

Department of Philosophy and Religion

NEWSLETTER

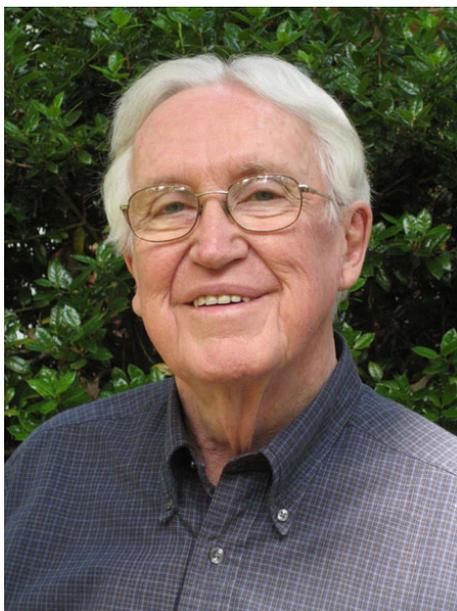
JUNE 2008

Feature Emeritus: Dr. Robert S. Bryan

It was not very long ago that there was no Department of Philosophy and Religion at NC State. Of course, it was not very long ago that there was no NC State University. The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering didn't have any serious liberal arts research or teaching. When John Caldwell became chancellor in 1959, he set about changing State College into a university. He created what is now the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and authorized the newly-minted School of Liberal Arts to offer degree programs in the humanities and social sciences.

In 1965 State College became North Carolina State University. Just a year after, in 1966, Dr. Robert S. Bryan was appointed head of the nascent Department of Philosophy and Religion. When he arrived, the big, multi-section course in the Department was "Marriage and Family Living." He dumped it, despite his devotion to his own marriage and family, and started a new tradition for the new department: hiring PhDs from the top graduate programs to teach rigorous courses in Philosophy and Religious Studies.

In Philosophy, ethicist Tom Regan, metaphysician Randy Carter, ethicist Don VanDeVeer, and logician Hal Levin joined the Department. All four of them are now emeriti, and still in the Triangle, except for Levin, who moved to the beach. In Religious Studies, Bryan helped bring in a scholar of early Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures, Jim VanderKam (now at Notre Dame); an historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century mainline Protestantism, Jim Moorhead (now at Princeton); a



Dr. Robert S. Bryan served as the Department Head for Philosophy and Religion from 1966 to 1989. Photo courtesy Peggy Korte.

specialist in early Jewish and Christian historiography, Bill Adler, whose international profile and thoughtful teaching still enhance the Department's reputation; and an expert in premodern Bengali and Sanskrit religious literature, Tony Stewart, who was central in introducing our Religious Studies major and is also still with us.

From a solid beginning, Bob Bryan continued to build a first-rate undergraduate department. But even as the Department grew, with new hires and new courses, something just as central to Bryan's approach survived: a remarkably congenial atmosphere.

Students and faculty from Bob Bryan's years – 1966 through 1989 – will remember his face more fondly than they

remember the early digs of the Department: the architectural atrocity called Harrelson Hall, which is to be demolished within a few years.

They will also be pleased to hear that Bob is enjoying a happy retirement in Raleigh – nothing "startling or exotic," he notes. He has only lately retired from tennis, because of slight arthritis, but remains a full-time reader of periodicals both professional and popular (though *The New York Review of Books* isn't often described that way). He continues to write, if only, he notes dryly, for his own "delight and edification." All three of his sons are still in Raleigh and visit with him and his wife, Geraldine, often. "Somehow, they seem not to consider Geraldine and me as old," he says.

Bob's current reading is *Philosophers Without Gods*, edited by former departmental faculty member Louise Antony, now at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Bob sums up his current contentment quite nicely: "As an academic, I have long believed that anyone trained in the humanities, and especially in philosophy, was uniquely prepared for a fulfilling emeritus life, which in fact I have enjoyed in my 17-year sabbatical/vacation."

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

PROGRESS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The Religious Studies curriculum has been overhauled recently to reflect changes in the world of religion and expose students to cutting-edge research. Older courses have been systematically revised and several new courses added. These include: *Darwinism and Christianity*; *Interpretations of Religion*; *Islam*; *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul*; *Religion and Conflict*; *Religion, Gender, and Reproductive Technologies*; *Religion, Globalism, and Justice*; and *Women and Religion*. We are also pleased to announce that we have received

permission to recruit a new faculty member with expertise in Judaism during 2008/9.

No conversation about human affairs can avoid reckoning with the importance of religion. Despite predictions to the contrary, humans appear to be growing more and not less religious; believers are increasingly active in public life and politics; and religious tensions have a huge impact on global circumstances. The Department is committed to exploring these developments along with more traditional topics in Religious Studies.

FUND RAISING

Because of the limits of state and federal funding, public universities depend increasingly on donor funds to maintain and enhance the quality of their teaching, research, and other services to the community. These gains also benefit alumni by securing the standing of their degrees.

As reported elsewhere on this page, we have been fortunate to receive donations of \$122,000 from GlaxoSmithKline over the past four years in support of our Logic and Cognitive Science Initiative. In addition, during the past year, a friend of the Department who wishes to be anonymous has made a significant bequest to fund a future lecture series. We are truly grateful for this outstanding support.

At the same time, we are not as well supported by donor funding as most NC State departments, and we are one of the very few that cannot boast any endowed scholarships for its students. Donations, no matter how modest, are always welcome. If you are interested in making a donation or discussing the possibility of a larger gift, a deferred gift, or a named endowment to support something close to your heart, please contact Michael Pendlebury at mjpendle@ncsu.edu.

THE LOGIC AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE INITIATIVE

The Logic and Cognitive Science Initiative was established in Fall 2004 to foster development in formal logic, cognitive science, and related fields of cognitive philosophy, including philosophy of science, philosophy of language, epistemology, and analytical metaphysics. Although these fields are highly abstract and theoretical, they deal with ideas, structures, and methods of reasoning that have significant practical applications.

A wide range of NC State students, including those who are likely to pursue careers in research and development, can enhance their conceptual resources by supplementing their chosen majors with a sequence of courses in these fields. The Initiative will serve NC State in fields that complement its strengths in science, engineering, and technology, and contribute to the educational needs of high-tech industry.

Based on our undergraduate minor in Cognitive Science, the Initiative has led to the introduction of a graduate minor in Cognitive Science, a BS in Philosophy with a Concentration in Logic, Representation, and Reasoning, and advanced courses in logic and the philosophy of biology. We also plan to introduce an undergraduate minor in Logic and Methodology in 2009.

Over the past few years, the Glaxo-SmithKline Semantic Technologies Group has supported the Logic and Cognitive Science Initiative with grants to the value of \$122,000. These have funded undergraduate internships in knowledge exploration and two public lecture series.



In December 2006, the Department of Philosophy and Religion moved into newly-renovated Withers Hall. Photo courtesy Ed Funkhouser.

BRICK PROGRAM

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences' Engraved Brick Program provides an excellent way to celebrate your time as a student at NC State. For a charge of \$75, you can have a brick engraved with your name and other details of your choice and laid in the sidewalk paving in front of Withers Hall, the Department's new home.

Inscriptions on the bricks may consist of three lines of text with up to 14 characters per line (spaces count as characters). Some examples:

SUSAN P ROSE
BS PHILOSOPHY
1989

JONATHAN T
APPLEBURY
RELIGION 1994

A FREDERICKSON
BA PHILOSOPHY
1973

Your brick will be a sign of your association with us for a long time to come. The charge incorporates a small donation in support of the Department, which we will be delighted to receive. To order your brick, please see <http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/chass/bricks>.

ADVANCES IN ETHICS

The need for improved ethics education is widely recognized. We have addressed this need by introducing an undergraduate minor in Ethics, a BA in Philosophy with a Concentration in Ethics, a graduate minor in Life Science Ethics, and several new ethics courses. We have also taken over and strengthened the undergraduate

minor in Health, Medicine, and Human Values. Our slate of ethics courses now includes courses on bio-medical ethics, business ethics, contemporary moral issues, environmental ethics, ethical problems in the law, ethical theory, global justice, history of ethics, life science ethics, and research ethics.

Faculty and Staff News

ON THE MOVE

After thirteen years as our Student Services Assistant, **Vickie Corpening** resigned in March 2007 in order to focus on her writing. *Patchwork Lives*, a collection of her short stories, has just appeared.

Ken Peters was appointed as our Student Services Assistant in April 2007. He has a BA in Art History from the University of Maryland and an MA in Legal and Ethical Studies from the University of Baltimore. Ken has previously worked at Ohio State, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the Raleigh City Museum.

Johannes Hafner was appointed as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy in January 2008. He specializes in logic, history and philosophy of logic, and philosophy of mathematics. Johannes has a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Vienna and a PhD in Logic and the Methodology of Science from the University of California, Berkeley. He has previously worked at Université Paris 1 (Sorbonne) and the University of Vienna.

Katie McShane and **Jeffrey L. Kasser** resigned in May 2008 in order to take up appointments at Colorado State University.

Douglas M. Jesseph has taken leave of absence for the 2008/9 academic year, when he will be teaching at the University of South Florida.

Stephen M. Puryear will replace Doug Jesseph for 2008/9 and teach Ancient and Early Modern Philosophy. Stephen graduated from NC State with a BS in Mechanical Engineering in 1994 without taking any courses in philosophy. Since then, he has earned an MA in Philosophy from Texas A&M and an MA and PhD in Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh. He has been a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford for the past two years.



Full-time faculty and staff, February 2008 – In indeterminate rows, from left to right (with name followed by discipline and/or administrative position and year of first appointment). **Front row:** Ron Endicott (PHI, 2001), Barbara Levenbook (PHI, 1980), Anna Bigelow (REL, 2003), Katie McShane (holding Declan, PHI, 2002), Jeff Kasser (PHI, Director of Advising, 2007), Ann Rives (Secretary, 1980). **Second row:** Gary Comstock (PHI, 2002), David Austin (PHI, 1983), Michael Pendlebury (PHI, Head, 2004), Mary Kathleen Cunningham (REL, 1983), Catherine Driscoll (PHI, 2004), Tim Hinton (PHI, 1996), Karey Harwood (REL, 2004), Ken Peters (Student Services, 2007). **Third row:** Tony Stewart (REL, 1986), Christine Pierce (PHI, 1984), Neil Schmid (REL, 2002), Jason Bivins (REL, Associate Head, 2000), Marina Bykova (PHI, 2000), Bob Hamburger (PHI, 1982). **Back:** (center to right) David Auerbach (PHI, 1975), Doug Jesseph (PHI, 1991), John Carroll (PHI, 1995), Robert Mabrito (PHI, 2005). **Not available:** Bill Adler (REL, 1984), Johannes Hafner (PHI, 2008). Photo courtesy Steven Heiner.

MAJOR FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

William Adler was awarded a fellowship for 2007/8 by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, where he conducted research on Christianity in the court of Edessa in the early third century CE.

Anna B. Bigelow has been awarded a Carnegie Fellowship for 2008-2010 to study peaceful coexistence between different religious communities at shared sacred sites in secular countries with large Muslim populations.

Gary L. Comstock is halfway through a two-year stint as a National Humanities Center Fellow. He is working on Singularity and Superiority in the Center's "Autonomy/Singularity/Creativity" project.

Tony K. Stewart has been granted a Fulbright-Hays Award for Faculty Research Abroad. He will conduct research in Bangladesh on "Romance of the Pirs: Popular Visions of Muslim Community in Early Modern Bengal" over the 2009 calendar year.

IN PRINT: Books and Select Articles Published During the Past Two Years

William Adler (with Martin Wallraff), *Iulius Africanus, Chronographiae: The Extant Fragments*, de Gruyter, 2007.

Jason C. Bivins, "The Religion of Fear: Horror, Identity, and Politics in Conservative Evangelicism," *The Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* 8, 2007.

John W. Carroll, *Laws of Nature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008 (first paperback edition of monograph published in 1994).

Mary Kathleen Cunningham (editor), *God and Evolution: A Reader*, Routledge, 2007.

Catherine Driscoll, "Why Moral Virtues are Probably Not Sexual Adaptations," in Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (editor), *Moral Psychology*, Volume 1, MIT Press, 2008.

Karey A. Harwood, *The Infertility Treadmill: Feminist Ethics, Personal Choice, and the Use of Reproductive Technologies*, UNC Press, 2007.

Timothy Hinton, "Liberalism, Feminism, and Social Tyranny," *Public Affairs Quarterly* 21, 2007.

Douglas M. Jesseph, "Descartes, Pascal, and the Epistemology of Mathematics," *Perspectives on Science* 15, 2007.

Michael Pendlebury, "Global Justice and the Specter of Leviathan," *The Philosophical Forum* 38, 2007.

Christine M. Pierce, "Anti-Homosexual and Gay: Rereading Sartre," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 22, 2007.

Where Are They Now? News From Our Alumni

Dale Lichtblau, BA Philosophy '68, MA, PhD (The Ohio State University '72 and '76), MS (George Mason University '87), has been a senior member of the research staff of the Institute for Defense Analyses, a Department of Defense "think tank," since 1989. He finds his training in logic and Aristotelian ontology and taxonomy especially useful in supporting the DoD's ever increasing reliance on complex information systems and global networks. He and his wife Debbie have two daughters, Julia (18) and Jennifer (23).

Charles G. "Gary" Helms, BA Philosophy '69, is a Bronze Star Vietnam War veteran who resides in his hometown of Midland, NC. He served as Parts Manager for Harrelson Ford in Charlotte for 25 years, and at Dale Jarrett Ford in Indian Trail, NC for five years. Gary has been married for 39 years to Fran (a graduate of Meredith College) and they have two sons, Jerrod (37) and Joshua (26).

Russell Brownell, BA Psychology '73 and BA Philosophy '84, is a Business and Technology Applications Analyst with the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. Russ has over 32 years of service with this state agency. He made a career change to Information Technology in March 1993 after completing his AAS degree in Business Computer Programming at Wake Tech. Email: russ.brownell@ncmail.net

Wayne Mastin, BA Philosophy and BA History '76, MA Philosophy (University of Kansas '86), MHA (Suffolk University '97), ABD Philosophy (Boston University), currently resides in Beverly, MA. He has experienced an interesting set of opportunities since graduating from NC State, including five years as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and English at West Point, a term as visiting Professor of Logic at Salem State College, and two years on the adjunct philosophy faculty at Massachusetts Bay Community College.

L. "Stephen" Robinson, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), BS Philosophy '79, MS Management (Troy State University-Europe '84), spent 22 years on active duty with tours spanning the U.S., Germany, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. Stephen currently serves as the Corporate Safety Coordinator for BB&T Bank in Wilson, NC. He has two sons, Thomas, 2Lt USAF (24) and Andrew (21). Email: flysafe81@aol.com

Rev. Gregory P. Rogers, BA Philosophy-Religious Studies Concentration '79, MDiv (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary '82), and DMin (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary '90) has served as Senior Pastor at Oakmont Baptist Church in Greenville, NC since 1986. He previously served the Oakmont congregation in 1983-1986 as Associate Minister. Greg and his wife Leslie (MEd, NC State '81 and Assistant Vice President for Student Services at Pitt Community College) have two children, Philip (24) and Lauren (22). Greg has been elected as moderator-elect of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of NC.

Rev. Dr. Kevin Meadows, BA Philosophy-Religious Studies Concentration '87, MDiv (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary '91), DMin (Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond '08) has been Senior Pastor of Grandin Court Baptist Church in Roanoke, VA since 2001. He was previously Senior Pastor of Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church in Sanford, NC, and has traveled extensively around the world on numerous mission endeavors. Kevin and his wife Cindy have a son, Blake (18) and a daughter, Lottie (15).

Dr. Al Bardi, BA Philosophy and BA Psychology '89, PhD Clinical Psychology (UNC-Chapel Hill '96) has accepted a position as Associate Professor of Psychology at Sewanee, The University of the South beginning in Fall 2008. He is currently Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology, St. Andrews Presbyterian College. Al is married to Dr. Sherry Hamby and they have two children, Lynnaya (8) and Julian (4). Email: bardica@sapc.edu

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Robert L. "Rob" Howard, BA Religious Studies '95, has been Project Manager for Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley in Hickory, NC since 2001. He was previously the Associate Director of Admissions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte Campus. He lives in Granite Falls, NC with his wife Katie and children Anna Katherine (4) and Thomas (2).

Larry Smith, BA Philosophy '95, is Town Manager for the Town of Spencer, NC. He resides within the same county (Rowan) as the fourth generation owner/manager of the farm on which he was raised.

Jennifer Robles, BA Religious Studies '98, married Michael Bradley in 2003. They live in Raleigh, where Jennifer is a Web Services Engineer at Time Warner Cable and Michael is a Network Engineer at Verizon Business. They have two sons, Liam (4) and Seth (2). Email: beagledog@gmail.com

Isaac Pomper, BS Philosophy with a minor in Physics '03, is a Textbook Information Analyst at the NC State University Bookstores. Email: godgumby@aol.com

Rev. Pamela A. Wesoloski, BA Religious Studies '03, has recently graduated from Duke Divinity School (MDiv '07) and has been pastor of Celebration Community Church (Raleigh) since June 2006. Pam plans to pursue her doctorate at Regent University.

Jake Alexander Goad, BA Philosophy '06, published an undergraduate research journal in 2007. Jake is now employed with the Carrboro Plaza Veterinary Clinic and resides in Chapel Hill with his fiancée Ted Gellar, a UNC graduate student in Classics. He is a former volunteer with the John Edwards for President Campaign, currently interns with the Jim Neal for Senate Campaign, and plans to continue his ambitions in the philosophical and political arenas. Email: jakegoad@gmail.com

Aaron Marks, BA Philosophy '07, is a Masters student at Liberty University where he has been awarded the Bill Bright Scholarship. As a graduate assistant for Dr. Thomas A. Provenzola, Aaron is currently conducting research, grading and teaching philosophy. He is scheduled to graduate in 2009.