

School of Public Affairs



S·P·A·update

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SPECIAL HONORS

SPA graduating seniors received seven of the 16 prestigious student University Awards presented at the 2004 commencement ceremonies.

Both the President's Award and the Carlton Savage Award went to **Akua Kwafoa Gyekye** (see photo at right) who distinguished herself as a scholar, student leader, and mentor. A law and society major, minoring in international studies and Spanish, she excelled in the University Honors Program and the SPA Leadership Program, earning a 3.91 GPA.

Born in Ghana and raised in Germany, Gyekye has been accepted to Cambridge University in England for graduate study in law.

Other SPA award winners were:

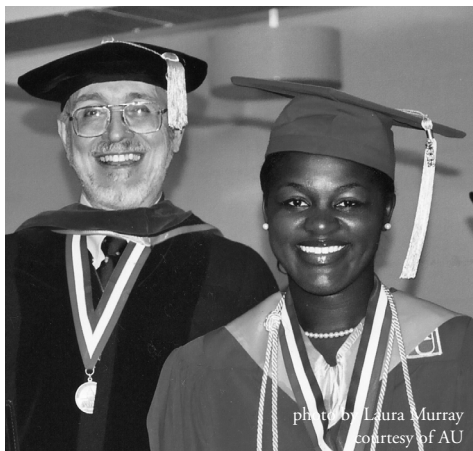
Marshall J. Bailly II, the Stafford H. Cassell Award;

Robert Nardo, the Fletcher Scholar Award;

Jason Richwine, the University Student Award for Outstanding Scholarship at the Undergraduate Level;

Gordon Sean Simonett, the Cathryn Seckler-Hudson Award; and

Myra-Lyn Abinales Supetran, the Harold John Award



Dean LeoGrande and Akua Kwafoa Gyekye at commencement in May, 2004.



A Conversation with the Provost (turn to page 2).

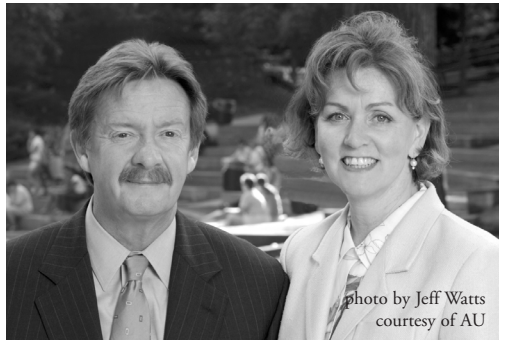
A Conversation

WITH THE PROVOST

Provost Cornelius (Neil) Kerwin and his wife Ann have established a doctoral fellowship to be awarded each year to an outstanding graduate student in the School of Public Affairs who is at the dissertation stage in his or her studies. The Neil and Ann Kerwin Fellowship provides \$15,000 for one year and includes a \$10,000 gift from the Kerwins and a matching \$5,000 grant from SPA. The Kerwins have pledged \$50,000 towards the fellowship through 2008. The first grant recipient is Heather Ahn-Redding (see sidebar story).

American University has been a major part of both Kerwins' lives since 1970, when they met during their junior year. After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1971 (BA/SPA), Neil Kerwin continued his studies in political science and earned his master's degree from the University of Rhode Island in 1973, and his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University in 1978. He's been an AU faculty member since 1975, beginning with the Washington Semester program and then teaching government at SPA where he became a public policy specialist with an emphasis on the regulatory process. Kerwin was named SPA dean in 1989 and was appointed provost in 1998.

Ann Kerwin received her degree in art history (BA/CAS/1971). She's currently the personnel director at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The provost and his wife live in Bethesda, Maryland. Their two sons, ages 23 and 26, live in the Washington area as well.



The Provost and Ann Kerwin

Sitting in his Leonard Hall office decorated with paintings by Robert Gates, a former director of the AU art department, Provost Kerwin took time out of his busy schedule to talk with *SPA Update* and reflect on his years at AU.

Q. Why did you and your wife establish the doctoral fellowship?

A. At the end of the day, I'm a scholar and a teacher. The purpose of the fellowship award was to foster the highest quality teaching and scholarship. I remember that writing a dissertation is a challenging time. It can be lonely. Money can be an issue and sometimes students drop out because of financial constraints. We hope this grant will make a difference each year for an outstanding student.

Q. Growing up in Waterbury, Connecticut, was going to school in Washington, D.C. a goal? What brought you to AU?

A. The university offered me financial incentives and I couldn't afford college without

(See Provost page 4)

Heather Ahn-Redding

For the first recipient of the Neil and Ann Kerwin Doctoral Fellowship, Heather Ahn-Redding, the award is especially meaningful. "I'm really grateful to the Kerwins for supporting graduate students who are involved in public affairs and, more specifically, for providing me with the rare opportunity to work on my dissertation full-time. This fellowship is going to make a huge difference in the amount of time and energy I can put into my research and I feel honored to have received it." Her dissertation topic is "Learned Violence: Violence and Aggressive Behavior among Non-Violent Offenders in Prison." She hopes to eventually teach criminology or criminal justice.

Ahn-Redding grew up in Reston, Virginia, and is a 1999 graduate of the University of Michigan where she earned her bachelor's degree in psychology. She received her master's in forensic psychology in 2001 from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (part of the City University of New York, CUNY). She recently married Ben Redding, a second year student in the combined law degree and MBA program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



A MAJOR MILESTONE: AU/NTL AT 25

If it wasn't for a blizzard in Nebraska, there might never be an AU/NTL master's program in organization development. On a winter's day in 1978, Edie Seashore and Morley Segal had just finished facilitating a training program at Northwestern Bell and were at the Omaha airport waiting for their flight home. At the time, Ms. Seashore was the president of the NTL (National Training Laboratories) Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, a non-profit organization, and



AU/NTL program co-founder Edie Seashore

Professor Segal was on the public administration faculty at the School of Public Affairs.

With their flight delayed, Seashore and Segal had abundant time to brainstorm. The result was a model program to train people as organization

development practitioners, based on a partnership between SPA and NTL.

Within two years, in 1980, the first cohort of students had been accepted and Class One had begun. Nearly 25 years and more than 1,000 graduates later, Class 50 started classes this past June.

Yet, the inspiration for NTL came much earlier from Kurt Lewin, a psychologist and a refugee from Nazi Germany. He was a visionary who started a group dynamic movement from a deep belief in the potential of good triumphing over evil in society.

In 1946, Lewin was the director of MIT's Research Center for Group Dynamics when he was approached by community and interracial activists to train up-and-coming community leaders. This request was an outgrowth of joint concerns of Jews and African Americans who were confronted with post-World War II discrimination in housing, jobs, and education. They were compelled to work for social change and social justice. NTL grew out of the success of workshops and conferences held in 1947.

Today, AU/NTL class cohorts average 18 to 26 students and new classes start twice a year in January and June. It takes 25 months to complete the 13 course, 39 credit curriculum. For the most part, classes meet one weekend a month, from Friday to Sunday. Students

travel from all over the United States and abroad to participate in what, for many, are eye-opening experiences.

"Many students come in blind to their own values, the mental models they use, and rarely if ever reflect," says Dr. Arthur Freedman, the current director of the AU/NTL program. Freedman, a clinical psychologist, was mentored by Lewin disciple Kenneth Benne at Boston University. He first became involved with AU/NTL in 1981 as a facilitator with Class Two. In 2000, Freedman became program director.

The average age of students is 40 to 45. Many are mid-career and seeking a life change. Among the alumni are nurses, dentists, lawyers, accountants, management consultants, and IT system developers, as well as organization leaders.

Paco Valencia was about to retire from the United States Navy after 24 years. He was a Senior Chief Petty Officer, working on organization development. He says the AU/NTL master's program provided him with a background of theories and methodologies that are important and definitely helped with his transition. Today, he is a graduate of Class 43,



AU/NTL Class 46 completed their program this past summer.

and still with the Navy, but as an organization development consultant. Valencia found the experience profound. "Learning about myself and how I impact groups, how people communicate with each other was amazing. I find myself using those skills every day."

Looking ahead, AU/NTL is planning to branch out. It's starting a program at the National Labor College/George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Maryland that's geared toward upper and middle management levels in organized labor.

To mark AU/NTL's twenty-fifth anniversary year, several special events are planned. A reception and dinner on November 6 will celebrate Class 50. More than 150 graduates, current students, and faculty are expected to attend. The 25th Anniversary Conference will be held at AU from March 10-13, 2005. For more event information, contact the AU/NTL Alumni Association representatives Ka Flewellen (kanefermat@aol.com) or Gerry Eggleston (gerryegg@aol.com).

WELCOME, MEG WEEKES

Margaret “Meg” Weekes is the new SPA associate dean for academic affairs, succeeding Professor Dick Bennett, who returned to teaching full-time.

Weekes first joined AU in 1991 as an adjunct professor in the Department of Justice, Law and Society and became an assistant professor in 1992. From 1999 to 2004, she was the associate dean of the Washington Semester Program.

One of her first projects this past summer was teaching the distance education course, “Justice in the Face of Terror.” Weekes, who developed the six-week graduate/undergraduate course, found herself responding to lengthy postings from the 20 students in the class, and enjoying it immensely.

“Since this is online, I want the students to feel involved,” she explained. “I put lots of time into it because I don’t want them to feel they’re losing the face-to-face time or the rigor they’d have in a classroom.” For her online courses, Weekes posts a lecture each week. Students are then required to post three supported responses to questions, a 500-word edited essay, and do assigned readings. They also have two essay examinations and a final paper. This course was one of nine the University offered online this summer, three from SPA.

AU increased its distance education offerings this summer, up from one offered by Weekes last year. Courses are offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This fall, AU is experimenting with at least one distance undergraduate offering, a general education course being taught by Weekes.

Weekes grew up in Newton and Needham, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. She received her undergraduate degree from Mount Holyoke College and her J.D. from Boston University. Her early career included a stint as an editor for a Department of Agriculture magazine (“Growing up outside of Boston, agriculture wasn’t on my radar screen, so it was fascinating!”), working as an attorney at the Justice Department and as a lawyer in a firm and, when her children were young, in private practice.

A long-time activist in the D.C. public schools and an avid reader (see her list of book recommendations on page 5), Weekes and her husband Derry Allen live in the District and have three grown children.



photo by Laura Murray

Meg Weekes

(Provost from page 2)

that. My father and uncle worked in the Anaconda American Brass factory in Waterbury. In fact, my father worked there 42 years before he retired. I worked there a few summers and vacations. While I enjoyed the work and the people, I understood I didn’t want to do it for the rest of my life.

As for choosing political science, politics has always been interesting to me. My father was active locally in Connecticut. When I was in grade school in 1960, he was elected to the state legislature as a senator and served a term.

Q. Are any professors from your early student days at SPA still teaching here?

A. Yes. One in particular was Howard McCurdy. When I was a senior, he was teaching the administrative process. He was a new professor, very young and very good.

Q. What would you say is most distinctive about AU?

A. First and foremost, the quality of the faculty. They are dedicated teachers and committed scholars, and their engagement with the world strengthens both.

Q. How has AU changed since your freshman days in 1967?

A. It has matured enormously as an institution of the top rank. The graduate programs have become more and more focused. Our full-time faculty members are in constant demand to consult. And, Washington has become a great college town. It’s more sophisticated and cosmopolitan. It’s where business needs to assemble to work with government. Those four undergraduate years opened up the world to me and we do that every day of the week for hundreds of people.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

...**Kelita Svoboda Bak** (BA/SPA/1996), the new president of the D.C. Alumni Chapter. Her two-year term started September 1. Bak is the director of government relations for Youth Service America.

...**Judith Meritz** (BA/SPA/1973) and **Charles Meisch, Jr.** (BA/SPA/1997) who join Bak as chapter vice president and member-at-large, respectively...

...department chair **Howard McCurdy** for his election to the board of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (NCAC-ASPA).



Dear friends,
I have some great news to share with you. At the 2004 commencement, seven of the 16 major student awards presented (see cover story), including the President's Award, were received by graduating SPA students. While we're all proud of this noteworthy achievement, sustaining that level of scholarship requires your help. That's why I want to talk with you about a new initiative, the Dean's Matching Gift Program.


SPA currently has several existing scholarship and award endowments that are below the minimum of \$50,000. This threshold is required to provide enough in interest earned to present the awards to deserving students.

Each individual gift of \$2,500 or more to an endowed fund, received by April 30, 2005, will be matched by an equivalent amount from unrestricted funds available to SPA. The maximum in matching funds that any one endowment can receive is \$25,000.

This program is especially meaningful, considering the many honors bestowed upon our 2004 SPA graduates at commencement. I hope you'll seriously consider making a contribution that puts our scholarship and award endowments on a stronger financial footing.

If you would like to know more about this special program, please contact our development director, Jenine Rabin at (202) 885-3968 or rabin@american.edu.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Homecoming events next month.

Regards,

William M. LeoGrande
Dean

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 14

Roger Jones Awards – 27th Anniversary Presentations.
Kay Spiritual Life Center, 7 p.m.

September 21

SPA Alumni Chapter fall meeting. Location: 1015 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. at the office of SPA chapter president Kelita Svoboda Bak, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
To register, call (202) 885-2942

September 22

SPA Dinner and Discussion Series presents Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio). Location: Mary Graydon Center, University Club, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Tickets @ \$25. To register online, use <http://alumni.american.edu/events>

Homecoming & Reunion Weekend 2004 will be held October 15 – 17

October 15

AU Key Executive/OPM Alumni Reception. Location: Mary Graydon Center, University Club, rooms 5 and 6, 5 – 7 p.m.

October 16

Homecoming Weekend – Special Panel – “Election 2004: 16 Days and Counting.” Location: Butler Board Room, 10 – 11:30 a.m. Breakfast will be served.

November 3

James Thurber and the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies (CCPS) host a post-Election Day forum. Location: Mary Graydon Center, rooms 3, 4, and 5, 7 – 9 p.m.

November 8

Capitol Hill celebration of the CCPS 25th anniversary. Location: U.S. Capitol, Mansfield Room, 6 – 8 p.m. Reservations required.

For event details and registration

go to www.american.edu/spa/alumni and click on the SPA Alumni Calendar of Events. Or contact Heather Vazquez at (202) 885-2942.

Book recommendations from Prof. Meg Weekes, Associate Dean,

Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* (Riverhead, 2003). The first novel by an American physician from Afghanistan is a moving tale of growing up, friendship, and love in pre-Taliban Afghanistan.

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (Beacon, 2004). A brief history of western countries' involvement in the Middle East with interconnections and parallels to current conflicts.

Nawal El Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero* (Zed Books, 1983) and anything else by El Saadawi, an Egyptian doctor, writer and advocate for Arab women's rights. This book describes a meeting with a woman on the eve of her execution for the death of a pimp.

Laurie R. King, *The Bee Keeper's Apprentice* (Bantam, 1996), the first of seven delightful mysteries about Mary Russell, colleague of Sherlock Holmes. The most recent in this series, *The Game*, is set in 1924 and brings in Kimball O'Hara (Kipling's Kim).

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