me, kind of serving what I call the third leg of my tripod. I wouldn’t be where I am now without her.”
Tom Meier

Tom Meier was selected the fall 2008 outstanding graduate student in the College of Management, which adds another item to his list of accomplishments.

Meier has participated in marathons and triathlons, including the Ironman triathlon. Meier was once on the U.S. rowing team.

Meier has volunteered for various organizations as a paramedic, including the Olympic Games in Atlanta, the Metrodome and the American Red Cross.

Meier is the operations director at RS Eden, a Minneapolis social-service agency that specializes in helping those who’ve served in prison reenter society and/or who have chemical dependency issues. He was previously information technology (IT) director and coordinator of management information systems at RS Eden. Before that, Meier was a paramedic and a property manager for an investment group that provided supportive housing. He is also founder of Pike Island Nonprofit Technology, a small business that provides IT services to Twin Cities-area nonprofit agencies.

As an undergraduate, Meier attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he majored in anthropology and was on the rowing team for four years. The Boulder, Colo., native graduated from Boulder High School, where he was a varsity athlete in football, track and field, and swimming.

Kristin Payne

Kristin Payne brought energy, insight and “unflagging curiosity” to every class said her advisor, Craig Hansen. That was a reason that Payne was selected fall semester outstanding graduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

“I was quite surprised. It was an honor to be considered and to have won,” said Payne, a graduate and assistant in the technical communication program.

Payne is a teaching and learning technologist at Luther Seminary, a Saint Paul higher-education institution offering master’s and doctorate degrees in theology and Christian education. Previously, she was program coordinator for Luther Seminary’s graduate programs and served as marketing manager for academic publishers.

She graduated in 1998 from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, where she majored in English, earned academic honors and was active in music and a literary arts publication. The Denver, Colo., native graduated with academic honors from Denver Christian High School.

Anthony Strand

Anthony Strand was selected the fall 2008 outstanding undergraduate student in the university’s College of Management. “It was a bit of a shock,” said Strand when told he won the award.

Strand has worked the past 12 years for Express Scripts, a pharmaceutical concern with a Bloomington office where he is a senior systems architect.

Until recently, Strand played keyboard, guitar and was a vocalist for The Circle Dogs, a Twin Cities-area rock-and-roll band.

Strand graduated with an associate degree from Brown College, Minneapolis, in 1989. The Benson, Minn., native graduated from Benson High School, where he was active in varsity wrestling and band.

He is the father of two children, one of whom attends Metropolitan State.
A Job Well Done

By Harvey Meyer

Patrick Flahaven ('92, '99)
RETIRES AS SECRETARY OF THE MINNESOTA SENATE

From a second-floor office in the State Capitol, Patrick Flahaven witnessed Minnesota senators on some of their worst behavior. But ask Flahaven, the state’s long-tenured secretary of the Minnesota Senate, to divulge any of those juicy, behind-the-scenes moments and this is what you hear:

Not a peep.

As far as Flahaven is concerned, what happens among state senators at the capitol stays at the capitol. His tact and diplomacy earned senators’ trust and his competence and professionalism their enduring respect. Except for 1973, the first and only time he drew opposition, senators unanimously reelected him to consecutive two-year terms. When Flahaven retired on Jan. 6, he had been senate secretary for 36 years, easily making him the longest serving person in that post in Minnesota history.

One reason he sought retirement at age 65 was a cancerous tumor on his neck, which was removed, leaving a slight scar. “While the cancer
HIS TACT AND DIPLOMACY EARNED SENATORS’ TRUST AND HIS COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM THEIR ENDURING RESPECT.
is gone and my health is good,” said Flahaven, “something like that makes you think about how you want to spend your remaining years.”

As secretary of the senate, Flahaven oversaw many changes that ultimately benefited everyday Minnesotans. He spearheaded efforts to professionalize and add year-round senate legislative staff. He was a leading proponent of adding widespread technological improvements, which led to enhanced communication between senators and their constituents, better recordkeeping and more information disseminated to the public. Under Flahaven’s watch, Senate Media Services was launched, which meant televising senate floor sessions, most committee meetings and some special programs.

Throughout his career, Flahaven was the go-to person and referee for many parliamentary procedure matters. Among other things, that meant having an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the Minnesota constitution, many statutes, dozens of senate rules and the 577-page Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure.

“You try to be fair to all the senators,” said Flahaven. “You try to apply the rules evenly so that you’re giving the minority party a chance to be heard and enable the majority party a chance to keep operations running.”

Over the years, Flahaven’s expertise in parliamentary procedure gained renown; senate secretaries from other states frequently sought his counsel. He was once president of the American Society of Clerks and Secretaries and staff chair of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

During the 1990s, he was invited by the federal government to travel abroad and deliver parliamentary education and training to emerging democracies ranging from Albania, Bulgaria and Hungary to Namibia, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

“It was fun and challenging to pass along the information I learned all those years in a whole new setting,” said Flahaven. “They were appreciative of us. That experience helped me because, in explaining our systems and processes, you have to really stop and think of what you’re saying to make things clear and understandable. But you also have to be careful not to be overbearing; you don’t want the attitude that, ‘We’re from America and this is how you do things.’”

Flahaven credits his Metropolitan State education—he received his master of management and administration in 1992 and his M.B.A. in 1999—with polishing his administrative skills. He directly supervised about 80 senate staffers, and some of his most enjoyable moments involved nurturing staff members and watching them blossom.

“I told a number of my staff members that Metropolitan State was a good place to get an education, a friendly atmosphere for adult learners who are working,” said Flahaven. “And I told them the price was right. Some did end up attending the university.”

As much as he appreciated the management, finance and other classes, Flahaven said he cherished interactions with Metropolitan State’s diverse student body, especially those from different countries. He treasured exchanges about cultural matters and their countries’ ways of doing business.

Flahaven’s fondness for the university was such that he joined the Metropolitan State Foundation Board in 1992 and served for a decade. He was a member of the Foundation’s executive and public affairs advisory committees. For years, Flahaven counseled the university on strategic legislative issues.

“I feel close to Metropolitan State,” he said. “It is doing important work. Being on the Foundation Board was a good way to be supportive of the university and give back a little.”

Only weeks now into his retirement, Flahaven said he plans on tooting his own horn more—specifically, a trombone, which he has played for four decades. While many of his senate colleagues were unaware of his musical talent, he has played in big bands, community concert bands and a large brass band in the Twin Cities.
Why go into Politics?

SOME ALUMNI ANSWER THAT QUESTION

Irene Bender (’95)
Dassel-Cokato Area School Board Member
First Elected to Public Office in 2008

Why did you go into politics? I've worked on a tight budget, I like to see things happen, and education is just in my heart. I had been volunteering at the Dassel-Cokato Middle School since I retired about five years ago. Prior to that, I had worked in the nonprofit field for more than 20 years, and I felt that my experience would be helpful.

My mother emigrated from Germany in 1922, and it wasn't until several years ago that I finally realized she had learned to read from listening to me read when I was in grade school. She loved my library books. We were living in a small town in north central Minnesota. Since this was before ESL, she really had to struggle to learn the language.

When my first daughter was born, we found out she had a hearing loss. Because of that, I became a regular at her school trying to get help for her. Now she works at Denver Children’s Hospital as a parent advocate for babies who are identified with hearing loss or deafness. My son had a learning disability, and he had to struggle, too. But he’s now managing Legacy Travel not far from Metro State. My other daughter is a school principal.

When I graduated from high school in 1954, not everyone was encouraged to go to college. It wasn’t until my children received their degrees that I started taking classes here and there. When I ended up with enough credits that I could see I might be able to achieve a degree, I transferred to Metro State.

Education is in my heart for a lot of reasons. I think it’s so important that we all become involved in our local school system regardless of the level. And, at this point of my life, I have time and energy for serving on the school board.

What issue do you consider to be your top priority? Obviously, at this time, it’s going to be funding. I really believe in positive and creative solutions and don’t like to focus on the negative, but it’s just becoming more and more obvious that we are in a serious economic situation. I think that makes it all the more important that students receive the very best education they can achieve.

Leo Foley (’74)
Minnesota State Senator, District 47
First Elected to Public Office in 1996

Why did you go into politics? My father was a county assessor. My first involvement was as a district party chair. I worked as a lobbyist for at least 12 years for the state highway patrol. The more I became exposed to politics, the more I wanted to participate.

What issue is your top priority? One strong interest I have is the health care area, specifically the mental health area. I served on the state advisory council for mental health, and I’ve been a director of the Family Life Center in Coon Rapids. A driving factor in my interest has been that my wife—after long struggles with depression—committed suicide, so she left me. It still hurts even after more than 20 years.

I served 12 years on the health and human services committees, both on the policy side and the budget side. When you see folks without housing, without jobs, and when we are an affluent society—it just isn’t right.

Mike Gamache (’92)
Mayor of Andover
First Elected to Public Office in 2000

Why did you go into politics? The mayor’s office interested me because of the fact that you can do so many different things on a local level. I had been the president of our Andover Athletic Association for a number of years, so you get to know a lot of what’s going on in the park system and different things within the city. In 2000, there were issues that I wanted to address, and I had a number of people who were willing to work on a campaign for me.
Why go into Politics?

What issue is your top priority? One is to continue with the development of our commercial area. That part of town was once a Superfund dump site that had been cleaned up over the years. It was also littered with a number of different auto parts establishments. We have seen so many changes within our commercial area over the last six to eight years—the Target store came in, and now we’re going to have the Anoka County Sheriff’s Department moving to a new building in Andover. We have a lot of good opportunities and chances for new growth within our city, and that’s pretty exciting right now, even though we are dealing with budget issues. The excitement of what’s happening in our commercial district really gives you hope for the future.

Stanley Karwoski ('87)
OAKDALE CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2002

Why did you go into politics? My interest evolved over the years. As a young kid growing up on the East Side, my family was “into” politics and current events, and I certainly had that in my blood. As I grew older, I cultivated that interest. About 12 years ago, I found a niche with the city of Oakdale’s park and planning commission. After being on the park and planning commission for several years, I thought I would like to play a role in the city council—I wanted to contribute at a different level of leadership in the community.

That’s how it evolved. I’m enjoying the responsibility, and I don’t take it lightly. I do the things that any elected official should do: be observant to what your community needs, try to represent all the people in your community, work hard, study the issues and make a well-informed decision.

What issue is your top priority? An issue that I think is number one is the redevelopment of Oakdale. If you keep your community vital with housing, safe neighborhoods and good parks, you’ll always be vibrant, and people will want to live in your community.

We are trying to retain and attract businesses that provide good living-wage jobs so that people can afford to buy homes. Having jobs in the community is key to keeping the housing stock in good shape.

Ken Kelash ('84)
MINNESOTA STATE SENATOR, DISTRICT 63
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2008

Why did you go into politics? I jumped into the race because I had some free time and I planned on getting into politics—or some kind of government service—after my retirement. I’ve been active for about 20 years in the DFL Party, serving as a precinct chair, a district chair, campaign volunteer, and so on. I was a business agent with the Carpenters’ Union for 13 years and retired in June.

Six years ago, I was awarded a Bush Leadership Fellowship and used that to go to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. I have a master’s in public administration from there. In the five years since then, I worked for the Carpenters’ Union, I worked in political campaigns, and I sat on several boards such as the workforce investment board, the neighborhood revitalization program, and the school-to-career program. So I’ve been dabbling in public policy and I’ve enjoyed the meetings and enjoyed the work.

What issue is your priority? Right now, it’s jobs. I’m sitting on three committees—transportation, economic development and environment. I’m also chairing a subcommittee on housing. Each of these committees has opportunities where we can create jobs for folks to get them back to work.

Darlene Lewis ('90)
WEST SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2004

Why did you go into politics? I’ve lived in West Saint Paul for 35 years; my kids went to school here. I’ve been very active within the school district. I’ve been very active within the community. When I retired from work at Ecolab in 2002, I decided that I needed to do something more with my time.

What issue is your top priority? First of all, we need to maintain our public safety—police and fire are critical. We are a first-ring suburb with a population of less than 20,000. And we are only five square miles, so we are a small community. We’re a safe community, and I want to make sure that we remain that way.

The other thing is the environment. I was recently active in forming an environmental committee. One of the things we are looking at is energy use and cost-savings in the city, so that’s a huge undertaking. That’s the big thing right now—a focus on how to save money on energy in our community.

And we have a lot of foreclosed houses here, so we are looking at the ways of handling that. Unfortunately, we don’t have the money to buy up houses and fix them up or buy them so that they don’t deteriorate. We just have to be watchful; when the market turns and the economy changes, we’ll be ready, hopefully.

Barbara Marschall ('00)
SCOTT COUNTY COMMISSIONER
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 1996

Why did you go into politics? I first entered politics when I was a junior in high school. We had a race for the class president, and we had two athletes who were vying for the spot. One of them, in particular, had a very narrow agenda, which would have benefitted activities strictly for the athletes in our school. So, my question was “What’s in it for the rest of us who are not athletes and are here to get an education?” I tried for a long time to get someone to oppose these two. I couldn’t find that person.

In the end, I did it. And I won. We had a great year—I was able to do things that I had never done before. It gave me a sense that you can
accomplish something that you might not have started out to do, and it could make a difference.

For a long time after that, I was busy with other things, raising my family and working. I worked for a company that did private research from the county courthouse. For about 17 years, I would get smatterings of opinions, both from the public and from the employees, about how inefficient some operations were, how duplicative the operations were, and how they didn't serve the public well.

When the election came around in 1996, I decided that there were policies that I thought needed to be reviewed and changed. As a concerned citizen, I had expressed some of my views to the incumbent saying that I thought we could do better in a number of areas; but I didn't think I was being heard. That's when I decided to challenge him, and I won. That's how I ended up as a Scott County commissioner, and I've been here ever since.

**What issue is your top priority?** The economy is on everybody's minds. We have a lot of folks who are struggling here. For years, Scott County was one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. We had growth that could help us with programs we thought were necessary both for infrastructure and for service. That has pretty much stopped. Our revenue has really diminished. We are struggling with things, both in reduced revenue, and also because people are having a hard time trying to pay their taxes and provide for their families. We are facing a whole new set of circumstances. There are things we have in place that we have to cut now because we cannot afford them anymore. I think that's the issue today, but it all points back to being efficient and analyzing what the people need and what we are able to provide for services. We are going to be cutting things, I believe, in the next year or two that we have never, ever considered before.

**Sandy Pappas** (’86)

**MINNESOTA STATE SENATOR, DISTRICT 65**

**FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 1984**

**Why did you go into politics?** I had a long history of involvement in social justice activities going back to being inspired by John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King when I was a teenager. I was involved in a long list of social justice movements when I was in my 20s—there was the war, the environmental movement, the women's movement. It was a logical progression for me, eventually, to run for office. Instead of pounding on the door of city hall or the State Capitol about my issues, I wanted to try to get inside.

My husband suggested I run for office. There were two incumbents who were running against each other because of redistricting and none of the people in my political circle were happy with either one of them; they were both fairly conservative Democrats. So, my husband said, “You’re pregnant with our third child, you have just been laid off from your job, and you don’t have anything to do for the next couple of months—so why don’t you run for the legislature?” In the end, I ran for office because of my own desire to make a difference around a variety of social justice issues and the support from my family.

**What issue is your top priority?** Higher education is my top priority: getting first generation students into college, making college more affordable and more accessible.

For individuals, the research has shown that people who have a college education have higher incomes, are healthier, contribute more to the community, and so on. There are also advantages for the state economy when you have a well-trained workforce. I also think that the research component at the university is very important to the future of the state. We’ve been successful as a state because we’ve put a focus on education.

**Victoria Reinhardt** (B.A. ’96, M.B.A. ’99)

**RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT SEVEN**

**FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 1996**

**Why did you go into politics?** I worked as a county commissioner’s aide in the mid 1980s, and I fell in love with the local level of government. I didn’t start out thinking that I would go into politics—when I went to my 20-year class reunion, people were commenting on the fact that if they had to vote on who would be the most unlikely classmate to run for elected office, I probably would have been it. One person said to me, “How did that shy girl in high school turn out to be you?”

What I was drawn to in county government was the impact it has on people's lives. It was the passion to make people's lives better in a very thoughtful way. That’s what drew me not only to run for office, but, specifically, to run for the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, because that’s the level of government that I feel is most closely related to individuals’ lives.

**What issue is your top priority?** Right now, with the state budget deficit as high as it is—and with the cuts that we know are coming—the priority is that we retain the basic infrastructure so that we can provide the services that we really need to provide. If you cut too deeply in a certain area, you can dismantle the entire infrastructure.

We need to be focused on what we need to do and asking, How can we do things differently? What partners can we bring in to help us? It’s not just the county, it’s not just the state or the city—it’s all of us in this together. So, right now, the top priority is to get the high quality services we need in the most cost-effective way possible.

From a policy level, I did receive my doctorate last year from Hamline University, and my dissertation was on avoiding taxpayer costs through crime prevention. I believe that we need to start paying more attention to issues before we have criminal activities, before we have sexual violence, before we have some of the more difficult challenges within families, to try to prevent things from happening. Prevention is not only good for society in general, but it’s also an economic benefit. It costs so much to deal with incarceration and probation and all of those things, that, in the end, we not only save
Why go into Politics?

lives but we save money when we prevent crimes. In the areas of juvenile crime prevention, domestic violence prevention, workplace violence prevention, these are all things that are going to have a huge impact on society and on the amount of taxes we pay.

There was a report a few years ago that concluded that we cannot build enough prisons in Minnesota to keep us safe. Ultimately, we need to figure out how to help people so that they don’t end up on a criminal path. There are going to be people, obviously, who need to be in jail, and we need to build prisons to deal with them. But, in many cases, we could have stopped the crime from occurring in the first place. I’m not saying that we don’t need prisons, but I am saying that if we think that’s the only solution, we are missing the big picture. If we can do something to stop a crime from taking place, aren’t we all better off?

Holly Thompson (’96)

ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2008

Why did you go into politics? The reason I ran is to give back to the community and to make a difference for the kids. I’m very passionate about education.

I have three children ages nine, five and three. When my son started school, I wanted to get more involved. I started volunteering in the classroom. I became the P.T.A. treasurer, and I helped the district with some referendums that they were working on. Then I was on the legislative actions committee, then the communications committee. I thought that I could either focus locally on my own children’s school, or I could work on a more global level. I was encouraged by teachers, administrators and parents to seek a position on the school board. I’ve spent the last couple years watching school board meetings and work sessions, so I felt I’ve been participating. It was a natural progression for me to go into politics. It’s a good bridge for me from staying at home to eventually going back to work.

What’s your top priority on the school board? Since I put my hat in the ring in July, a lot of things have changed in our economy. I think that all school districts are going to be facing serious cuts. It has become very apparent to me that the most important thing is to make sure that the cuts we have to make affect the children as little as possible.

Jerry Tveit (’00)

MAYOR, SAINT FRANCIS
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2008

Why did you go into politics? It was not something that I planned on doing, but I’ve always been active in the community. Last year, the city of St. Francis had a 12 percent tax levy increase. I went to a city council meeting along with a lot of the neighbors. We expressed our concerns to the city council, and, to our chagrin, they decided to pass the tax levy anyway.

When I got my tax statement, my property tax had increased by $300. I’m a single parent, so $300 a year is a pretty good chunk of change. Not all of that $300 was a city tax—there were city, county and school taxes in there—but one-third of that was the city’s. So, I was complaining about the taxes. My daughter said to me, “Dad, don’t complain about it, fix it,” which I have said to her quite often. That’s when I decided I may as well run for mayor.

I’m really happy that the citizens of Saint Francis voted for me. I’m looking forward to serving them and trying to represent their best interests.

What issue is your top priority? My top priority is being fiscally responsible, whether that means cutting spending or reevaluating some of the contracts that the city has. I’m not against raising taxes; I just don’t want it to be our first resort, and I don’t want to be greedy about it either.

Elizabeth Weir (’97)

MEDINA CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
FIRST ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN 2004

Why did you go into politics? I am very community-minded. I’m also an immigrant—I grew up in England and now I’ve lived here for 29 years. Belonging is something that I seek, and see as necessary for my own well-being.

In 1997 I had a friend on the Medina Planning Commission who found it interesting. Before my children had graduated, I had been involved in school activities and the parent association, and I felt that I’d like a new direction for my community involvement. So I served on the Medina Planning Commission for seven years and chaired it for the last three years. I had been asked to run for city council several times, but I wasn’t sure if I really wanted that degree of commitment.

My real interest in running for city council is that I’m deeply interested in preserving the health of Medina’s natural areas, particularly marsh and wetlands. I’m also committed to open, transparent government. I’m also trying to keep the city as rural as possible, even if the Metropolitan Council pressures us to grow.

What issue is your top priority? I take it very seriously that I’ve been entrusted by the residents to represent them. The decisions that we deal with at the city council relate to taxes, keeping our roads in good condition, staffing city hall with competent people and paying them well (but expecting a lot from them) and keeping the government as lean as we can.
Writer Polly Grose remembers
a wonderful time in London

By Harvey Meyer

Polly Grose ('83) can’t help herself. Occasionally words like chockablock and straightaway tumble spontaneously from her mouth.

The words are echoes of her 19 years living in high-society London with her British husband. Grose’s time abroad is captured in A London Scrapbook, a recent memoir that offers a candid account of a middle-aged Twin Cities career professional and community leader who pulled up stakes to be with the love of her life.

The book, drawing from materials she and husband David collected in giant 12 by 24-inch scrapbooks, has received critical praise for its well-crafted prose and for inspiring readers to pursue their dreams. The memoir genre has been criticized of late—think James Frey’s much-publicized, sometimes-fabricated account of addiction and recovery—which is why Grose took pains to ensure its accuracy; her memoir took four years to write.

“Polly Grose has, with this beautiful book of love and loss, transformed a story that might have left both writer and her readers filled with a sense of fear, dislocation and sadness,” said Amy Friedman, University of California, Los Angeles, writing instructor and a memoirist herself. Instead, said Friedman, the book brims with the “tenderness of new love, the joy of discovery, the comfort of reflection, the richness of a life fully lived.”

Asked in January what she misses about the London life, Grose’s intense blue eyes soften as she smiles and nods toward a window in a lounge at the downtown Minneapolis Guthrie Theater, where she has served on the board of directors for 20 years over a period spanning almost five decades. Snow was gently falling as if in a snow globe, the temperature hovered around brrrrrr, and a blizzard seemed in the offing. “They did occasionally have snow there, but nothing like this,” said Grose.

Grose credits Metropolitan State with helping prepare her for her adventure in England. (She graduated in 1983 with a concentration in business.) The many diverse students Grose met in class mirrored the multicultural store owners and residents she encountered daily in a quaint London neighborhood called Chelsea Green. Moreover, her degree enabled her to navigate in professional circles in both countries.

“the book...has received critical praise for its well-crafted prose and for inspiring readers to pursue their dreams.”
“It was terrific,” Grose said of her Metropolitan State experience. “The university had established a fine reputation and I was able to gain the academic credentials I had long wanted.”

The contrast between life in London and Wayzata, where Grose was reared and now lives, was evident in the first cocktail party she attended with David Grose, a bon vivant, high-powered insurance executive who chummed with some of England’s aristocracy. David reminded her of Londoners’ reserved and more formal nature, which clashed with many Americans’ outspoken and spontaneous manner.

Living in London, Grose’s perspective became more internationally flavored, less U.S-centric, although she always felt obliged to serve as a sort-of ambassador for the United States. Her conversational skills flowered, in part out of necessity; she and her husband hosted and attended far more private dinner gatherings than in America.

One August afternoon Grose was introduced to Queen Elizabeth at a St. James’ Palace soiree. With characteristic spunk and amiability, Grose briefly chatted with the queen.

“I said, ‘Your majesty, it’s marvelous to see you having such a good time with your friends.’ She looked at me and said, ‘It’s wonderful. I know everybody in this room and I’m having a wonderful time.’ ”

While living abroad was certainly a departure for Grose, in several ways it mimicked life in Minnesota. In both locales, she frequently attended modern and classical theater, where thought-provoking and life-affirming plays energized her.

As in the Twin Cities, her professional career continued to flourish. She had launched her career in Minneapolis in 1974, working for eight years as the Guthrie’s development director. While serving on the Guthrie board—she was the theater’s first woman chair in 1972—she became the first female to occupy a seat on the boards of St. Paul Companies and Tonka Corporation. Grose was also the first woman elected to join the up-to-then men’s only Minneapolis Club.

After a stint for a public relations agency, she was hired as development director for the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey (HHH) Institute of Public Affairs in Minneapolis. In a move coinciding with her budding relationship with David, whom she had met earlier through a mutual friend, Grose relocated to London in 1984 to expand the institute’s presence in England. The position required her to rub shoulders with business, higher-education and government officials, including a former prime minister.

She was appointed an American member of the U.S.–U.K. Fulbright Commission, which selects students and professors from both countries for the renowned Fulbright scholarships. The commission eventually assumed HHH institute programs in England. Grose had effectively helped dissolve her own job.

But that left more time for her and David to pursue other activities—like sailing. As someone who grew up on Lake Minnetonka, Grose occasionally “crewed” for vessels and understood the technical skills required for, and romance of, sailing. She and David, an expert sailor with his own sloop, frequently sailed off the coast of England and stopped at various ports around the Mediterranean Sea.

“I had a love for the sea and just being with David,” she said. “There was the sense of freedom, of getting away from city life.”
A lifelong writer who as a child once produced an ongoing newspaper for her family, Grose’s passion for the printed word was later in life wed to a blossoming interest in her Quaker heritage. She ended up researching her Quaker ancestors in a London library that held archives dating to the 17th century. Her ensuing three books, sold to Quaker groups and historical associations in both countries, offer a lasting legacy for her own family.

Despite being a confirmed Anglophile, Grose always remained homesick, especially for her three adult sons and a growing brood of grandchildren.

After David died in March 2002 from a lingering illness, Grose eventually moved back to Minnesota to heal. As she walked in the door, literally, of her Wayzata condominium, a close friend phoned and invited her to rejoin the Guthrie board.

“Talk about a reentry,” she said. “I was welcomed back before I even had my overshoes off.”

Firmly ensconced now in the Twin Cities, Grose often reflects back on her London life. Sometimes she'll peruse one of the 11 humongous scrapbooks.

“It was,” she said, “a wonderful time in my life.”

A London Scrapbook was published in May 2008 by the Beavers Pond Press.

“I never tired of London’s sounds—the taxi klaxon, the double-decker buses’ snort as they pulled into and away from the curb,” wrote Grose. “I was forever intoxicated by the smells of the city—the many varieties of ethnic food wafting from the food shops and cafes. And I delighted to hear the voices of the people—different accents, exotic dress, dozens of languages.”

“I felt like Dorothy from Kansas,” wrote Grose, “setting out, naïve and unprepared, on the Yellow Brick Road.”
“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
—WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

WHO LiT YOUR FiRE?

Was there a certain teacher who allowed you to see the world in a different way? Did someone mentor you and ignite your passion for a specific career? Was your life or career transformed by your Metropolitan State experience?

Every day, the fires of education are lit for our students. Metropolitan State students—just as you did—return to college in order to improve their lives. Today’s students are tomorrow’s nurses, peace officers, nonprofit managers, social workers and teachers. Metropolitan State is preparing a new workforce of leaders in many of the most critically needed areas of our society.

Help us today to blaze Metropolitan State’s future by giving a gift of support to the 2008–2009 Annual Fund:

• Give online at www.metrostate.edu/foundation
• Mail your gift using the envelope inserted in this magazine
• Call the Annual Fund hotline at 651.793.1810.

WHO LiT MY FiRE?

The man who “lit my fire” was Dr. David Sweet, the first president of Minnesota Metropolitan State College as it was then called… I graduated in 1974.

Later, when I moved to California, I served as controller for American Intraocular Implant Society. After AIIS moved to Virginia, I served as finance consultant with Systems Experience International Corporation handling their financial operations in Canada and the United Kingdom. I retired four-and-a-half years ago as controller with Partners In Care Foundation, Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice of Pasadena (three corporations under one management team).

After retiring, I moved to the central coast of Oregon where I own a home with a magnificent ocean view. My woman friend and I look for agates on our daily walks on the beach. We also take short day trips in Oregon and Washington. She and I both volunteer with the Lincoln City Visitor Center, with AARP and with our church.

Retired life is good!

Sincerely,

Wayne C. A. Johnson
Class of ’74

Ways to Give: Planned Gifts

There are almost as many variations on ways to make a donation as there are needs to be met. Check out the Metropolitan State Foundation Web site and discover new ways to make a gift that also takes into consideration your personal circumstances and the needs of your heirs.

You’ll find the information you need on the Metropolitan State Web site: www.metrostate.edu/msweb/community/foundation/types_gift/Planned%20Giving.html.

Or contact Development Director Rob Larson at 651.793.1813 or info.giving@metrostate.edu.

Explore the value of charitable gifts that require a little thought, but pay off in big benefits to you, your family and Metropolitan State University Foundation.
Where did you go to college?
I attended Dartmouth College. I was a religion major with a minor in Chinese.

Why did you choose that course of study?
I had gone to De La Salle High School in Chicago during the late 60s and early 70s and had serious questions about faith at that time. When I got to college, I found myself wondering about fundamental questions such as the nature of my relationship with God, my relationship with the world, and God's relationship with all of the rest of that. I studied a wide range of far-eastern religions—Chinese Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, Confucianism and Hinduism.

Nothing in college had much to do with making a living. I was in the fortunate position of knowing what I wanted to do from the time I was 10 years old.

When I was about 10, my dad got a job with the Cook County Sheriff’s Department in Illinois. I was allowed to sit very quietly on our back porch with my dad and all of these cops, who were 6’3” and 250 pounds and had guns. They were superheroes for a 10-year-old, little skinny kid from the South Side of Chicago. I knew from that point on, I wanted to be a cop.

You also teach as a community faculty member at Metropolitan State. How long have you been doing that?
It’s been over 20 years now. A friend of mine, Debbie Montgomery—who was the first Black female officer in Saint Paul, later to be a city council member—convinced me that I needed to get a master’s degree. She convinced me with reasons that were similar to why I went to Dartmouth and why I studied religion. She said I’d have the chance to talk to people about important matters. I’d have intellectual peers for conversations. So, I signed up at the University of St. Thomas for a master’s program and graduated in public safety education. Then Debbie said, “OK, now that you have your master’s degree, you need to find some place to teach.”

I started looking around for places to teach, and Metro State had a program called the Peace Officers Standards and Training program—it was a certificate program. It just so happened that the head of the program was looking for a part-time community faculty member. I was more than willing to try that out. Much has happened since then as we moved from a certificate program to a regular major. I was able to help design the curriculum, help find the space for the School of Law Enforcement, and help to hire Ginny Lane and most of the early faculty there.

Teaching has done exactly what Debbie said it was going to do; at Metro State I get to talk about things that are near and dear to me with some of the brightest people I know.

How has your interest in religion continued in your life?
I think there are questions that are unfortunately never going to be answered. That’s part of religion. I spent yesterday at New Hope Baptist Church where I gave a speech about Black history and enjoyed myself immensely. I spend a lot of time at Clouds in Water Zen Center where I’m still trying to figure out the nature of reality.

You were on the security detail for the Obama inauguration, is that right?
Yes, I and 52 of my cops were part of the group of 4,000 cops that were there for the security of the inaugural. We were at 13th and Pennsylvania Avenue, making sure that the presidential parade was secure.

It was cold that day and we needed people on duty from 4:30 in the morning until 7 o’clock that night. The Minnesota folks had hand warmers in our pockets and we took shifts.

The most impressive thing that day was seeing people stretched out from the Capitol steps to the Tidal Basin and beyond the Washington Monument. I don’t think I’ll ever forget it—seeing the sea of humanity that had come to celebrate that particular moment.
Donald Bibeau, associate professor, social work, College of Professional Studies, presented “Finnish and Native Culture Monographs” last summer at the 25th Annual Finnfest 2008 in Duluth. Bibeau is of Finnish and Chippewa ancestry and maintains a dwelling on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. He also participated in the Anishinaabe/Finnish panel, “Trail of Success.” Native American, Saami and Finnish cultures were incorporated into this year’s theme, “Sharing the Spirit of Finland.”

Ramin Daghig, assistant professor, natural sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, is the site coordinator for the Louis Stokes/LSAMP grant funded by North Star, which supports African American, Hispanic and Native American students taking science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses and pursuing STEM majors. The University of Minnesota is the recipient of the umbrella grant and Metropolitan State’s portion of the grant is approximately $13,500 for each of four years, FY09–12.

Sue Fitzgerald, professor, information and computer sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, is the site coordinator for the Louis Stokes/LSAMP grant funded by North Star, which supports African American, Hispanic and Native American students taking science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses and pursuing STEM majors. The University of Minnesota is the recipient of the umbrella grant and Metropolitan State’s portion of the grant is approximately $13,500 for each of four years, FY09–12.

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Nadine Haley, associate professor, Urban Teacher Program, College of Professional Studies, was a guest speaker on KFAI radio, “Conversations with Al McFarlane.” She spoke about issues surrounding inequities in educational outcomes and the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership’s, “State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Conference” in November. In addition, Haley was elected to the board of directors of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc., this past fall.

Beth Mayer, community faculty, Communication, Writing and the Arts Department, College of Arts and Sciences, had her short story, “The Implausible Etiquette of Smelt,” chosen for publication in The Sun Magazine, sometime in 2009. Her flash-fiction has been selected twice for the MiniStories series, a quarterly contest sponsored by mnartists.org.

Tom O’Connell, social science professor, College of Arts and Sciences, was a guest on the “Truth to Tell” program at radio station KFAI-FM in November, which featured an analysis of the election. The program is available in the archives on KFAI’s Web site, www.kfai.org.

David O’Hara, economics professor, College of Management, was a guest on the Jack Rice Show, WCCO radio (AM 830), in September. He discussed the federal government bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Two Metropolitan State faculty members and two academic advisors were honored at the Fall Faculty Conference for their stellar contributions during the 2007–2008 academic year. Receiving the Excellence in Teaching Award were Daryl Parks, Woodbury, associate professor, literature and language, College of Arts and Sciences and Urban Teacher Program; and Joel Wilson, Lakeville, assistant professor, College of Management. Megumi Yamasaki, Shoreview, assistant professor and academic advisor, First College, and Princess Kent Zak, New Richmond, Wis., advisor, College of Management, were selected recipients of the Carol C. Ryan Excellence in Advising Award.

Sharon Rice Vaughan, professor, College of Professional Studies, and Carol Lacey, community faculty member, College of Arts and Sciences, were both among those interviewed for a feature in the Minnesota History magazine’s summer 2008 issue, “When Women Went Public: Feminist Reforms in the 1970s.”

Rikki Wagstrom, mathematics professor, Cindy Kaus, mathematics professor, Julie Maxson, biology professor, and Sarah Hansen, Math Center director and Center for Academic Excellence assistant director, were featured in a December issue of Minnesota Women’s Press. The article, “MPower camp: math + science = tons of girl fun” tells the success of the summer math and science camp for Saint Paul girls originally created by Wagstrom and Hansen in 2005. The article is also available at http://www.womenspress.com/main.asp?Search=1&ArticleID=3268&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&S=1.
Carnegie Foundation selects Metropolitan State for 2008 Community Engagement Classification

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected Metropolitan State University for its 2008 Community Engagement Classification. Metropolitan State and Augsburg College were the only two Minnesota schools selected this year.

For more than three decades, the Carnegie Classification has been the leading framework for describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education. It has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students or faculty.

Colleges and universities with an institutional focus on community engagement were invited to apply for the classification. Classifications were in one of three categories: Curricular Engagement, Outreach and Partnership, and Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships. Metropolitan State was in the third category, because it has substantial commitments in both areas.

“The achievement of the Carnegie classification,” according to President Sue K. Hammersmith, “both recognizes Metropolitan State’s consistent investment in integrating community-based learning with students’ academic experiences and recommitts the university to the mutually-beneficial community relationships for which we have been well-known throughout our history.”

The university's engagement, outreach and partnerships include such things as University-Community Library Partnership with the Saint Paul Public Library; PeaceJam in partnership with youthrive; Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders); American Democracy Project; and the Dayton's Bluff Urban Partnership, a collaboration of residents, neighborhood organizations, community leaders, businesses and educational institutions committed to developing the social, economic and physical health of the Dayton's Bluff Community.

John Beargrease—Legend of Minnesota’s North Shore

DANIEL LANCASTER ('99)

John Beargrease—Legend of Minnesota’s North Shore is a new book by Daniel Lancaster ('99). The biography is about the Ojibwe mail carrier for whom the dogsled marathon is named, and includes the history of how Beargrease helped bridge the cultural gap between the Ojibwe community and white settlers of the late 1800s. The book was published in November 2008 by Holy Cow! Press.

Be A Light

MARY HAYES GRIECO ('84)

Mary Hayes Grieco ('84) is the author of a new book, Be A Light: Illumined Essays for Times Like These. There are 26 essays in all, filled with storytelling, and “how-to” guidance on such matters as forgiveness and using your intuition. Be A Light was published in fall 2008 by Waterwheel Publishing.

50 State Quarters Program

BAORONG LI

Baorong Li is the author of the new book 50 State Quarters Program 1999 through 2008, A Celebration of the States. Li is the director of assessment and academic research at Metropolitan State. The book, which includes stories about the designs of the coins in English and Chinese, was published in China by World Affairs Press.

Unity through Community Service Activities

AUGUST JOHN HOFFMAN

August John Hoffman, associate professor, College of Professional Studies, is author of Unity through Community Service Activities: Strategies to Bridge Ethnic and Cultural Divides. This book addresses the power of community service work and how it can bridge cultural divides, facilitate interethnic group development, and reduce ethnocentrism and ethnic conflict. It was published in January 2009 by McFarland & Company, Inc.
Gordon Parks forged much of his artistic sensibility while living as a young man in Saint Paul. Parks went on to become the first African American photographer at Life magazine where he worked for 24 years. His iconic images are part of our nation’s cultural and artistic history.

Barbra Streisand, Ingrid Bergman and Muhammad Ali are a few of the celebrities he photographed. Yet celebrities were not his main subjects. His most evocative photos, which produced enormous public response, illuminated poverty and powerlessness: he produced riveting photo essays on the 1960s Black Power movement, a Harlem youth gang, and a desperately ill boy in a Rio de Janeiro slum.

Parks also authored The Learning Tree, a popular coming-of-age semi-autobiographical novel about a young black man experiencing racism, love and loss. He continued his path-breaking work by directing a film based on that book and composed the film’s music. Parks later directed Shaft, a 1971 commercial blockbuster that featured America’s first black hero. The largely self-taught Parks also penned other novels, memoirs, four volumes of poetry, a ballet and several orchestral scores.

The late Gordon Parks would have treasured Metropolitan State University. Parks would identify with the motivation and perseverance of many Metropolitan State students and alumni. He would have admired the university’s embrace of diversity.

Parks especially would have cherished Metropolitan State’s art gallery. As was Parks, the gallery—located on the third floor of the university’s new library—is committed to presenting artistic expression in varied forms and in serving underrepresented communities. Because of these shared values, it is fitting for Metropolitan State to commemorate Parks by renaming the university art gallery in his honor.
The fund-raising campaign, in addition to supporting the art gallery, will also support community outreach, including establishing ties with a number of Saint Paul public schools and enhancing connections with the city’s East Side.

When the fund-raising campaign concludes in April 2010, the gallery’s new name will be unveiled along with an exhibition of Parks’ work.

This project is a partnership with Parks’ great-niece, Robin Hickman, executive producer of Soul Touch Productions. For further information, contact Rob Larson, development director, university advancement, at robert.larson@metrostate.edu (651-793-1813); or Erica Rasmussen, professor and gallery director, at erica.rasmussen@metrostate.edu (651-999-5942).
George Oyeho ('04), Saint Paul, was featured on the cover of the January 2009 issue of The Rotarian magazine.
Charles Farrow ('78) and his wife Maridee Farrow ('83) standing next to the Camp Ripley Court of Honor monument in Little Falls.
Community Organizing in the age of Obama

By Andrea Jenkins ('99)

It was after the summer, the leaves had fallen; we raked and raked, moving our lost treasures to new horizons. The wind carried me back, like the leaves to my younger more energetic days, my beginning college days at the University of Minnesota. And though I never obtained the vaunted degree from said institution, I never gave up on the desire to learn.

I attended Normandale Community College, Minnesota School of Business and eventually Metropolitan State University. After 20 long years of struggle, I finally captured that elusive sheepskin. But the quest for learning had just begun. You see Metropolitan State University's motto used to be “lifelong learning.” It is a message that I took to heart, for since then I have obtained a master's degree in community economic development, and I'm currently pursuing a master of fine arts in creative writing at Hamline University.

I love to learn new things and new ways to think about things. There has not been a single year since I was four years old that I have not been enrolled in some sort of formal educational/training program—for at least part of the year anyway. And I won't disclose my age here, but suffice it to say that past days probably out number the future ones.

During my time at Metro State, I took several internships, one of which really had a profound impact on me and really ignited my entrée into community organizing. I interned as a teacher at an alternative high school in North Minneapolis. The young people there were trying to create better opportunities for themselves. These were bright, talented young people with so much energy for learning, but their home lives didn’t always support that.

Most were being raised by single moms, who either worked two jobs or were receiving public assistance and sometimes both, just to make ends meet.

Deep down these were great kids. They needed someone to believe in them and tell them they were valued; someone to support them. Many of the problems we face as a society can be resolved by each of us supporting one another to build stronger communities. This however is never as simple as it sounds: it takes tremendous sacrifice.

Community organizing is about meeting people one on one; it’s the old Saul Alinsky model of organizing. Alinsky organized workers in the Chicago stockyards for better working conditions and wages and became the guru that all others now look to for inspiration. I find it quite interesting that the world’s most famous community organizer also honed his skills in Chicago—President Barack Obama.

They both worked with families and neighborhoods to get better conditions, stronger communities and good schools for their children. Community organizers train workers, feed preschool children and provide services for the elderly. They teach financial literacy to low-income mothers and host poetry readings at the local theaters.

We as a society have a great opportunity ahead of us to remake ourselves and our country again. Obama calls it “A New Birth of Freedom.” But it is going to take the community organizer in all of us to truly achieve that lofty goal. But as Metro State alumni, we are all about achieving lofty goals.

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member Elizabeth Glidden, I work on these issues with the community to create safe, healthy thriving neighborhoods. During council member Glidden’s three years in office, we have engaged artists in conversations and activities that have led to the formation of a grassroots organization called SM(Arts) South Minneapolis Arts. This is the first officially designated business association specifically for artists in Minneapolis. The mission and intent is to support individuals and small arts organization to create economic opportunities for the area. Already a new arts organization is locating in the heart of the ward we serve called the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center—it will train young people in metal work, glass making, jewelry making and other fire arts. There will be performance and gallery space. This means jobs, after-school opportunities and economic development for our community.

I am not suggesting that I am Saul Alinsky or Barack Obama, though I did grow up in Chicago, too. But what I do know is that we all can help build a better community right where we live; I hope you take that challenge.

Andrea Jenkins earned her bachelor of science in human services/interpersonal communications from Metropolitan State University (’99); a master of science in community economic development at Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, N.H.; and a certificate from the University of St. Thomas Community Leadership Institute. She is pursuing an M.F.A. in creative writing at Hamline University. She works as a senior policy aide for Minneapolis City Council member Elizabeth Glidden.

We welcome submissions for the column “From You,” but we publish only one submission per issue. Submissions may be sent to Alumni Relations at alumni.relations@metrostate.edu.

Chicago (A poem for her native sons)
Written by Andrea Jenkins (’99)

This was back in the grape
pop chicken wing front stoop hanging
midnight ramble rollerskating
days
When 8tracks hollered
“Moving on Up”, “Keep on Pushin” and “People Get Ready
There’s a train a comin” by Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions
On Fourth of July days
a heavy scent of Kingsford Charcoal mixed with the sweet
smell of ribs from Moo and Oinks hung in the air like clotheslines
The holidays were, This Christmas- I saw mommy kissing
Santa Claus don’t come to the ghetto and
chestnuts never roasted on a silent night-
days
I played baseball in Stony Island Park with
my boys from the ‘hood
Ernie Banks and Jesse Jackson sons played too
This was the didn’t know better
days—Picasso on the left—Art Institute on the
Right, Lake Michigan to the
right of that
Gold Coast, glory holes-
When I worked as a messenger in the Sears Tower
I had to take three elevators to get
to my office on the 76th floor—
one day Ava pointed out
Iowa
Indiana
Michigan and Wisconsin from the observation
deck
we lit a fire to some trees and we were high as the birds
then we went back to work
cause these were the Black Panther Fred Hampton
assassination days co-intell
pro J. Edgar Hoover FBI
Mayor Richard M. Daley, 1968 Democratic Convention
days
I learned about Kwanzaa in the bicentennial
year and went to White Sox games cause we lived on the Southside
Yup, the Herb Kent “The cool gent”, Tom Joyner “The Fly Jock,”
Lindblom High School sock hop soul food hip hop
days
My delicious growing up in the ghetto days,
The rooting for Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman, B.J. Armstrong
Horace Grant, Trent Tucker all got rings in ’91, ’92, ’93, came back
And did it again in ’96, ’97, ’98, Da Bulls days
I was marinated in a hot tub of justice and
Injustice—
Grew strong like the skyscrapers that distinguish
Lake Shore Drive
From this—emerged a voice for
my generation, a community organizer for
the ages with compassion for all human
ity
An icon for hope.
April 17–July 21, Saib Kuv (Watch me–See the Hmong in me), Saint Paul Campus Library, Third Floor Gallery. Reception: April 16, 4–7 p.m. Saib Kuv features a collection of digitally manipulated photographic portraits coupled with poetry and prose by local artists. Exhibit continues through July 24. Gallery hours are Monday–Thursday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.; and Friday–Saturday, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.; closed on Fridays during the summer.

April 30, Spring Commencement Ceremony, 6–6:30 p.m. reception, 7–9 p.m. ceremony, Minneapolis Convention Center, Auditorium. If you would like to volunteer, contact Sue Amos Palmer, commencement coordinator, at 651-793-1823 or e-mail her at sueamos.palmer@metrostate.edu.

May 8, College of Management 25th Annual Graduate Program Spring Dinner at Jax Café in NE Minneapolis. Social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m. The dinner is primarily for CM graduate students (current and alumni), CM faculty and Metropolitan State administration.

May 21, Metropolitan State University Foundation “Recognizing Excellence” recognition dinner in the Great Hall of New Main on the Saint Paul campus.

July 2–6, Alumni Trip to Washington, DC. Enjoy the Fourth of July in our nation’s capital. For more information contact the Alumni Office at alumni.relations@metrostate.edu.
Brandie Adams
*untitled*
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24"

The painting by student Brandie Adams was selected by the Metropolitan State Art Exhibition Committee for a 2008 Art Purchase Award. The Award is given to encourage the growth and development of student and alumni studio artists and to elevate the profile of the arts on campus.
Terry Bebertz ('07)

Solitude

Bebertz took the photo at Cass Gilbert Memorial Park located behind the Minnesota State Capitol.