Emurities Newsletter, Fall 2013

Georgia State University Emeriti Association

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China: The Past 10 Years

By Sherman Day, professor emeritus, College of Education

In 2002, Afton and I answered a magazine article for English teachers in China. We were accepted into the program and assigned as “Foreign Experts” at Tsinghua University in Beijing, which is considered the best in China (though Peking University disputes this). Our teaching assignment consisted of teaching extremely bright Chinese students to speak better English. Afton taught Ph.D. students to write, and I taught graduate students American culture. My class had 30 registered students but was attended by more than 100.

After our first semester, we were approached by the Department of Foreign Language about American methods for enriching specific subject matter. The university administration felt strongly that Tsinghua graduates could compete on the global stage in every way except speaking English. The Department was challenged to start a university-wide program to improve spoken English.

We suggested they start a summer program patterned after summer camps in America where specific subjects are taught in an intensive manner, and the Tsinghua English Summer Camp was born. We envisioned the first camp as a voluntary pilot program, but the administration responded that Chinese students don’t know enough to know what they need. All 3,200 students who finished their freshman year at Tsinghua University would participate. They completed exams on Friday and started the intensive four-week summer camp the following Monday.

While there have been many changes over the years, the basic camp structure has remained. Each week has a theme, such as Western music and culture, world issues or critical Chinese topics such as clean water, air and the Chinese one-child policy. Each day starts with lectures by native English speakers followed by discussion groups. The afternoon is spent in English language competitions, including singing, drama, skits, speeches and debate. The evening activities include movies, lectures, dance, fashion and English games.

Tsinghua University has made a great financial commitment to the program, which is free and now considered a compulsory part of the Tsinghua experience. In addition to student costs, the university imports about 60 teachers (typically professors or graduate students, but not necessarily majors in English). It also imports about 125 undergraduate students as classroom volunteers. Each group of students has a teacher, two volunteers from an English-speaking country and two Chinese volunteers who have attended the previous camp. The teachers are paid a stipend, live in Western-style dorms and have meal tickets good at more than 50 dining areas on campus. The camp is administered by two co-directors — the dean of the Foreign Language Department and me. Eight Chinese professors serve as coordinators of the teachers and volunteers. Tsinghua University is also committed to providing Chinese cultural experiences for the foreign guests, sponsoring trips to places such as the Great Wall at no cost.

I must say a few words about the Georgia State University contribution. Not only does Georgia State send six...
For the first few years after I retired from the Georgia State History Department in 1997, I kept busy with a number of things: writing a book-length memoir, trying to master the word processor and other computer skills and doing some travelling. I took long walks, cleaned out all my closets and drawers and I was even asked back to the department to teach a couple of graduate seminars. But inevitably, all these activities came to an end – or became tedious.

Then one day Sandy Bederman, a Geography Department retiree, asked me if I would consider teaching a course or two at Senior University on the Mercer University campus. I decided to give it a try, and I was hooked from my first visit. I not only agreed to teach a course but signed up to take courses myself in subjects I had never had time for before. Later, I helped persuade two of my retired colleagues from the History Department, Jerry Davis and Merle Reed, to enroll as teachers and students.

During the next few years I taught six different courses in my field (modern Europe from about 1750 to 1950), and I was invited to give these same courses at Emory University’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) program. One of the many pleasures of teaching and taking courses for seniors is that there are no exams, no term papers and no homework (of course, in literature courses, reading the relevant books is an enjoyable sort of homework). Another pleasure, for the instructor is that the older students are engaged, interested and knowledgeable – for example, there is no need to ground them in basic geography. They already know the location of the countries and cities you are discussing, and a great many of them have travelled extensively.

In 2008 I moved from Atlanta to a retirement community in Charlottesville, Va. Soon after I had settled in, I learned that Charlottesville had an OLLI program, run by the University of Virginia, and I signed up to teach my repertoire of six courses. The program here is much more extensive than at Emory; the fall 2013 catalog offers 46 courses on every conceivable subject, many taught by retired UVA professors. I discovered that, although there were many courses being offered in American history, Virginian history, and current world affairs, there were almost no European history courses, so mine proved to be very popular. After three years, when I had completed my six courses, I was urged by OLLI to start over again because there were so many new people in the program.

I have continued to educate myself by taking courses, especially in American history, a subject I’m embarrassed to admit I neglected in the past. After three years, when I had completed my six courses, I was urged by OLLI to start over again because there were so many new people in the program.

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Teaching seniors and learning with them is fun, rewarding and keeps you mentally alert. I highly recommend it to any Georgia State retiree.
The Business and Technology Institute (BTI) is a two-year institution of post-secondary education on the southwestern coast of Haiti in Les Cayes. BTI is modeled after community colleges in the United States. The institute operates under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti, with support from Episcopal Relief and Development and parishes and individuals throughout the United States.

The name BTI has a dual meaning. The college is also referred to as the Bishop Tharp Institute, named for The Right Reverend Robert Gould Tharp, the Second Bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee, who played a role in its creation.

My church in Atlanta, the Church of the Epiphany, began supporting BTI about five years ago. In addition to providing financial support, parishioners have travelled to Les Cayes to volunteer their skills and expertise. I got in contact with BTI’s director, Father Kesner Ajax, who told me he had trouble finding someone to teach the business ethics component of BTI’s Business Law course, so I volunteered to take that on.

BTI has limited access to qualified faculty in Les Cayes. Teachers are available in Port-au-Prince, but that is about a four-hour trip over a mostly two-lane road or by air taxi. Les Cayes has no scheduled air service.

BTI has a twofold mission: it provides students in southwestern Haiti with the opportunity to obtain a high-quality, American-style, university-level education without being forced to leave their families and homes, and it also strives to support the economic development of Les Cayes and the surrounding areas by providing skilled employees for existing businesses and supporting entrepreneurial graduates in starting and successfully operating small businesses.

While in Haiti I taught two units of business ethics over a week’s time. I was fortunate to have help from Leila Lawlor, one of Georgia State’s law graduates, who teaches business law at Perimeter College. She was very helpful in providing me with materials she uses in her course and steering me in the right direction as I prepared materials for the BTI students. I taught last spring over the College of Law’s spring break, and again in late October.

In order to avoid imposing the cost of textbooks and materials on the students, I developed a set of readings for the course units in English and French and adapted those into PowerPoint slides. Tracy Templeton, the LexisNexis representative for the College of Law, was able to arrange for the donation of 90 thumb drives from LexisNexis, so each student in my class was able to have the PowerPoint slides and the readings/problems for the course.

I have had to adapt my teaching style to the students at BTI. For example, students there are used to lectures, do not ask many questions and are unaccustomed to being asked questions by a teacher. That makes teaching a subject such as business ethics, which is at its core about evaluating and assessing choices, challenging.

Haiti is a place of amazing contrasts. It is extremely poor. Houses are small and primitive, with curtains rather than doors for entrances and no indoor plumbing. Goats, chickens and pigs routinely run loose. Through all this, however, Haitians exhibit a sense of dignity and ambition to improve their lot that never fails to impress me.

I would challenge Georgia State’s emeriti faculty, who have over their long careers accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience, to consider sharing that wealth with an institution such as BTI in countries that have great needs.
China  continued from page 1

To eight people to the camp every year, but two of the key Chinese administrators also received their doctorates in applied linguistics from Gail Nelson and the staff at Georgia State. Our university has an excellent reputation at Tsinghua University, especially the summer camp.

This summer camp experience has been great for us. We have made many friends in China. We have also seen China become more westernized in the past years. This is manifest in the choice of music, dress and willingness to discuss difficult subjects. Ten years ago, you would never hear a student speech about student rights, gay/lesbian issues or corrupt government. Today those speeches are commonplace in the camp competitions. I look for even more change in the next 10 years.

Tsinghua students learn to play American-style games.
EMERITIES
Events & Activities

2013-2014 Upcoming Events:

DECEMBER
Emeriti Holiday Party
Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013 • 1 p.m.
Join us for the annual Emeriti Holiday Party in the SunTrust Suite at the Rialto Theater on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 1 p.m. Enjoy good food, drink, fellowship, and holiday cheer. Then step into the auditorium for the joyous sounds of the Georgia State School of Music’s 16th annual Gala Holiday Concert. More than 200 student and faculty musicians will perform. The concert will feature the Georgia State Symphony Orchestra, Choruses and Jazz Band, and will also include community ensembles performing traditional holiday favorites and music with an international twist. Purchase tickets at www.rialtocenter.org or by calling 404-413-9849.

JANUARY
Rajeev Dhawan’s State of the Georgia Economy
Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014 (details to come)

FEBRUARY
Valentine Party
Friday, Feb. 14, 2014 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
It’s not too early to think about Valentine’s Day! Our special Valentine is Georgia State’s traditional gift of the Valentine’s Day luncheon. Every year the university treats us to a reception where we meet friends, former colleagues and current deans and other administrators. This time of fellowship and catching up is followed by an elegant lunch on beautifully decorated tables and includes Georgia State’s best entertainment. As usual, the Valentine’s Day party will be at the Rialto Center for the Arts, 80 Forsyth St. NW, on the corner of Forsyth and Luckie streets. Parking will be validated.

MARCH
Author Series
Thursday, March 6, 2014 • 11 a.m.
Hear from another featured Georgia State author early in the new year. Michael P. Eriksen, dean of Georgia State’s School of Public Health, will discuss his book, The Tobacco Atlas, in the Library South Colloquium Room (eighth floor).

RECAP: Emeriti Group Travels to Baroque-Era Rome through Interactive Michael C. Carlos Museum Show

Jean Ellen Jones, professor emerita, College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State emeriti visited the Michael C. Carlos Museum on Tuesday, Oct. 8, for a docent-led tour of the exhibition “Renaissance and Baroque Images of Rome.” After enjoying a catered lunch at the museum, the participants walked across the hall to encounter intricate architectural drawings and maps of small and wall-size proportions. The three sections of the show highlighted 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century views of a changing Rome. The craftsmanship of the drawings and maps, all etchings, was so fine and artful the museum provided magnifying lenses in the galleries for examining the details.

Moving beyond the framed architectural etchings, Emory Art History Professor Sarah McPhee and local architects Jordan Williams and Erik Lewitt of the Atlanta-based firm plexus r + d created a special feature for the show. Using 21st-century 3D architectural technology with a variety of 17th-century maps and views, they presented a virtual Rome. Georgia State emeriti were able to view and “walk” through the various streets and gardens of the city. All they needed to make the city come to life was an Apple computer and joystick. The show, which ends Nov. 17, was the first of several emeriti arts trips scheduled for the year.
RECAP: AUTHOR SERIES
By Anne Page Mosby, professor emerita, University Library

JOSH RUSSELL
AUG. 28, 2013

Book: A True History of the Captivation, Transport to Strange Lands, & Deliverance of Hannah Guttentag

The creative writing program at Georgia State has talented leadership in its co-director, Josh Russell, who charmed the emeriti audience with an overview of his recent novel. The idea for A True History came from his exploration of Puritan New England women’s captivity narratives at a time when he was “held captive” by the newborn in his house. He used this as an example of how writers’ ideas originate, take tangents and finally develop into a publishable manuscript. Josh also described the rapidly changing publishing world, with its transformation by the Internet, do-it-yourself publishing and monetizing of artistic and scholarly work.

RECAP: PROVOST RISA PALM ADDRESSES EMERITI
OCT. 2, 2013

Every Fall the Emeriti Association has a reception which includes two features, Provost Risa Palm’s annual University update and a welcome ceremony in which new emeriti are introduced. On October 2, 2013, Provost Palm brought us up to date on exciting and impressive new initiatives that made us proud to be a part of Georgia State. She discussed new programs and their outcomes in four areas: academic success for students, research, urban (Atlanta) issues and international initiatives. In addition, seven new emeriti were introduced. Provost Palm presented each of them a memento of their initiation into emeritus status. We all enjoyed hearing the news about the University, greeting our new Emeriti Association members and chitchatting with our old friends.

In Memoriam

Charles (Charlie) Edward Billiard, professor emeritus of reading/language arts, died peacefully in his sleep Aug. 26, 2013, at age 96. A member of the Greatest Generation, Billiard served in the military during WWII, the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis. After completing his doctoral work at Purdue University in 1969, Dr. Billiard was one of the early faculty members in the Curriculum and Instruction Department, where he was instrumental in designing the reading/language arts curriculum and the first doctoral programs. He was known for his gentle ways and his engaging teaching, as well as his research in social dialects. He retired in 1982. Dr. Billiard was also one of the first official live weathermen at any radio station in the country, and was popular at WOWO in Ft. Wayne, Ind., and WPLO in Atlanta. He will be missed by his many friends and former students.

Norman R. Harbaugh, professor emeritus of managerial sciences, died on September 20, 2013. Dr. Harbaugh served in the U.S. Navy for 27 years and then received his doctorate from Harvard in 1965. He came to Georgia State as a faculty member in the Business Management Department (which later became the Department of Managerial Sciences) in 1970 and retired in 1989. He was involved in university affairs and taught and mentored many students. Each year at the Honors Day Ceremony of the Robinson College of Business his department presents the Norman R. Harbaugh Scholastic Achievement Award to the most outstanding management student in the MBA program. Dr. Harbaugh was usually present to meet the award winner. Dr. Harbaugh was a member of the Emeriti Association’s Coordinating Board for several years and regularly attended Emeriti Association events with his wife, Sally.