Armed
WITH KNOWLEDGE
A WAVE OF VETERANS
BRINGS STRENGTHS
AND NEEDS TO THE U

CONTINUUM
THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
VOL. 23 NO. 1

Summertime 2013

A CENTURY OF PIANO: THE U CELEBRATES TRAINING PIANISTS
FIGHTING FOR THE WILD: KEN SLEIGHT’S LEGENDARY PATH
GAMES OF CHANCE: A LEGACY IN WRITING, AND CASINOS
AT HOME IN THE TREES: A U PROF BRINGS SCIENCE TO ALL
For the third year in a row, University of Utah Health Care has earned a top 10 ranking from the University HealthSystem Consortium’s prestigious Quality and Accountability Study. It’s an accomplishment that puts us among the best academic medical centers in the country and affirms our ongoing commitment to provide top-quality care.

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Cover photo: Michael Cumming, left, and Audra Thompson, both military veterans and University of Utah students, walk toward the Park Building on the U campus. (Photo by Brian Nicholson)
A LEGACY OF SOUND
Dr. [Thomas G.] Stockholm [“Pioneer in Sound,” Spring 2013] was a very nice guy. I stopped by Soundstream back in the late 70s and visited with him out of pure curiosity for what he was doing. He gave me a half hour of his time and explained what he was doing and how he was doing it. The disc pack shown [in the online video with the article] held 10 minutes (!) of music.

The original Telarc masters at the dawn of the digital era were mastered by Soundstream at a higher frequency rate than the current CD standard. I’ve always felt those early Soundstream masters sounded much warmer (and juicier) than the Sony standard which became the norm. The Janowski recording of the Wagner Ring was mastered by Soundstream and, for me, is the best sounding of any of the digital Ring recordings.

Yes, this guy was a major pioneer in the history of recording, from Edision to the present.

James Bevan BS’71
Comment submitted via continuum.utah.edu

THE YOUNG IMPRESARIO
For my last two years at the U, a large group of us (engineering & business students) would meet at the Crimson Commons, the restaurant in the basement of the Union Building, for lunch, and play dealer’s choice poker. Nolan [Bushnell] [“The Impresario,” Spring 2013] was a regular participant, and would often bet without even looking to see what he had. He was “gutsy” then, and still is now. I would not describe him at that time as being nerdy, but kind of a fun guy to be around.

Timothy Tate BS’69
Comment submitted via continuum.utah.edu

Nolan [Bushnell] was a fraternity brother of mine, and we lived at the fraternity house at the same time. He was always an exceptional Nerd.

Richard Lybbert BA’69
Comment submitted via continuum.utah.edu

PRAISE FOR AN INNOVATOR
You’re a real hero, John [Warnock] [“The Innovator,” Spring 2013]. I still remember that time in 1968 seeing a drawing on Dave Evans’s office wall of a building illustrating the new “hidden line algorithm” by student John Warnock. I couldn’t imagine how the data was represented. It was just a bunch of points in space! How did he deal with it?

Congratulations on your contributions.

Carol Withrow MS’70
Comment submitted via continuum.utah.edu

ENCOURAGING A SCIENTIST
Many thanks for both putting the item about me in “Through the Years” [Winter 2012-13] and making sure that I saw it.

Several fellow U of U geezers and geezettes saw the item and sent me congratulations via email.

I owe a great debt to U of U. I was treated as a person, not just a student ID number. As an under-grad, I had only vague ideas of a career. However, two U of U professors thought I would make a good scientist.

First, as I was completing my B.S., Professor Ivan Cutler called me in and said as much—but did not leave it at that. He told me Professor Milton Wadsworth had a Ph.D. research assistantship to offer to the right student. Then he picked up the phone and made me an appointment with Professor Wadsworth. He, too, decided I had potential and awarded me the assistantship. I did my research under Professor Wadsworth’s excellent direction. I became a scientist, and it has been a great career for me.

Two U of U professors treated me as a person and shaped my life.

A.U. “Dan” Daniels BS’61 PhD’66
Professor Emeritus for Experimental Surgery
University of Basel Faculty of Medicine
Riehen, Switzerland

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Dean Searches at the U Bring Opportunities

The University of Utah is currently searching to fill eight dean positions, a little less than half the institution’s total number of 19 deans.

Many of the departing deans have gone on to greater administrative responsibilities. Three searches—for the College of Education, the Graduate School, and the Marriott Library—are being supervised by Michael L. Hardman, the U’s interim senior vice president for academic affairs. Two more searches are being overseen by Vivian S. Lee, the U’s senior vice president for health sciences: for the College of Nursing and the U’s new School of Dentistry. And three additional searches—for the colleges of Law, Social and Behavioral Science, and Architecture + Planning, will begin this fall, under the new senior vice president for academic affairs, Ruth V. Watkins.

It’s a key moment that provides the University with the chance to bring in fresh ideas, says Gretchen Bataille, senior vice president of leadership and lifelong learning with the American Council on Education. “It should be viewed as an opportunity,” she says, to hire people who will bring greater diversity to the University, to look at how programs are aligned, to hire deans who have a good track record in fundraising, and to forge new teams across the institution.

The American Council on Education does studies of college presidencies every five years, and one recent trend has been that an increasing number of deans have been moving on to become college presidents, Bataille says. In the past, the majority of presidents came from provost positions. But the changing role of deans has made them attractive candidates for presidencies. “It used to be that deans were glorified department chairs,” she says. “Deans are now being asked to do a lot of fundraising and strategic thinking and data-based decision making.”

“Deans are now being asked to do a lot of fundraising and strategic thinking and data-based decision making.”

Because of that experience, they can be attractive candidates for college presidencies, she says. “When they go out to interview, they can talk knowledgeably about fiscal realities in higher education, and fundraising. It’s a relatively new training ground, because the old thinking was that they didn’t get involved in those duties.”

Two of the current U vacancies were created when University of Utah deans went on to college presidencies. Charles A. Wight, who was the dean of the U Graduate School, became president of Weber State University last fall. Hiram E. Chodosh, dean of the U’s College of Law, will take office as president of Claremont McKenna College on July 1.

Some U deans went on to other senior leadership roles. M. David Rudd, who was dean of the U College of Social and Behavioral Science, became provost of the University of Memphis this past March. The U College of Education deanship opened when Hardman moved from that job to be the U’s interim vice president of academic affairs. Joyce L. Ogburn, who was dean of the Marriott Library, became a special assistant to the U’s senior vice president for academic affairs, leading interdisciplinary projects. Maureen Keefe, dean of the College of Nursing, will be stepping down at the end of June to move into a new job assisting Lee with special projects, interprofessional education, and the Utah Cluster Acceleration Partnership (UCAP), which is a statewide effort to accelerate key industry sectors as engines of job creation and economic growth.

The Dentistry deanship is a new position for the school whose creation was approved last year. And Brenda Case Scheer, dean of the College of Architecture + Planning, announced in March that she would be stepping down to take a sabbatical to write a book, and then return to the U as a professor.

“In my previous role as senior vice president for academic affairs, I worked closely with all of these deans and know of their tremendous contributions to the U,” says U President David W. Pershing. “I’m not surprised to see new opportunities coming their way and look to their successors for continued achievement and academic excellence.”
Illinois Dean Named U’s Chief Academic Officer

The University of Utah has selected Ruth V. Watkins, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, to become the U’s chief academic officer. Watkins was selected to be the U’s vice president for academic affairs after a national search. David W. Pershing held the position for 14 years before becoming president in 2012.

Watkins, who is a professor of speech and hearing science, will begin work at the U in August. “I’m honored to be joining a Pac-12 university that is growing in stature nationally and internationally,” she says. “I look forward to working with the faculty, staff, and students of the University of Utah to implement President Pershing’s vision for delivering a high-quality academic experience that prepares students for meaningful roles in the global community.”

As the liberal-arts dean at the University of Illinois, Watkins has been a leader for 600 faculty members and has ensured quality in education for nearly 12,000 undergraduates and 2,500 graduate students.

She also has overseen a budget of approximately $142 million per year and has promoted the college’s fundraising and advancement efforts. During her time, the college exceeded its fundraising goal of $250 million.

She joined the faculty at Illinois as an assistant professor in 1993. She served as associate dean for academic and research affairs in the College of Applied Health Sciences from 2000 to 2003. She became an associate provost in 2003 and then served as vice provost from 2006 to 2008, when she became a dean.

“Ruth is a superb administrator with a strong academic background, including major external research funding and a focus on the undergraduate experience,” Pershing says. “I am confident her collaborative leadership style and commitment to providing exceptional educational opportunities will enable her to enjoy continued success here in Utah.”

Watkins graduated with highest honors from the University of Northern Iowa with a bachelor of arts in speech-language pathology. She received a master of arts in child language at the University of Kansas and continued there to obtain a doctorate in child language.

Utah Governor Gary Herbert and the Utah State Legislature demonstrated unprecedented support for the University of Utah during the 2013 legislative session. The University received funding increases that will allow it to restore and increase the Medical School’s class size, implement a small pay increase for employees, and provide continuing support for USTAR, as well as other initiatives.

“It was a great year on the Hill for the University of Utah and higher education in the state,” said University of Utah President David W. Pershing, in a letter thanking the many political advocates who helped advance the U’s causes during the 2013 legislative session. More than 400 volunteers—alumni, present and former faculty and staff members, and students—have signed up to be political advocates for the University, and they helped by contacting lawmakers at key junctures to voice their support for the U. Their efforts were coordinated by the U for Higher Ed Committee through a program sponsored by the University of Utah Alumni Association and the University’s Office of Government Affairs.

The advocates’ efforts were well received by the Legislature, says Jason P. Perry JD’99, the University’s vice president for government relations: “All of our top priorities were accomplished.”

The 2013 session of the Legislature ended in March. Thanks to the efforts of Pershing and Health Sciences Vice President Vivian Lee, the Legislature passed S.B. 42, which appropriates $10 million in ongoing funding, with $6.5 million in the first year, to expand the Medical School’s class size from 82 students to 102, starting this fall. The class size will then increase an additional 20 slots in 2014, bringing the total number of annually admitted students to 122.

Lawmakers also approved partial funding for a 1 percent compensation increase for public higher-education employees. In a clear sign of support for the USTAR initiative, which continues to bring world-class researchers to the state, the Legislature appropriated $5 million in ongoing funding that will help restore some prior budget cuts and allow the U to fund new research teams. And as requested by the Utah State Board of Regents, legislators appropriated $18 million to help fund distinctive mission initiatives as well as growth at each public institution of higher education.
U Named Pac-12 Champion in Green Power
The University of Utah’s commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which announced in April that the U is the Pac-12 conference champion for the 2012-13 College & University Green Power Challenge. The U beat its conference rivals by using more than 93 million kilowatt-hours of green power, representing 31 percent of the University’s annual electricity usage.

The U purchases a combination of renewable energy certificates and utility green power products from 3Degrees and Rocky Mountain Power, which helps to reduce the environmental impacts associated with electricity use on campus. In addition, the U generates green power from an on-site renewable energy system. The green power purchases were motivated by a student-led campaign to create a fund for clean energy purchases.

L.S. Skaggs Pharmacy Institute Opens at the U
The L.S. Skaggs Pharmacy Institute at the University of Utah was opened in April, providing a new, 150,000-square-foot home for pharmacy research and teaching, as well as the Utah Poison Control Center.

The $75 million-plus building was created through the generosity of the late L.S. “Sam” Skaggs and stands as a tribute to Skaggs’ dedication to scientific discovery and many years of involvement with the University’s College of Pharmacy. A businessman and philanthropist who led one of the country’s largest food and drugstore chains, American Stores, Skaggs and charitable organizations he created donated more than $50 million to help construct the new U institute. Skaggs died on March 21.

Master’s Degree in Entertainment Arts Approved
The Utah State Board of Regents in late March approved a master’s degree in Entertainment Arts and Engineering (EAE) at the University of Utah. EAE is an interdisciplinary program between the U’s colleges of Fine Arts and Engineering and will provide the first advanced degree for the discipline in the state.

The new degree approval coincides with the program being recognized for the number one undergraduate and number two graduate game degrees in the nation by the Princeton Review in its 2013 rankings, released in mid-March.

Previously, U students in the EAE Master Games Studio graduated with a master’s degree in computing or a master of fine arts degree in film and media arts, with an emphasis in game arts, game engineering, or game production.

Honorary Degrees Bestowed at Commencement
A physician, a mountain climber, and an executive specializing in environmental sustainability were presented with honorary doctoral degrees at a revamped University of Utah commencement ceremony in May.

In an effort to attract greater participation, the U this year moved the ceremony from a daytime slot to a Thursday evening, and incorporated multimedia elements, including an Instagram photo contest in which students were invited to submit photos, with the winning shots displayed at the ceremony.

Thomas D. Rees MD’48, a U alum and physician who co-founded the Flying Doctor Service of East Africa, received an honorary doctorate in science. Mountaineer Apa Sherpa, who has summited Mount Everest a world-record 21 times, received a doctorate of humane letters. And Andrea Brantzeg Thomas BS’88, a senior vice president of sustainability for Walmart Stores, received a doctorate of humanities.

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Natalie Gochnour Named Associate Business Dean
The David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah has appointed Natalie Gochnour BS’84 MS’88 as an associate dean. A 28-year Utah public policy veteran, Gochnour’s U job will involve enhancing the relevance, reputation, and relationships of the school with business and community leaders throughout the state.

Gochnour will report to both the dean of the business school and the president’s office, and she will plan and implement a new public policy initiative focusing on serving Utah businesses and community leaders. For the past seven years, Gochnour has guided the public policy work of the Salt Lake Chamber, Utah’s largest business association, representing 7,700 member businesses. She will continue to advise the Salt Lake Chamber and serve as their chief economist.

U Neighborhood Partners Opens New Center
University Neighborhood Partners celebrated the grand opening of the new 10,000-square-foot Hartland Partnership Center in April. The center brings together University of Utah faculty members and students, nonprofit organizations, and residents of west Salt Lake City to address economic, linguistic, and social barriers.

The partnership provides help with English language acquisition, family financial literacy, citizenship issues, after-school programs, employment skills, health-care education, and life skills training.
Todd and Debbie Reid love U athletics. Not long ago, at a Crimson Club event Todd and Debbie met a young student athlete. After spending some time with the young man, they were impressed by his passion for education and learned that without the scholarship he had been given, he would not have been able to go to college.

From that moment on, the Reids knew what they wanted to do—provide the support student athletes need to get a quality education at the U. They are regular donors to the Crimson Club Excellence Fund, and have established a planned gift of life insurance, too. Each time a student athlete puts on their uniform and competes for the U, Todd and Debbie can see the immediate impact of their charitable giving, while knowing that the proceeds from their planned gift will provide for future student athletes.

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The Reids’ planned gift will provide support for the Athletics Department, and the College of Education.
Longtime river guide and University of Utah alum Ken Sleight stands on the banks of the Colorado River near Moab, Utah.
Fighting FOR THE Wild

U alum Ken Sleight has taken a legendary path through Utah’s rivers and deserts.

By Stephen Speckman

To reach the Colorado River from Ken Sleight’s Pack Creek Ranch south of Moab, you first take a right off of the dirt and gravel Abbey Road, named after Sleight’s long-time friend Edward Abbey, the author who tapped away at a typewriter for a few years in a tiny cabin at Sleight’s ranch.

Pack Creek Ranch is a peaceful place, nestled in the foothills of the La Sal Mountains and surrounded by cottonwood, oak, and evergreen trees. A creek near the sprawling cabin that is Sleight’s home winds its way down the expanse of high desert below the ranch, flowing toward the Colorado River and its network of side canyons that Sleight explored for nearly 30 years as a pioneering river guide. He and Abbey became friends after meeting in July 1967, when Abbey, then a ranger with the U.S. National Park Service, offered to help him put in at Lees Ferry on the Colorado.

The roads and trails through the desert around the river have multiplied over the years. On a recent drive down State Route 128 for a stroll along the banks of the Colorado, Sleight was taken aback by all of the heavy equipment along the river where workers were putting in a paved trail and building two more footbridges to connect the two shores. It’s a scene that in the old days would have moved him to action, the kind that compelled Abbey to use him as the model for the character Seldom Seen Smith in the novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. 
“They keep coming and coming. You can’t stop it,” Sleight says.

The wild vastness of Utah’s red rock canyons and the Colorado first beckoned to him in the 1950s, when he began his river-running business and started steering his path away from his accounting department job at Firestone Tire and Rubber in Salt Lake City and toward the desert that called to him and that eventually he would wage fierce fights for as an environmental activist.

Sleight BS’55 landed the job at Firestone soon after graduating in business from the University of Utah. Born in Paris, Idaho, he and his five siblings had grown up on farms in Idaho and northern Utah, hanging around in general stores run by their father and uncles. He headed to the U after high school, on track to become a businessman like his father.

Sleight recollects that he was timid when he first came to the University. Stuttering didn’t help. “I was very shy all the time,” he says. “That was an albatross. It hurt, because you can’t speak out when you want to.” He credits speech classes at the U with helping him to gain confidence and overcome not only his stuttering but his shyness. “I had some great teachers at the University,” he says.

But even during college, the outdoors beckoned him away from the classroom. “I kept sloughing,” Sleight recollects. “I always wanted to go hiking and so forth, and I did that.” He also took his first river trip in 1951 with guide and friend Malcom “Moki Mac” Ellingson. The trip was through Lodore Canyon on the Green River, and Sleight loved all of it—the desert, the water, the time in the rafts.

The Korean War interrupted college for him. He was drafted in 1951 and served in Korea with the U.S. Army’s 48th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, from June 1952 until September 1953, including a month on the front line near Chuncheon firing Howitzer rounds. He served another year in the Army Reserves after his discharge. Sleight, who reached the rank of sergeant, remembers that even during the war, he and a friend somehow managed to make an impromptu trip on a raft they fashioned out of a tree trunk, branches, and “derelict” boards, using a few of those boards for oars. The two Army buddies floated for an hour or so on the Bukhan River, in the northern Gangwon Province.

When he came back to Utah, he had changed. “I was getting damn good grades,” he says. “I knew I couldn’t get a good job without going to school.” Firestone recruited him as he graduated. He would occasionally attend John Birch Society meetings, though he never officially joined. Sometimes he’d wear a bowtie to work.

But the outdoors kept calling him. So he began turning his daydreams into plans, and saved money from his Firestone job to purchase eight neoprene Army surplus rafts for $35 to $50 each. He wanted to start a business that would allow him to guide people on the adventure of running rivers through canyons, and on horseback trips through the mountains. Back then, he recollects, you didn’t need the “rigmarole” of dealing with permits and approval from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or the National Forest Service before you could embark on such endeavors. You just went. He began with guiding Boy Scouts down the Green and Colorado rivers. “I didn’t want to sell tires all my life,” Sleight says. “I saw more of a future in the river business than I did with Firestone.”

He used a mimeograph machine to churn out brochures to promote his new line of work, and after a few years of guiding river trips, he quit his Firestone job in 1957, took on odd jobs, and began substitute teaching to help finance his new river running business. Eventually he moved with his first wife
and children to southern Utah, living in Escalante and then Green River. His Wonderland Expeditions, incorporated on April 1, 1957, soon became Ken Sleight Expeditions as he gained a stellar reputation.

"Dad thought I gave up all that schooling to be on the river," Sleight says now. "But it was seventh heaven, and I made the right decision. I did what I wanted—I've always done that. It was an adventure. It was freedom. It was not only the places you'd go, it was the people—people with great ideas. I enjoyed that."

Sleight guided epic river trips throughout the Colorado River system, through Cataract, Grand, Desolation, and Glen canyons, for three decades. In 1990, he began dismantling his business, transferring operations in Grand and Glen canyons to his son Mark. He sold the Cataract, Lodore, and Desolation canyon operations to separate buyers. "My last commercial river trip was down the Grand Canyon," he says. So storied was his career that last year, Sleight was inducted into the River Runners Hall of Fame at the John Wesley Powell River History Museum in Green River, Utah.

Glen Canyon was Sleight's favorite place as a river runner, and he loved the stops along the way, such as Music Temple and Rainbow Bridge. Construction on the Glen Canyon Dam began in late 1956, much to his dismay. But he continued to take passengers on float trips through the canyon, from 1957 to 1963, when the floodgates of the dam were closed and Lake Powell began to form. In The Monkey Wrench Gang, published in 1975, Abbey wrote that the character Seldom Seen Smith, a lapsed Mormon and river runner, called the newly created Lake Powell "the blue death." In the book, Smith kneels atop the dam and prays "for a little pre-cision earthquake right here." He also helps a friend drive a road grader off a cliff and into the reservoir, and helps dynamite a coal train, among other exploits.

Sleight today still demurs on how much of the monkey-wrenching in the book was based on reality. "Your conscience tells you what you can do if you feel like paying the price, but don't tell others what you did—that's where you get them into the picture [as a witness in court]," Sleight says. "So, you do things on your own, but you don't tell anyone about it."

At one point, Sleight and others started a Sierra Club chapter in Moab, hopeful it would help push the agenda of one day getting rid of the Glen Canyon Dam and what he still calls "Lake Foul," instead of Lake Powell. But they didn't get the backing they needed, so Sleight and others quit, calling the Sierra Club back then a "milquetoast" operation.

The rivers, Sleight says, had talked the timidity out of him as he told stories to his clients along the way. And the more time he spent outdoors, exploring Utah's red rock country, the more he and his political views shifted from the conservatism of his youth. He eventually served for eight years as chairman of the local Democratic Party Club in San Juan County. He protested and marched for various causes alongside Navajo and Ute Indians and environmental groups.

Dams. Roads. Overgrazing. Bridges. Drilling for oil in wilderness areas. Sleight had the "guts," as he puts it, to speak up over the years. After the Glen Canyon Dam was completed in the late 1960s, he helped fight a proposed highway that would have bridged across the Escalante River near Stevens Arch, and won. "That effort was my greatest environmental accomplishment," he says now.

Sometimes he lost. He and David Brower, then head of the Sierra Club, sued the federal government in order to preserve Rainbow Bridge National Monument, which was being flooded by the Glen Canyon Dam, and won the battle in federal district court, but were overruled in the federal Circuit Court of Appeals.

In the early 1990s, Sleight, then in his early 60s, saddled his horse Knothead and rode to Amasa Back Mesa near Moab, standing down bulldozers before they began to take down several hundred

"I did what I wanted—I've always done that. It was an adventure. It was freedom."

Officers escort Ken Sleight, second from left, away during a protest near Moab in the early 1990s.
acres of juniper forest. The Caterpillar advanced right up to him and his horse, but Sleight didn’t back down, and his audacity helped prompt a moratorium on the forest’s destruction, according to the local bimonthly newspaper, The Canyon Country Zephyr. He made a similar stand against a road grader in another nearby area, but there, the people and machines won. He and Jim Stiles, publisher of the Zephyr, also more formally protested a proposed highway through the Book Cliffs region of Utah, and prevailed.

Stiles says Sleight has waged plenty of quixotic crusades over the years, and yet played a real role in preserving some key areas and raising awareness about the need for conservation. “A lot of us see overwhelming odds and give up,” Stiles says. “Ken seems to thrive on fighting those kinds of odds. I think that’s something missing these days and a lesson from Ken that’s so important. It’s the integrity that you bring to the fight that counts.”

Sleight in 1999 received the David R. Brower Conservation Award, which honors individuals for their “dramatic, positive impact on conservation efforts in the Colorado Plateau region.” Sleight’s love of Utah’s rivers also has moved him to help others who were similarly enamored, including SPLORE founder Martha Ham MS’77 MSW’90. Sleight mentored her more than 30 years ago, to help her start her own river-running business, with its own unique twist of taking people of all abilities, notably the disabled, on river trips.

Most recently, Sleight has been a supporter of activist and fellow U alum Tim DeChristopher BS’09, who served a two-year prison term until this past April for monkey-wrenching a 2008 federal oil and gas lease auction in Salt Lake City by offering fake bids, which resulted in the auction being called off. Sleight met DeChristopher at a rally in Salt Lake to show his support and visited with the younger man before, during, and after the trial and prison term. “I think he’s done great,” Sleight says. “He’s got guts.”

DeChristopher says he read Abbey’s The Monkey Wrench Gang when he was 17 or 18 years old, long before he learned the model for Seldom Seen was very real and living in Utah. “I think he is an example of principled courage,” says DeChristopher, who has been working in recent months at a bookstore in Salt Lake City.

These days, Sleight spends most of his time at the Pack Creek Ranch, raising horses and tending alfalfa with his second wife, Jane, whom he married in 1983. Jane recalls that when they first met—on a river trip, of course—Sleight had a quart of milk, a Slim Jim sausage, and a dictionary in the front of his pickup. “I said, ‘So, what’s with the dictionary,’” she says with a laugh. “He said, ‘I’m writing a book.’ So, he’s been writing a book for as long as I’ve known him, and for about 20 years before that.”

Sleight admits he’s still writing that book, inside his office on the ranch. Instead of sipping Jim Beam from his omnipresent coffee mug, he’s switched to actual coffee these days. He and Jane have also been busy in recent months with packing boxes, preparing to move out of the sprawling cabin on the ranch that they’ve long called home and into a trailer near Sleight’s office.

At the kitchen table in the cabin, Sleight produces a box of old photographs, many depicting in black and white a man gripping oars on a wild river or the reins of a horse as he rides through the mountains. The plan is maybe to finish that book, take Spot and Apache for rides on dirt roads and trails, and to give presentations inside a large room inside the old cabin—the same room where Abbey once spoke to a group as part of Ken and Jane’s “Conversation at Pack Creek Ranch” reading program. Sleight now wants to use that room to show people slides and movies from the old days—times spent running rivers, guiding horse trips, tilting at windmills.

—Stephen Speckman is a journalist and photographer based in Salt Lake City and a frequent contributor to Continuum.
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A Century of Piano

A U student tries out a new Steinway concert grand piano after its delivery to Libby Gardner Concert Hall.
In 1913, a young man named Thomas Giles, recently returned from seven years of musical studies in Europe, was appointed to the University of Utah’s faculty. Out of necessity, he taught virtually everything in the music department, including, of course, piano. Although others had taught piano before him, Giles, in both numbers and longevity, is rightly regarded as the founder of the U’s grand tradition of piano instruction.

Thousands of students have studied and performed at the U in the century since then, and many have gone on to illustrious careers. The School of Music’s Piano Area has evolved and grown and is now the largest area within the School of Music, representing 18 percent of the students. So it seems appropriate that Raymond Tymas-Jones, dean of the College of Fine Arts, has declared 2013-14 “The Year of the Piano.” Susan Duehlmeier BFA’70 MFA’73, the Piano Area’s chair, says the U plans a yearlong series of public and private concerts and community events to celebrate.

To kick off the festivities, a recital was held this past April in New York’s Steinway Hall. Several hundred alumni and friends of the University heard performances by three recent graduates of the School of Music: Whitney Pizza Smith BMu’08 MMu’10 and J. Michael Stewart BMu’11, who are both now pursuing graduate degrees at New York conservatories, and Karén Hakobyan BMu’06 MMu’08, who has become a successful international performer and composer. A second display of University talent
will take place in Steinway Hall this October, when members of the U’s piano faculty will demonstrate their own keyboard mastery.

“Music holds a special place in the cultural language of Utah,” says U President David W. Pershing, who attended the Steinway Hall concert in April. “The University’s outstanding piano faculty, facilities, and program attract gifted students from around the state and the world to perfect their skills, explore their natural gifts, and create music that endures.”

Duehlmeier says that during the 2013-14 academic year, the Piano Area also plans a series of recitals by U piano students that will be held in community members’ homes and will give listeners a chance to mingle with the musicians in a relaxed atmosphere. In April 2014, the centennial celebration will culminate in a special “homecoming” concert in Libby Gardner Concert Hall that will bring together many former members of the piano faculty, as well as alumni. It will be a festive party, Duehlmeier says, “to remember where we’ve come from—the fledgling years as well as the recent past—and to honor all those who have made this extraordinary century possible.”

Back in 1913, Giles ran the department almost singlehandedly at first. Gradually, as other teachers were added to the faculty, piano study became more diversified. In 1923, Ellen Nielson, who had a certificate in piano from the New England Conservatory, joined the U faculty, followed four years later by William Peterson, a versatile musician and fine pianist with New York credentials.

Serious local students also had other alternatives. One was the McCune School of Music in downtown Salt Lake City, and some musicians studied both there and at the U. The most famous product of this kind of collaborative education was the acclaimed concert pianist Grant Johannesen ex’40. The son of Norwegian immigrants, he became the student of McCune’s Mabel Borg Jenkins, a native of Utah’s Sanpete County who had studied piano in New York.

While in Salt Lake during a tour, the famous French pianist Robert Casadesus heard the young Johannesen and accepted him as a student on the spot. But Johannesen’s parents insisted that he first get a practical education, so he became a freshman at the University in 1938 while continuing his piano studies with Jenkins. He performed in a recital in 1940 at the Assembly Hall at Temple Square in Salt Lake and then went on to study with Casadesus, and to an international career. Over the years, Johannesen continued to lend his name and services to his alma mater, and the U awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1978. Instead of the traditional acceptance speech, he played a recital.

Another noteworthy early U piano student was Leigh Harline ex’26. After studying at the U in the 1920s, Harline moved to Los Angeles, where he soon became a staff composer with Walt Disney Studios, writing music for such Disney classics as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) and Pinocchio (1940), for which he received two Academy Awards, one for best film score and the other for his song “When You Wish Upon a Star.” He went on to write scores for other studios’ movies after he left Disney in 1941 and, in all, received eight Academy Award nominations during his career.

The World War II years seriously depleted the student body and decimated campus musical activity, but the return of large numbers of GIs under the GI Bill brought a welcome rejuvenation. After the war, large amounts of war surplus became available, including pianos and space for much-needed practice rooms, in buildings at Fort Douglas.

When A. Ray Olpin became the U’s president in 1946, every area of the University was challenged to look well into the future, and one important consequence was the formation of the College of Fine Arts, with the famous sculptor Avard Fairbanks ex’22 as its dean. Olpin then joined forces with Maurice Abravanel, the Utah Symphony’s new conductor, to find a chair for the Music Department to replace the retiring Giles. When Utah composer Leroy Robertson won first prize in a prestigious international competition, they knew they had found their man.

Taking charge in 1948, Robertson quickly organized the U’s graduate programs and incorporated new faculty members. With Olpin’s hearty approval, Robertson invited the Utah
Symphony to rehearse on campus and made the symphony principals adjunct instructors in music. Reid Nibley BFA’50 MA’53 was appointed to the faculty in 1950 and remained until the early 1960s, as an artist-in-residence and master teacher, and was the Utah Symphony’s pianist. Ardean Watts MA’60, who followed Nibley as pianist (and assistant conductor) of the Utah Symphony, came to the U for graduate work and later served on the University faculty for the remainder of the century. Gradually, a real “piano faculty” was beginning to emerge.

The growing program also continued producing excellent alumni, such as Robert Cundick BA’49 MFA’50 PhD’55. A composer and organist for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir who also served on the music faculty at Brigham Young University, he received one of the U’s first three music doctorates. Although his major focus was organ, Cundick was in great demand as a piano accompanist and chamber music collaborator during his years as a student at the U.

What could be termed the modern era (with the “Piano Area” as a distinct division within the Department of Music) really began almost by accident with the timely arrival of Gladys Gladstone. She had been raised in upstate New York and had received impeccable training under Artur Schnabel in New York. “Gladys” to virtually everyone, she came to Utah from Los Angeles in 1947 when her husband, Dr. Harold Rosenberg, was assigned to the VA Hospital after World War II. She performed with the Utah Symphony and played chamber music, but not until several private students had won their divisions at the Utah State Fair did she begin to attract real attention as a teacher. With Abravanel as her musical champion, Gladstone was finally appointed to a U professorship in 1966, after years as an adjunct instructor. For almost five decades, she was “the teacher.” Her students now can be found performing and teaching around the world, from Hollywood to the south of France. Like all members of the piano faculty, Adjunct Professor Lenora Brown BFA’71 has studied with many world-class artists, but she says her most influential teacher was Gladstone. “She was the consummate musician and teacher in every sense of the word,” Brown recollects.

Another “Gladys” student, Paul Pollei BFA’61, this past March was named Artistic Director Emeritus of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation, which he founded in 1976. Pollei, who was a faculty member at Brigham Young University, started the original Bachauer Competition on a shoestring. Gina Bachauer’s personal interest, coupled with encouragement from Abravanel and the Utah Symphony, brought the contest to Salt Lake, where, gradually, the competition assumed its present status as one of the oldest and most prestigious in the nation.

The Bachauer Competition has been the impetus for much of the U Piano Area’s growth. Ning Lu BMu’92 MMu’94 debuted with the prestigious Central Conservatory orchestra in Beijing at age 12. A few years later, after winning first place in the China preliminaries, he competed in the Bachauer finals in Salt Lake. He stayed to study at the University with Duehlmeier, who received her doctorate in piano performance from Boston University and has been the fire and energy behind much of the Piano Area’s success for nearly four decades. After Lu went on to doctoral studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, he returned to join the U’s piano faculty, where he now serves as assistant chair.

Hakobyan, who performed at the U piano-centennial celebration in New York, came to America in his mid-teens after winning Bachauer auditions in Armenia. He decided to attend the U, and after graduating, went on to receive diplomas from the Mannes School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music in New York. He has performed several times in the last year at Carnegie Hall in New York.

Weihui Mao BMu’95, who was a child movie star in China during the 1980s, debuted with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 1988. She moved a year later to Salt Lake, studied with Duehlmeier at the U, and went on to win several top...
prizes in national and international piano competitions. She continues to perform around the world.

“Our students come from major schools of music to study with us, and our undergraduates have been accepted into some of the most prestigious graduate programs in the country,” Duehlmeier says.

Students from within the state have gone on to success, as well. Stewart, who also performed at the spring Steinway Hall recital, grew up in West Valley City, Utah, and received a full scholarship to attend the U, where he studied with Duehlmeier. In 2012, he won first place in the American Protégé International Concerto Competition, an honor that brings the opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall. Smith, who shared the stage at the Steinway Hall recital, has been a laureate in numerous competitions, including the Seattle International Piano Competition. While at the U, she studied with Vera Watanabe and Bonnie Gritton.

Steinway Artist Josh Wright BMu’10 MMu’11, another student of Duehlmeier at the U, completed a piano album that topped the Billboard classical charts just three weeks after its release in April 2011, and he is scheduled to release a second CD in 2013.

Currently, the U School of Music’s Piano Area has about 60 piano performance majors, including 12 doctoral and eight master’s degree candidates. All of them have auditioned for their places. Other music majors also study piano as part of their degree requirements, and many other students enroll simply because they wish to play better.

One of the biggest challenges to the Piano Area has come since 2000, as the U has strived to provide enough instruments for the growing number of students. With the inauguration of the new Gardner Hall in 2000, Utah benefactor Bruce Bastian (cofounder of WordPerfect) made a generous gift of 55 new pianos, including two matched Hamburg Steinways, for the Libby Gardner Concert Hall.

The renovation also brought more studio space, along with new lab facilities and practice rooms, several of which, through Bastian’s gift, were equipped for the first time with Steinway instruments to replace most of the worn and battered pianos of the last century.

“The program’s legacy—and its future—are graduates who become outstanding piano performers and teachers.”
Little more than a decade later, however, growth had tripled, outpacing even the magnanimous Bastian gift. Space was once again at a premium, and providing enough instruments with the sensitive range and touch required at advanced levels was proving difficult. The influx of students made the Piano Area the largest single division within the School of Music, and the constant search for practice rooms (the bane of music students everywhere) was robbing piano majors of vital practice time. Other areas were also growing, and they, too, needed good instruments for accompaniments and chamber music.

The solution was to find enough money for another major piano purchase. Through the efforts of Dean Tymas-Jones and other administrators, with an intermediary in the indefatigable Gerald R. “Skip” Daynes, Jr. ex'66, owner of Daynes Music in Salt Lake, a centennial campaign raised $2 million to help purchase 49 new Steinway pianos, mostly for the School of Music, but also for the Theatre Department, Kingsbury Hall, and elsewhere on campus. This allowed the School of Music to retain its coveted status as an All-Steinway School. The University now has a total of 196 Steinways or Steinway-designed instruments.

As this “Year of the Piano” unfolds, Duehlmeier notes that the Piano Area has much to celebrate with its century and more of great music. “Generations of piano students have benefited from the piano program’s start 100 years ago,” Duehlmeier says. “The program’s legacy—and its future—are graduates who become outstanding piano performers and teachers.”

—Roger L. Miller is a University of Utah professor emeritus of musicology who taught at the U for 25 years.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to view a gallery with more photos.
Nalini Nadkarni, now a U biology professor, sits high in the trees of a rainforest in Monteverde, Costa Rica, in 2003, studying the canopy.
Nalini Nadkarni, who describes herself as "a small brown woman," has been pulled aside in airport security lines a couple dozen times as she has traveled the globe. For these special occasions, she has perfected what she calls her "Trees and Toiletries Lecture."

As Transportation Security Administration agents rummage through her tote bag to make sure she's not carrying any suspicious items, she begins her spiel. That lipstick? It gets its smooth texture from shea butter, derived from the seeds of a West African tree. The nail polish? Glossy because of tree fibers mixed with nitrocellulose. Those bandage strips? The adhesive on them comes from gum arabic, an exudate from trees belonging to the pea family.

She continues her lecture until the agents have finished searching—because even in the most unlikely situations, an alert scientist can always find an opportunity to talk about the topic she loves.

Nadkarni is a forest ecologist and, since the fall of 2011, the director of the University of Utah’s Center for Science and Mathematics Education. This is her mission now: to draw more K-12 teachers to science and math, to improve instruction on the college level, and to bring science and math to everyone else—to prisons and churches and halftime at Pac-12 football games.

The freedom to create such an ambitious center is what lured Nadkarni to the U, despite her initial reluctance. Utah, after all, is hardly the tropics, where she and her biologist husband, Jack Longino, have done the bulk of their field research. It's not even the mossy, forested Pacific Northwest, where the couple had spent the previous two decades. Called "the queen of canopy research" by the National Geographic Society, Nadkarni is at home in the kind of lush foliage found hundreds of feet above the floor of the world’s rain and cloud forests. Utah, by comparison, is dry and sparse.

But in the summer of 2011, the couple packed up their labs and their furniture and moved to Salt Lake City, eager to start a new life at a research university dedicated to public outreach. In her office on the second floor of the University of Utah’s Aline Wilmot Skaggs
Biology Building, she installed two hanging swings. If you climb onto them, look out the big windows, and squint, it’s the next best thing to being in a tree.

Her passion for science began in the towering maples in her parents’ front yard in Bethesda, Maryland. The trees were Nalini’s oasis, a place where she could read and watch birds and dream of tying a spool of thread to a squirrel’s tail so she could measure its journey across the branches. As she writes in her 2008 book Between Earth and Sky: Our Intimate Connections to Trees, “Those perches aloft were my refuge from the world of homework, parental directives, and the ground-bound humdrum of the everyday.”

Her mother had been raised an Orthodox Jew in Brooklyn, New York, and her father had been raised a Hindu in Thane, India. The family lived an Indian lifestyle in suburban Washington, D.C., sleeping on mats on the floor, eating without utensils, and subtly expecting more from Nalini’s three brothers than they did from her and her sister, she recalls. Trees were the place where Nalini could both escape and excel.

By the time she was nine years old, she figured she had learned something the rest of the world needed to know; so she wrote her first book, a hand-written, stapled tome called Be Among the Birds: My Guide to Climbing Trees.

By the time she entered college at Brown University in 1972, she was torn between careers in biology and dance. When she graduated, she wrangled two disparate internships: six months at the camp of a beetle taxonomist in Papua, New Guinea, followed by six months with a modern dance troupe in Paris. She came back home and drove a taxicab in Maryland while she sorted out her plans. She loved both science and dance—but science won out.

It was “the intellectual piece” that she found so enticing about field biology, she says. And the beetle taxonomist was 70 years old, proof that she’d be able to have a long career.

She enrolled in graduate school in the University of Washington’s College of Forest Resources, and it was during her first summer’s field course—in the tropical forests of Costa Rica—that she found herself drawn to what was so tantalizingly out of reach, hundreds of feet above the dark understory. How did plants live up in the forest canopy without connection to the soil, she wondered. Were there insects and animals that spent their whole lives up there?

Her instructors had no answers for her, because almost no one had been up in the canopy to study it. She itched to get up there herself, but, as she writes, “Most of these trees have unnervingly tall trunks, without lower branches, and can sport spines, biting insects, and the occasional lurking snake. The tree-climbing skills I had developed in the benevolent trees of my childhood were useless.”

Everything changed when she met a student who was applying mountain-climbing techniques to reach the highest treetops. Suddenly, literally and figuratively, her world opened up.

She came back to graduate school intent on researching the differences between the temperate rainforest canopy of Olympic National Park and the tropical cloud forest canopy of Costa Rica. But when she approached her grad committee with her enthusiastic plan, they balked,
reminding her there was plenty still to be discovered on the ground. So Nadkarni applied for, and received, a $50,000 grant on her own.

The result was a first-ever study of these forests' epiphytes, the canopy-dwelling plants—orchids, ferns, mosses—that cover every available trunk and branch of rain and cloud forest trees. Her discovery, the cover article in the prestigious journal *Science* when she was still a student, was that these epiphytes are able to trap nutrients from rainfall, eventually forming a rich mat of soil underneath them as they cling to the tree. She also discovered that trees develop aerial roots to absorb these nutrients from the mats.

She has spent her research career since then studying the canopy, helping to classify and categorize epiphytes, learning how they interact with the rest of the forest, and beginning to learn what effect humans are having on them.

The first time Longino saw Nadkarni, she was bouncing down a road in Costa Rica. He was a University of Texas graduate student studying ants in a remote field site in the lowlands and was part of a field excursion to the cloud forest. They both say it was love at first sight.

After a few days, he had to return to his field site, located a day or two away in one of the most remote places in Costa Rica, but they continued to see each other as often as they could. Once, when the bush plane didn't come on time, Longino hiked 20 miles across the rain forest to catch a bus to another airport to catch a plane that would take him to the village bus that would finally get him to Nalini.

Later, after they were married, he named an ant after her, and later still named ants after their two children. Asked if Nalini's ant is beautiful, Longino—who is now a professor of biology at the University of Utah and a well-known taxonomist—admits “you’d have to be an ant lover to call any ant beautiful.” But her ant is a canopy ant. “And it’s rare.”

He says his first impression of his wife is still true today: a woman with energy, earnestness, and charisma. “It’s almost an aura,” says Longino, who is not typically a man who gushes. “And there’s not a political bone in her body. The normal politics that go on in any kind of organization, she’s somehow above it all. There’s nothing self-serving about anything she does. I watch her give talks, and it’s like people are ready to give their lives over to her. It’s some kind of Nalini evangelism.”

The search committee for the U’s Center for Science and Math Education
was similarly smitten by Nadkarni. “She has this infectious enthusiasm that’s really hard to ignore,” says U biology professor Don Feener. “Her skills at outreach I think are really built into her bones.” Plus, adds U Interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Hardman, “she’s one of the most respected plant biologists in the world.”

Nadkarni laments the widening gap between both nature and humans, and science and society. “People who do not have awareness or the understanding of the approach of science lack tools that can help them make good decisions about important issues such as human health and the environment,” she says. Science provides a way to take the glut of data and “interpret it wisely,” she says, “rather than basing decisions on religion or emotions, traditions or being swayed by political pressure.”

Most science researchers, though, “live in the country of Academia,” with their own customs and scientific language, she says. So she both encourages and instructs them on how to become “ambassadors” to the non-science community at large. Nadkarni herself has taken dancers, musicians, and Washington state legislators into the canopy, and has brought rap singers and urban youth together in the forest to make their own beats about trees.

Last year, she teamed up with the U’s Athletics Department to develop “Sports ‘n Science,” a program designed to explain the science behind sports. During last fall’s football season, they launched their first home-game Jumbotron video, “The Science of the Punt,” featuring U math professor Peter Trapa and Ute punter Sean Sellwood discussing velocity vectors, angles, and psi. The video is now being shown at other Pac-12 schools.

And then, there is Treetop Barbie. Nadkarni first created the makeover of the iconic, perfectly coiffed fashionista in 1996. Students and volunteers round up the used dolls from thrift stores, dress them in climbing gear, binoculars and a hard hat, and sell them on the International Canopy Network website to raise funds for canopy research.

After an article about Treetop Barbie appeared in The New York Times in 2003, the doll’s manufacturer, Mattel, Inc. complained—until Nadkarni convinced them that 1) the money raised was for a good cause, and 2) she knows a lot of reporters.

Her most ambitious outreach has been to prisoners. In 2004, she began a collaboration with Dan Pacholke, then head of a small corrections center in Washington and now director of prisons for the state. Pacholke, who describes Nadkarni as “electric,” had already been interested in making the correctional facility more environmentally sustainable. With Nadkarni’s help, they were soon bringing in scientists to give lectures and hiring prisoners to compost, grow an organic garden, and raise endangered frogs, butterflies, and prairie plants to repopulate threatened ecosystems.

The prisoners were also hired to research the best ways to grow mosses—the same epiphytes that the floral industry was stripping illegally from the rain forest and that take multiple decades to regenerate in the wild.

Pacholke reports that these work opportunities have given the prisoners a sense of “meaning and purpose beyond themselves,” and although hard data on the program’s effect awaits long-term studies, indications are that the prisoners involved are less prone to act out.

With Washington’s Sustainability in Prisons Project as a model, Nadkarni this spring began the Utah Science in Prisons Project, with the goal of bringing science education, job training, conservation projects, and environmentally sustainable operations to correctional facilities in Utah. The project includes a lecture series at the Utah State Prison on science and math topics, featuring her colleagues from the U. Nadkarni has also been working with researchers and community partners who would like to involve prisoners in conservation research and restoration projects. And she is talking with prison authorities about developing sustainability projects at the correctional facilities.

She’s comfortable in front of prisoners and loggers, professors and TV cameras, but to see Nadkarni in her element, it’s best to watch a 1999 National Geographic special called Heroes of the High Frontier (a clip appears in her 2009 TED talk). There she is, outfitted with ropes and a harness, hoisting herself up an impossibly tall giant strangler fig in Costa Rica. Eager and free.

Fifty years after she began climbing the maple trees in her parents’ yard, this is what she still loves: the arms of a tree holding her, the mystery of nature about to unfold. She and Jack held their own private, unofficial wedding ceremony in a silk-cotton tree in Costa Rica. And someday, when she’s about to die, this is what she’ll want, she says: to be hoisted up into a tropical canopy and strapped to a tree branch, left to sway until she’s gone.

—Elaine Jarvik is a Salt Lake City-based freelance journalist and playwright and a frequent contributor to Continuum.
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Michael Cumming and Audra Thompson review classwork together on the University of Utah campus.
A wave of veterans is bringing strengths and needs to the U campus.

Story by Jennifer Dobner
Photos by Brian Nicholson

On the day his high school classmates in Pensacola, Florida, donned caps and gowns to pick up their diplomas back in 2000, Gerald Sanders was already a week into Air Force basic training—learning the rules of the military justice code and marching to drills barked out by a tough sergeant. He went on to serve in the Iraq war and ran electronic warfare jamming systems to protect pilots, but he was forced to end his military career in 2006 when he developed iritis, a painful inflammation of the iris that can cause blindness. After he was discharged from Hill Air Force Base, he worked for a few years before enrolling at the University of Utah. Now 30, he is a business management major on track to graduate this summer. But his first years on campus were a blur of heavy course loads and limited interaction with other students, he says. Like many veterans, he learned quickly that talking about one’s military service can have a downside, even in conservative and patriotic Utah.

“People automatically think you’re a pillager, or a baby killer, or that every single war veteran has post-traumatic stress disorder,” he says, shaking his head. “We have veterans who don’t want to claim themselves as veterans because they don’t want to get asked the stigmatic question: How many people did you kill?”
Experiences like his are becoming more common on college campuses nationwide. With wars in Iraq and Afghanistan coming to an end, many of the United States’ 2 million service men and women are enrolling in college. Over the past three years, more than 870,000 student veterans have tapped their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits for school, according to the federal Veterans Administration. It’s said to be the largest influx of student veterans into higher education since World War II.

As of fall 2012, the University of Utah had identified 889 student veterans on campus, including 213 women. The group makes up about 3 percent of the University’s overall population and has been steadily growing. The U’s student veteran population has nearly doubled since 2007, when 459 vets were enrolled.

The University also has more student veterans than any other school statewide. Salt Lake Community College is a close second with 850, followed by Brigham Young University with 700, Weber State University with 650, Utah Valley University with 520, and Utah State University with 430.

Campus life has gotten a little easier for student veterans at the University of Utah since May 2011, when the U opened its Veterans Support Center. The center offers vets and active duty service men and women a place to connect with each other and a resource for navigating through the college experience.

Tucked away in a corner on the first floor of the Olpin Student Union Building, the center buzzes with students going in and out throughout the day to use computers, pick up information about coming events, or just grab a free cup of coffee and talk with staff or other vets. “The goal is to help veterans transition from a military environment to an academic environment—get in, graduate, get out, and go on to successful lives,” center director Roger Perkins says. “That means tutoring, accessing the GI Bill, counseling. One woman needed a babysitter. It means doing whatever it takes, because each veteran has a different set of circumstances.”

“We’ve got a guy, 62, who served in Vietnam, a 49-year-old with a 20-year Marine career, a 17-year-old, and everything in between,” says Perkins, a Vietnam-era vet who served 21 years in the Army and retired following Desert Storm. “They’ve got some college, no college, some were in school 20 years ago, some three or four years ago, and it’s difficult to get back into the swing of things sometimes. We give them a place to come and talk about that.”

Hitting the books after the battlefield presents a number of challenges, Perkins says. Veterans tend to be older than traditional students. Their life experience is more varied. They may have added responsibilities such as families to support, or ongoing military duties if they are now serving in the reserves. Many student veterans are also facing an education gap. Some may have gone from high school straight into the military, and it may have been five or more years since they sat in a classroom. And for those who have been to battle, there may also be some residual emotional issues to manage, including PTSD.

At the same time, veterans returning to school have already trained for and worked in skilled jobs, Perkins says. Most have developed strong work ethics. They know how to establish priorities, make decisions, and complete tasks. Those qualities can be assets, but sometimes also bring frustrations in the college setting, he says.

“We have veterans who don’t want to claim themselves as veterans because they don’t want to get asked the stigmatic question: How many people did you kill?”
“I don’t know of any other job [like those in the military] where a guy 26, 27, 28 years old with a high school diploma and maybe a little college is going to be responsible for $4.6 million in capital equipment and seven people,” says Perkins. “Then you get out of the military and you come to college, and they treat you like a freshman. That’s a source of frustration.”

David Rudd, a former dean of the U’s College of Social and Behavioral Science and a psychologist whose research includes veterans issues, says societal systems, whether on a college campus or in professional employment communities, don’t give veterans credit for their work experience and training. A combat medic in Afghanistan or Iraq comes home from war having treated the wounded in a combat zone, for example, but can’t automatically qualify as an emergency medical technician in civilian life.

“You start back at the end of the line in terms of working your way back up,” says Rudd, who founded the National Center for Veterans Studies at the U and now is provost at the University of Memphis. “They have to repeat all of that education experience and then get supervisory experience. Those are the kinds of things that not a lot of people think about.”

Another problem is that the most common public narratives focus on veterans who are in crisis. It’s a story line that’s only true for a quarter or less of the veteran population, Rudd says. The majority, 75 to 80 percent, return from war with no mental health problems. And while combat veterans statistically will show a higher rate of PTSD than other military vets, studies have shown that among student veterans the percentages are not disproportionate to the rate of emotional struggles in the wider student population. On average, Rudd says, 20 to 25 percent of vets struggle with emotional issues secondary to combat. The same percentages of students have issues that are developmentally based on the transitioning to independence and being adults. “It’s just a different kind of struggle,” and not one that is widely known, he says.

Rudd believes that because the United States has an all-volunteer military, some veterans may suffer under the preconceived notions the public may have about what type of person even joins the military. Young college students who have not been in the military may have some stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a veteran and about what it means to be deployed and to be in wartime and to have military experi-
ence. “So there’s really a chasm between how most people think about military service and what military service is really like,” he says.

Veteran Mary Huggins, 26, knows firsthand about those stigmas and says some of the issues differ for women. Huggins says when people find out she has been in the Air Force, they assume she has PTSD. She doesn’t. “I think that there’s a perception that everyone in the military is damaged goods,” says Huggins, who was a radio communications specialist and is working on a degree in communications. “We’re not. One thing I’ve heard in the classroom is that everybody expects that one day some vet is going to go postal and shoot everybody up.”

Both she and Sanders say most civilian students also think everyone who serves is in the Army and that the folks with the boots on the ground are also responsible for U.S. policies that involved the country in war. “They don’t realize that soldiers and sailors and airmen don’t make those policies,” says Huggins, who works at the Veterans Support Center.

“You get out of the military and you come to college, and they treat you like a freshman. That’s a source of frustration.”

Sometimes, it’s hard to hold your tongue, says Michael Cumming. The 31-year-old served 10 years on active duty, including three as a Marine and seven in the Army, achieving the rank of staff sergeant in an infantry unit on the front lines in Iraq. Now in the Army Reserves, the Seattle native is working on a degree in adventure and outdoor programs and frequently uses center services, including counseling for PTSD.

In one classroom, when the discussion turned to an incident involving Marines accused of urinating on the dead bodies of their enemies, Cumming says he blew his stack. “I just had to stand up, and went off about what you have to do in war in order to be able to do the job. You have to dehumanize the enemy,” says Cumming, who served three tours and lost 17 of his friends. “I think people were pretty mortified, but I said what I had to say.”

Despite (and perhaps because of) moments like that one, Rudd says student veterans are an educational asset in the classroom. Vets bring a different set of experiences and perspective that can deepen the experience for both students and faculty. That includes providing a different way of thinking about the Middle East, America’s role in the world, and what an American presence in a foreign country means.

Part of Perkins’ mission is also to help faculty understand and appreciate the challenges veterans face. He wants professors to see the military as a culture with a set of standards, habits, and values that has shaped its young men and women, just as other forms of culture do.

Dean of Student Affairs Barbara Snyder says the U, which funds the support center with about $120,000 annually, is committed to helping student veterans succeed and meet their unique challenges with grace, and not judgment. “We feel a tremendous sense of responsibility toward our veteran population,” Snyder says. “We provide an awfull lot of support for traditional students, and parents, and all kinds of subsets in our student population. How could we not do this?”

Gerald Sanders, an Iraq war veteran and U student, is a business management major.
One of the first things you notice about Jeff Key, besides his towering 6-foot-4-inch frame, is his tattoos. “Warrior” stretches along the inside of his left forearm, all in lowercase script. “Poet” scrawls along the right. Both are apt descriptions.

Key is a 47-year-old U.S. Marine veteran who served in Iraq and is completing a bachelor’s degree in English at the University of Utah. The Alabama native, who enlisted in 2000, is also an accomplished playwright whose one-man show, The Eyes of Babylon, toured eight U.S. cities and Ireland. The play is based on journals and videos that document Key’s months in Iraq. Through storytelling, Key says, “we have a chance to redefine the veteran.”

Key was a natural fit for the U’s “Writing on War” course taught by Maximilian Werner, an instructor and lecturer with the College of Humanities. An author with three published books, Werner BA’93 (along with an MFA from Arizona State University) introduced the class in the spring of 2012 and taught it again in 2013. The course, which is open to both civilian and veteran students, draws on some of the best writing and films on war and pushes students to think beyond the stereotypical ways in which military service people are mostly portrayed: warrior as hero or monster.

“When you look at the narratives that we use to explain or to make sense of these different experiences, we’re just not given a lot of options,” Werner says. “There are broad ranges of experiences when we talk about the experience or phenomenon of war. It’s a complex story that has a lot of facets.”

Werner’s students contribute their own work, both fiction and nonfiction, to the conversation and are asked to look critically at the rhetorical devices used in crafting narratives. The class also has provided lessons in changing perspectives. Civilians, including Werner, who has no military background, have been given a window into the sharp edges of war. They have learned about the practical matters of unit organization and what military acronyms mean, as well as the political nuances that drive the way conflicts play out on foreign soil. And they have gained deeper perspectives about why someone like Key, who joined the Marines at age 34, one year before the attacks on 9/11, volunteers to serve.

Veterans have also been able to hear from civilian students about their views on 12 years of war as seen from U.S. soil, and gained deeper insight from telling their own sometimes difficult stories. “We learned from our collective experience,” says Key.

The goal of the class has never been to offer a therapeutic release, but Werner says students have told him that they were changed by the undertaking. A newcomer to writing, veteran Michael Cumming says the class took him on a journey he didn’t expect.

Cumming, 31, served three tours in Iraq. He was prodded to take the class by another teacher who saw promise in his prose. “It seemed like a good way to write about some of the experiences I’d had and to get some of that off my chest,” says Cumming.

Writing about war seemed easier to him than talking about it, and he says he was surprised by what ended up on paper. “I thought I would write about the battles. I ended up writing about taking a well-aimed shot on a kid that was digging a hole for an IED and about some of the guys I knew and the relationships I made,” says Cumming. “It was the first time I had real emotions about it.”

Werner considers the class perhaps the most important thing he’s done in his 20 years of teaching and hopes the class will continue to be offered during the next academic year. “It’s our responsibility as citizens to hear the stories of war, so that we understand what’s at stake,” he says.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to read some of the students’ stories and poems.
The conversation about developing a student support center came “at the right time and with the right people around the table,” she says. University officials were already talking about ways to address the issue when the campus Student Veterans of America group, which was an informal club, sought official status from the Associated Students of the University of the Utah (ASUU). “What I hope we are learning is that after someone has paid the debt to us and to our country, we have an opportunity to pay our debt to them,” Snyder says.

Other campuses across the nation are taking similar steps to accommodate veterans, according to the American Council on Education. Data collected from ACE surveys in 2009 and in 2012 show the number of dedicated veterans support offices on campuses nationwide grew 18 percent between those years. The findings of the 2012 report, based on responses from 690 institutions, show that 62 percent of colleges now provide military-specific programs and services. Nearly 90 percent of those had increased their campus services since 2009. The survey also found that the services, programs, and policies dedicated to meeting student-veteran needs are as varied as the veterans themselves, says Meg Mitcham, ACE’s director of veterans programs.

One particular area of study critical to successful transitions for veterans is college outcomes and graduation rates, Mitcham notes. Over the past year, some media reports have suggested that as many as 88 percent of student vets drop out of college before graduating. The figure comes from a study by the Colorado Workforce Development Council and the Colorado State Office of the Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. But that study’s findings have been questioned by the national Student Veterans of America, which contends insufficient research has been done on student-veteran outcomes.

That’s about to change. In January, U.S. Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the agency would partner with Student Veterans of America and the National Student Clearinghouse to gather graduation data to create an education database. Separately, in fall 2012, the U’s veterans studies center launched its own nationwide study of the factors contributing to the academic success of veterans. Those can include school-related factors, family military history, support from family and friends, life experiences, health, and stress, says Craig Bryan, an associate director of the U’s Veterans Support Center and a former Air Force psychologist. As of this spring, more than 200 student veterans from across the country had taken the short online survey. Bryan is hoping for a total of 750 responses before closing the study.
A portion of the study focuses on suicide risk, which past studies suggest may be significantly higher in student veterans when compared to traditional students. "What we seem to be seeing so far is that the majority of student veterans who report ever having suicidal thoughts or making a suicide attempt did so before they joined the military," he says. "Interestingly, we have found similar patterns in other military samples—which has caused us to reconsider how suicide risk emerges over time in military personnel and veterans, whether or not they are enrolled in college classes.” Rudd, who has testified before Congress about the needs of veterans, says he hopes such data will help the U and other institutions make thoughtful decisions about programming.

Perkins has high aspirations for the future of the Veterans Support Center, which now hosts monthly events, including a free pizza lunch and employment seminars. He wants to expand outreach to efforts and programs such as peer-to-peer counseling. He’d also like more space, and a bigger coffee pot. In time, he wants the center to grow into a gathering place for veterans, much like the day rooms that military units have in their barracks. “So that if [the world] out there doesn’t feel like a fit, you can come in here. It’s a touchstone to something that’s familiar. The culture exists in here,” he says.

Perkins has deep respect for the current generation of vets and says the battle against terrorism in which the United States is engaged is a conflict far different than those fought by past generations of soldiers, sailors, and airmen. “These kids for 10 years have known that this was a dirty war, and not one that anybody had trained for,” he says. “There’s not a homeland to take, there’s not ground to take. It’s more like a gang fight, but they still go in. I’m absolutely in awe of this generation.”

Jennifer Dobner, a former longtime Associated Press reporter and editor, is a Salt Lake City-based freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Continuum.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to view a gallery with more photos.
Games of

U professor emeritus David Kranes has a legacy in plays, stories, novels—and casinos.

By Jason Matthew Smith
David Kranes was a silent boy. He was always on the sidelines, observing, rarely saying much. On Saturday mornings, he might go to Boston’s University Theater to see a Tom Mix, Roy Rogers, or Gene Autry film. The theater handed out silver dollars to a lucky few between showings. It was a big deal to kids in their early teens. But even if the young Kranes managed to snag a silver dollar at the theater, it’s a safe bet that he wouldn’t yap about it very much. He just wasn’t a talker.

Even today, decades later, Kranes is by no means a chatterbox. When he speaks, he chooses his words carefully, as if plucking the ripest fruit from the branch. He exudes an almost Zen-like air. His home on a hillside above the University of Utah, near Popperton Park, is spotless. He has spent a lifetime cultivating his powers of observation, and honing an ability to not just communicate, but to select the right word and the right phrase.

Now a professor emeritus at the University of Utah, Kranes taught at the U for 34 years until his retirement in 2001, and he has mentored many preeminent authors. As the founder and onetime artistic director of the Sundance Playwrights’ Lab, he has shepherded numerous award-winning plays (his own and the work of others) from page to stage, working with such celebrated playwrights as Tony Kushner and actors including Kathy Bates and John Malkovich. His own dramatic work has been produced nationally, including at the Manhattan Theatre Club and Mark Taper Forum. And as the author of seven novels and a handful of short story collections—including, most recently, *The Legend’s Daughter*, released in May—he has established himself as a writer with a distinctive and clear voice, with accolades including a Pushcart Prize and the Utah Governor’s Award in the Arts.

Yet Kranes himself will readily admit that reaching a point where he felt comfortable expressing himself was a long time coming. “Discovering that I could speak and what that speaking might mean to others may have saved my life on a number of occasions. I tried not to be a writer in various ways. So to somehow earn my own permission to speak was so vivifying and life-giving.”

Kranes grew up in Boston, where his father was a highly regarded physician and was for a time chief of medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. His mother put aside her nursing career to raise Kranes. “Though my parents couldn’t be described as ‘power’ people, they were respected people of note in many ways, and their friends were ‘important’ people in the Boston/Harvard/MIT community,” he says. “I remember a night when there were three Nobelists at our house for dinner. How would one ever dare to enter into that conversation?”

Under this kind of pressure, Kranes remained a reserved and quiet child, the kind of kid who kept his mouth clamped shut. “I stood at the edge of things, taking notes but believing I’d never measure up,” he says.

Living in the deep shadow cast by his father led him to enroll as a pre-med English major at Bowdoin College. But then he hit a wall. “I applied to med schools my senior year, but, in the late spring, realized, I can’t do this! I understood that my medical path was to please my father, who had always said, ‘Whatever you do, I’ll be pleased,’ but the unspoken message had been, ‘I’d be so happy if you chose medicine,’” Kranes recollects. “So I ditched med school and flailed for a couple of weeks, then decided, I love words. Lawyers use words. Lawyers are respected professionals.”

At 21, Kranes enrolled at Columbia University’s law school, where he flourished for a time. But the competitive nature of the school, with students clawing their way over one another to get into the best law firms in the country, began to wear on him. And his slate was full for another reason, as well. “I was trying to read a novel a day and write

“In a casino, the idea of ‘are you a winner or are you a loser?’ gets compressed into a three-minute or five-minute span of time.” —David Kranes
a sonnet a day, because I’d never get to do that once I graduated and started to practice,” he says. “And all that conspired into a breakdown. And after my head cleared from the breakdown, I saw that I’d best try to do what I loved, which was to write.”

He entered New York University and received a master’s degree in English. And the words wouldn’t stop: He wrote furiously, constantly. He also met and married his wife, Carol, during this time, and shortly after leaving NYU, he came to another crossroads. “I realized theater was more of a drive than poetry or fiction,” he says. “I’d had a few poems published; I’d had a story published; but I’d had a play optioned for off-Broadway production, and Yale was the place to go if you thought you might write for theater.”

So he hit Yale University’s Drama School in the mid-1960s, having finally found his niche. “[Yale] immersed me in the literature of world theater,” he says. “It gave me a laboratory in which to take the literature of world theater, “he says. “It gave me a laboratory in which to take the literature of world theater, which was more of a drive than poetry or fiction,” he says. “I’d had a few poems published; I’d had a story published; but I’d had a play optioned for off-Broadway production, and Yale was the place to go if you thought you might write for theater.”

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After obtaining a doctorate of fine arts, Kranes headed west to Utah, where his wife had been raised. He also believed the move would be beneficial for him. “I thought it would be a good thing to get away from the East Coast, where I felt the pressure to become one of the Nobelists sitting around my family’s dinner table.”

He came to the University of Utah in 1967, teaching classes in both the English and Theatre departments. Once at the U, he found that he loved teaching. “That surprised me, because the choice to teach was a cynical one,” he says. “I asked myself, ‘What job might I have that would allow me the most hours in a given day to be a writer?’”

Kranes found that mentoring young writers was as much a calling as his own efforts to craft fiction and drama. “I think it’s very hard to commit to making stuff out of words without feeling a little odd, strange, or outside the mainstream. You help the younger writers see it’s not necessarily solitary,” he says.

One of those students was Ron Carlson HBA’70 MA’72, now a professor in the Programs in Writing at the University of California at Irvine and an author of numerous short stories and novels. Carlson first met Kranes in 1968, soon after Kranes had arrived at the U. Carlson says that Kranes had a talent for coaxing writers from their shells. And Kranes’ own work opened Carlson’s eyes to new possibilities. “I found it fabulous, dense and angular, and full of surprising imagery like nothing I’d ever seen. It made me want to write, and the truth is that his prose still is a spur to my own work.”

Another of Kranes’ former students is Jon Tuttle B5’82, now a professor at Francis Marion University, who compiled and edited David Kranes: Selected Plays, released in 2011. Tuttle says that Kranes was one of the most beloved professors at the U during the early 1980s, when he was taking courses from him. “What he’s best at is making you feel like you belong and have something to say,” Tuttle says. “And that’s the first thing I keep in mind when I’m talking to my own students. I try to listen. That’s Kranes.”

The music of Kranes’ work largely follows two recurring themes. Like poking at a sore tooth, Kranes returns again and again to the charged dynamic of fathers and sons, tussling over control and veiled emotions. The landscapes of the West, of Utah, Idaho, and Nevada, also have come to figure prominently in his work. “I think we all need distance as artists,” Kranes says. “When I first got to Utah, my writing was about the East. It took me about six years to begin writing about the West. And it was different from my East work, which was cooler and more observant. The West work began with wonder and newness and discovery, senses of rebirth and initiation… What’s good and bad about the East for me is its constancy. The West, on the other hand, is inconstant, shifting, changing, new—both discoverable and rediscoverable.”

That process of discovery and rediscovery took an unexpected turn during one of Kranes’ exploratory trips soon after arriving from Yale. He was heading to Elko, Nevada, with some friends when they hit a snowstorm raging across the salt flats. The travelers stopped at the old State Line Casino in Wendover. Inside, Kranes happened to stand behind a man who was raking it in at the blackjack table. The gambler passed a silver dollar to Kranes and said, “Here. Good luck, kid.” Kranes was transported back to his days as a teen in Boston, where those silver dollars were handed out as prizes during the Gene Autry or Roy Rogers flicks.

“Discovering that I could speak and what that speaking might mean to others may have saved my life on a number of occasions.”
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That confluence of the past and the present ignited a fascination with casinos and the emotions they trigger. “In a casino, the idea of ‘are you a winner or are you a loser?’ gets compressed into a three-minute or five-minute span of time,” Kranes says. And it dovetailed perfectly with his work in theater. “I’ve always been hypersensitive to space, especially affective space—the way any given configuration of space makes you feel,” he says.

After that fateful night in Wendover, first came stories and plays based in Nevada and its casinos, and then his essay about casino space called “Playgrounds” appeared in a Las Vegas travel guide. The essay appeared at a time when casinos were largely dark, dank spaces with wildly patterned carpets, and without windows and clocks. Kranes argued that patrons would be more inclined to linger if these spaces were more welcoming, and he chose a handful of poorly designed properties as examples of what not to do, predicting their demise. His prognostications proved true, and soon thereafter, in the early 1980s, the casino CEOs came calling, and he began evaluating casino properties for their effectiveness in keeping gamblers in the seats. He urged the CEOs to open up their gaming spaces, allow natural light to flood the casino floors, and bring a sense of the natural world indoors.

“It was the convergence of the two—the study of affective space and the fascination about Nevada’s images and surreal—which led to the casino consulting,” he recollects. “I was off and running on a consulting jaunt, which has taken me across the country and to Estonia, Lithuania, and Lake Como. Who was I to say no?”

In addition to the casino gig, he also was busy working with Robert Redford’s Sundance Playwrights’ Lab. “I had had a film project in the first Sundance Film Lab,” Kranes says. “The next year, I was approached and asked if I would like to create a Playwrights’ Lab which had the same developmental mission elements as the Film Lab.” He founded the new lab and worked with it for more than a decade, and although he is not involved currently, he still has a keen interest in its development. “I’m working on a book which tries to frame the first 14 years of the Sundance Playwrights’ Lab,” he says. “It was an inspired place and process, and I’m trying to record a sense of that.”

Today, Kranes is also facing a new challenge. In July 2012, he was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer. “The treatment has gone very, very well, but there have been side effects,” he says. One side effect of the medication has been periods of crippling mental depression, which have brought a new degree of gravity and urgency to his writing. “I wrote a kind of journal called ‘Writing Myself Well’ and, as hard as I could, tried to use the process of writing and what it ignited in me to not stay in that darkness.”

He now believes the cancer will soon be in remission, and he still has a lot of writing he wants to do. He looks forward to spending as much time as he can with his two grown sons. He also has been rediscovering old stories he produced many years ago but squirreled away in filing cabinets. “Sometimes I put them in the drawer and forget about them,” he says. “I’ve been a poor marketer of my own work. It doesn’t serve me well professionally, but there’s always been this drive to do the next one and the next one.”

In addition to his new story collection The Legend’s Daughter, his latest work includes two novels (resurrected from the depths of those file cabinets), which will be coming out later in the year. As he sits in his house recollecting the work to be done, he leans back and folds his hands together. “I’ve also started sketching a play titled Final Episode,” he says, “a title which, at my age, speaks for itself.” Then he’s quiet, grinning from ear to ear. These days, he is quite comfortable with his own silence. He has a lifetime of stories that do the talking.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to view a gallery with more photos.
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Full Circle

Spring Awards honor former U football player Steve Smith, a U advisor, and a U alum.

Former University of Utah student and current NFL star Steve Smith ex’01 has focused on giving time and attention to worthy causes in recent years. For that, and his athletics accomplishments, the U Alumni Association honored him with its Par Excellence Award at its 2013 Spring Awards Banquet.

Smith, who has played for the NFL’s Carolina Panthers for the past 12 years, received the award in April. The Alumni Association’s Young Alumni Board presents the award annually to a former student who attended the U within the last 15 years, in recognition of his or her outstanding professional achievements and service to the community as well as the University of Utah.

Smith grew up in Los Angeles.
and was raised in a single-parent home by his mother. He was forced to grow up quickly, and he looked to sports as an outlet and a way to have a different kind of future. He started playing football in middle school, where he played baseball and ran track, as well. In high school, he began to focus on football.

He attended Santa Monica College, drawing attention from universities in surrounding states. He took his first college recruiting trip to the University of Utah and soon committed to coming to the U. He met his wife, Angie, during his first year at the U, and they were married during the bye week in October of 2000. The following April, he was drafted in the third round to the Carolina Panthers. He started his rookie season as a punt/kickoff returner, and over the years, has become one of the best wide receivers in franchise history. He helped the Panthers to the Super Bowl in 2003, and in 2011, he was elected to his fifth Pro Bowl.

Smith is a dedicated husband and father. He also has enjoyed helping good causes. Early in his career, he created a coat drive in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the less fortunate. Following the movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado, he made a substantial contribution to the victims to cover their medical expenses. And in the spring of 2012, he became an NFL Ambassador for Samaritan’s Feet, a nonprofit group based in Charlotte that is dedicated to serving people all over the world through washing their feet and giving them a new pair of socks and shoes. He has taken several mission trips with them, participated in shoe drives, and represented the group by speaking at schools and churches. He also showed his commitment to the group by taking off his cleats at the end of each game this past season and walking barefoot into the locker room.

Smith recently took a trip to China with another nonprofit group, visiting orphanages and conducting football clinics for children. Following that trip, he went on a USO tour to Afghanistan, where he spent time with U.S. troops. “He has a huge heart and shows it by giving of his time and resources to countless people,” says Angie Smith.

His generosity continued at the Spring Awards Banquet: He announced that he is donating $150,000 to endow a scholarship fund to help disadvantaged students attend the University.

At the banquet, the Alumni Association also presented U Transfer Center Director Terese Pratt BA’86 with its Philip and Miriam Perlman Award for Excellence in Student Counseling. Former Young Alumni Board member Jill Briggs HBS’95 MPR’96 received an Outstanding Alumna Award.

Pratt has worked in University College Advising since 2003 and was part of the leadership team that developed the Transfer Center. In her job as director, she has developed and coordinated advising services for transfer students at the U. She began her career at the U in the late 1980s, as an instructor and then as an advisor with the Center for Academic Advising.

As the Transfer Center’s director, she also has worked on U initiatives for international students and has traveled annually to China for the past four years, to help promote the U to students there. “She is an outstanding advisor who focuses on the needs of each student and addresses some of the most challenging advising situations presented at University College,” says Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, assistant vice president for Undergraduate Studies and University College.

Briggs served as vice president of the Young Alumni Board and is currently chair of the U’s Business Alumni Association. Over the years, she has been a strong supporter of the Young Alumni Board’s Homecoming 5K race. She also was named as one of the “30 Women to Watch” by Utah Business magazine in 2009 and was the recipient of the Woman of Courage Award from the American Woman’s Society of Certified Public Accountants in 2012. She is currently a tax director at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Four years ago, she was diagnosed with brain cancer and is now recovering from her third surgery and undergoing radiation treatment. In each case, she has had to strive to recover and regain her skills. Despite all that, in May 2012, after months of training, she ran in the TriUtah Women of Steel Triathlon.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to watch a video featuring Smith.
The University of Utah Alumni Association’s Young Alumni Board won a Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Award of Excellence for outstanding alumni programing at the annual CASE District VII Conference in San Francisco in March. The “bronze” award was given for their successful efforts in putting together the Young Alumni 5K Run and KidsK on Homecoming Day.

The 5K race last year had 600-plus runners and raised more than $37,000 in scholarship money for University of Utah students, says Tim Conde BA’00 JD’04, the Young Alumni Board president. Work for the annual race begins in May each year, and the 20-plus members of the board meet during the summer to plan details of the race.

The CASE District VII awards recognize efforts by colleges and universities in the Western region of the United States. “We received a record number of entries this year, and your excellent achievement stood out among the best,” the judges wrote in notifying the U Alumni Association about the award for the 5K event.

The 2013 Homecoming 5K Run and KidsK will be held on September 14. Save the date, and be sure to sign up to run and help raise scholarship funds.

International Coordinator Joins U Association

Cornelia “Nelly” Divricean BS’09 MS’12 has joined the University of Utah Alumni Association’s staff, as a coordinator of international alumni relations. She previously had been a coordinator for international alumni through the U’s International Center.

In her new role, she will continue to forge connections with international alumni and help them organize alumni clubs and events. “The University of Utah now has thousands of its alumni throughout the world,” says John Ashton BS’66 JD’69, the Alumni Association’s executive director. “We are very pleased to have Nelly join our staff to assist the Alumni Association in serving and engaging this important group of our alumni and supporters.” Divricean says that her goals include establishing a worldwide alumni network by maintaining strong relationships between the U and international alumni, as well as domestic alumni living abroad. She also aims to foster opportunities for international alumni to help the U recruit high-achieving international students and provide internships and study-abroad experiences. Her work also includes connecting international and domestic alumni living abroad with Utah businesses.

The U currently has more than 4,500 international graduates and seven international clubs, in Europe, South Korea, China, India, Taiwan, Thailand, and, as of this past May, Turkey. Alumni in 21 countries also have agreed to serve as international contacts to help the U and provide a network for its graduates.

Board President Wins Student Leader Award

Danielle McConkie, president of the University of Utah Alumni Association’s Student Alumni Board, received the Outstanding Student Leader Award this past March at the District 7 Western regional conference of the Affiliated Student Advancement Programs of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

McConkie graduated this spring with a bachelor’s degree in political science. The Student Alumni Board is involved in a wide range of events and programs, including the Unrivaled Rivalry Food Drive, the U Book traditions book, Senior Sendoff, Homecoming, and Founders Day.

“The experiences I have had on the Student Alumni Board have shaped my time at the University of Utah,” says McConkie. “[Being on the board] has given me the opportunity to develop my leadership qualities and really serve my board members, students on campus, and the greater community.”

As the winner of the regional award, McConkie is eligible for a national award in the same category from CASE. The national awards will be announced at the group’s convention in New Orleans in August.
Colleges of fine arts on university campuses are the incubators of transforming our ideas, knowledge and understanding into art. It is therefore imperative that artists interact with all that is around them, developing an insatiable thirst for knowledge, while engaging and challenging themselves to embrace the many facets of what life offers.

Raymond Tymas-Jones, Associate Vice President for the Arts and Dean, College of Fine Arts, The University of Utah
The story of monkey-wrencher Tim DeChristopher BS’09 has come to the big screen in the feature-length documentary film Bidder 70.

DeChristopher entered the national spotlight when, as a University of Utah student in 2008, he found himself holding a bidding paddle at a widely disputed federal auction of Utah land. The George W. Bush administration had put thousands of acres of pristine wilderness on the block for oil and natural gas drilling, and DeChristopher was attending the auction intending simply to protest. But literally handed the chance to do more, he began bidding—and winning bids, with no intention to drill—which subverted the process. Incoming Interior Secretary Ken Salazar eventually invalidated the entire auction and protected more than 100,000 acres of land. Nonetheless, DeChristopher’s act of civil disobedience landed him in court, and he was sent to federal prison.

But DeChristopher became an instant environmental activism star and co-founded the Salt Lake City-based “climate justice” organization Peaceful Uprising, which describes its work as “at the intersection between environmental degradation and human rights.” The group held the first national screening of Bidder 70 this year on April 22, the day after DeChristopher finished his prison sentence and, fittingly, Earth Day.

Bidder 70 has now been recognized with 15 major film festival awards. Filmmakers Beth and George Gage have previously produced documentaries including American Outrage, about two Western Shoshone sisters fighting the U.S. government, and Fire on the Mountain, a profile of a World War II Army unit made up of winter-sports enthusiasts. The latter played at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival, where it became a personal favorite of Robert Redford. The actor-activist makes an appearance in Bidder 70, as does writer and environmentalist Terry Tempest Williams BS’79 MS’84. Following filming, the Gages gave Redford a baseball cap with “Bidder 70” embroidered on it, and Redford wore the hat in his latest movie, The Company You Keep, in which he plays a Weather Underground member who uses the cap as a disguise when hiding from the police.

The Gages note, “Tim DeChristopher is a young man with a message that needs to be heard. Climate change is upon us, and there is nothing more important to work for than a livable future.”

DeChristopher is now considering becoming a minister in the First Unitarian Church, of which he is a member, and plans to attend Harvard Divinity School starting this fall. “I see divinity school and ultimately the ministry as an extension of my previous activism, not a new direction,” he told The Salt Lake Tribune. “I’m continuing on the path I’ve been on, just stepping my game up.”

Visit continuum.utah.edu to view the video trailer for the film.
Spencer F. Eccles BS’56 was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2013 Governor’s State of Sports Awards, organized by the Utah Sports Association. Eccles for decades has been a generous and significant donor to athletics efforts at the University of Utah and throughout the state, from youth sports to the Olympics. He was also an award-winning athlete in his youth. He skied competitively for 13 years, becoming a four-year letterman at the U, an All-American, and a member of the 1958 U.S. world championship team. After college, he spent four decades in banking, including nearly a decade as chief executive officer of First Security Bank, before its 2000 merger with Wells Fargo. He remains chairman emeritus of Wells Fargo’s Intermountain banking region. LM

Bryan J. McEntire BS’78 MBA’82 has been named a Fellow in The American Ceramic Society, in recognition of his notable contributions to ceramic science and technology. McEntire holds one patent and three pending applications and is author or co-author of more than 30 technical papers on processing and characterization of ceramics for heat-engines, industrial applications, and medical devices. Presently chief technology officer at Ambedica Corporation in Salt Lake City, his current interests involve the development and manufacturing of ceramics for orthopedic applications. Between 1986 and 1995, McEntire served as a short-course lecturer on “Forming of Ceramics” for the National Institute of Ceramic Engineers. He spent nearly a decade with Ceramatec and also worked with Norton/TRW Ceramics, the Advanced Ceramics Division of Saint-Gobain Corporation, and Applied Materials Corporation. He previously served as a member of Applied Materials’ Technical Review Board. LM

David Marcey PhD’85, a biology professor at California Lutheran University, has been named a Vision and Change Leadership Fellow and is spending a year helping identify ways to improve undergraduate life sciences education as part of the new Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences, a joint initiative of the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Marcey recently began teaching courses in which students watch lectures online and spend in-person class time collaborating on problem-based activities. He pioneered the use of web-based tutorials in macromolecular structure, putting together a website of interactive tutorials that are used throughout the world. His tutorials, often co-authored with students, have also accompanied several prominent textbooks. Marcey co-edited the 2008 book Integrated Science–New Approaches to Education: A Virtual Roundtable and has served on the editorial board of Project MERLOT, an online peer-reviewed journal of digital learning tools.

Dheeraj “Big D” Gadicherla Men’08 quit his job with IBM India in 2012 and embarked on a motorcycle ride across India from the lowest plains to the world’s highest motorable road, through the Khardung Pass. “It was an absolute back crusher of a ride, traversing roads, no roads, mountains, rivers—you name it, I rode on it,” says Gadicherla. At the U, he was involved in many campus programs, including the Associated Students of the University of Utah. After graduation, he took up safety and ergonomics consulting and moved first to Philadelphia.
through the years

and then New York before moving back to India to be near family, taking a position with IBM India as a program manager for safety operations. “Three years into the job,” he says, “I had the opportunity to sail a boat on the river Ganges, when I realized there are better things in life.” He quit his job and set off for more adventures, including learning to paraglide, backpacking, and exploring the world by motorcycle (gaining corporate sponsors here and there). Gadicherla also pursues his art and works part time as a research consultant for an engineering school.

Vishal Gupta PhD’11 received the 2012 Outstanding Young Scientist Award from the Industrial Minerals & Aggregates Division of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration. The award recognizes members of the society who have an outstanding reputation for professionalism and accomplishments and have significantly contributed to the workings of the society and this division. A research engineer with FLSmidth, Gupta also won the company’s 2012 Business Idea Competition and was selected as one of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration’s 2012-13 Henry Krumb Lecturers.

Chelsea Sloan BS’12, co-founder of the retail clothing franchise Uptown Cheapskate, was awarded first place in the 2012 Global Student Entrepreneur Awards, garnering $150,000 in cash and in-kind business services from the Entrepreneurs’ Organization to help build her business. Sloan was selected for the award from nearly 2,000 student applicants from around the world. She is the competition’s first female winner since the awards began. Sloan and her brother, Scott Sloan BS’06, co-founded Uptown Cheapskate in 2009 while both were still students. Their parents are the founders of the children’s resale franchise Kid to Kid, and the two young entrepreneurs set out to create a similar concept for their own demographic. Their store buys, sells, and trades new and gently used designer and fashion-forward clothing and accessories for men and women (primarily between the ages of 16 and 35). Since 2009, the siblings have opened more than 25 Uptown Cheapskate franchise stores in 14 states, with plans to develop more.

We want to hear from you! Please submit entries to Ann Floor, ann.floor@utah.edu.

U Professor a 2013 TED Fellow

Miriah Meyer PhD’08, a USTAR assistant professor in the University of Utah’s School of Computing, has been named a 2013 TED Fellow, recognizing her efforts in interactive visualization systems that help scientists make sense of complex data. Meyer received her bachelor’s degree in astronomy and astrophysics at Penn State University before heading to the U for her doctorate. Prior to joining the U faculty, she was a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University and a visiting scientist at the Broad Institute of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard. She was awarded a Microsoft Research Faculty Fellowship in 2012 and has been included in Fast Company’s list of the 100 most creative people. “I’m really looking forward to participating in the TED Fellows program, in large part because it will give me an opportunity to spread the word about the amazing research going on in the School of Computing, the SCI Institute, and the College of Engineering,” Meyer says. “The TED vision seems very much in line with our focus on tackling challenging and important problems that matter for our quality of life today, as well as in the future.”

TED is a nonprofit group devoted to “Ideas Worth Spreading.” It started in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from three fields: technology, entertainment, and design.
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Planting the Future

Walter P. Cottam brought trees to the U campus and conservation into the national spotlight.

By Roy Webb

Generations of University of Utah students have strolled down a shady, brick-lined pathway on the western edge of campus known as Cottam’s Gulch. It’s named for the late Walter P. Cottam, a professor of botany at the University for more than 30 years and an outspoken advocate for conservation nationwide. Cottam’s efforts helped lead to the later creation of both Red Butte Garden and Arboretum and The Nature Conservancy. Because of him, the entire U campus is a state arboretum and serves as the arboretum portion of Red Butte Garden.

Cottam was born in St. George, Utah, in 1894, and received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Brigham Young University. After completing his doctorate at the University of Chicago, he returned to Utah and taught at BYU for 12 years. In 1931, he moved to the University of Utah, where he spent the rest of his career and used the campus land for plant research.

Cottam’s early advocacy for conservation—especially his 1947 groundbreaking lecture, “Is Utah Sahara Bound?”—brought him national attention. In the lecture, he argued that overgrazing was turning Utah into a desert—an assertion that angered powerful farmers and ranchers. But time has shown the value of his research, and many of his suggestions have since been adopted. “It was largely through Dr. Cottam’s efforts that land practices changed and conservation became a reality in Utah,” the Deseret News wrote in his obituary in 1988.

Cottam was one of the co-founders of the Ecologists Union, which later became The Nature Conservancy. In Utah, he was instrumental in seeing that lands at the mouth of Red Butte Canyon were set aside for a research center, which later became part of Red Butte Garden. And at his request, the Utah Legislature established the State Arboretum of Utah on the University of Utah campus in 1961.

Cottam retired from the University in 1962, and toward the end of his career, his tireless work on behalf of Utah’s native landscape was recognized with many honors, from organizations such as the Utah Foresters Club; the Ecological Society of America; the National Council of Garden Clubs; and the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters.

After retiring from the U, Cottam began his work on the hybridization of oaks, combining two different species of oak to produce hardy hybrids, which can now be found all over the United States.

Besides Cottam’s Gulch on the U campus, the Visitors Center at Red Butte Garden is named for him. His classes on wildflowers of Utah are fondly remembered by generations of University alumni. And the U’s campus is graced by hundreds of beautiful trees from all over the world, many of which Cottam himself planted.

—Roy Webb BA’84 MS’91 is a multimedia archivist with the J. Willard Marriott Library.

Visit continuum.utah.edu to view a gallery of more photos of Cottam and his trees.
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