



SCHEPP CONNECTIONS

LEOPOLD SCHEPP FOUNDATION FOUNDED IN 1925 VOLUME 1, NUMBER 15, 2013

CONTENTS

ADVOCATING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY DRAWING ON A WORLD OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE Eleanor Thompson, J.D., Schepp Scholar 2010-2011	4
A LIFE OF SERVICE: DR. PERRY HENDERSON SCHEPP SCHOLAR 1954-1958 By Banning Replier, Trustee	8
THE RIGHT ROAD TAKEN Damon Grant, M.A.Ed Schepp Scholar 2006-2007	12
MEET NANCY GROSSMAN, SCHEPP TRUSTEE by Banning Replier	16
HELPING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET ON TRACK FOR COLLEGE By Teresa McCune, J.D. Schepp Scholar, 1979-80	20
MY ADVENTURES AS A PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARIAN Shannon G. McCook, DVM, MPH Schepp Scholar 2010-2012	26
ON THE BATTLE LINE OF HIV Sonia Rastogi, student, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Schepp Scholar 2013-14	31
COMPLICATED THINKING: LIFE AS A WITNESS AND PARTICIPANT IN TURKEY Dayla Rogers, M.A., Instructor and Professional Development Assistant at Dragoman, Inc., Schepp Scholar, 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 (Peace Corps Fellows Program, Teachers College, Columbia University)	38
A JOURNEY OF SERVICE Michael McNamara, student, Georgetown University Schepp Scholar 2013-2014	42

ON THE COVER

Jivan Lee
"Standing Tree"
48" x 36", 2012

A CRUCIAL CROSSROADS

As you will discover in the following pages, our current and former Schepp Scholars are continuing the tradition of social service that is the hallmark of everything we stand for. From an 81 year-old retired obstetrician and gynecologist to a West Virginia Public Defender, a Georgetown University student and many others, you will see real-world commitment to making the real world a better place to live, including expanding access to perinatal care, educating prisoners, mentoring young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, monitoring the health of endangered gorillas in East Africa, advocating for human rights in West Africa, and much more. In this issue, you will also meet our newest Trustee, Nancy Grossman. Throughout her notable career, Nancy has channeled her passion for education into improving teaching methodologies in underserved communities and integrating the arts and culture of the times into the study of history. You will find these stories and those of all the others who have contributed to this issue both moving and inspiring.

But, along with the good news, we have some not so good news. The Foundation has reached a crossroads, where we must soon determine the course of our future. The fact is, as the stock market continues to be soft, our scholarship grants have begun to exceed the income from our shrinking endowment. As a result, it is time for some hard decision-making. There are a number of possible scenarios that we have discussed. One is to maintain the status quo of giving away more than we take in, in which case we will have spent down our endowment and will have to close our doors in about 15 years. (Leopold Schepp himself never envisioned the Foundation going on in perpetuity.) Another scenario involves scaling back our grants, thereby reducing our impact on the amount students will have to borrow and ultimately undermining our relevance as college costs continue to soar. A third option is to make a determined effort to increase our endowment through serious fund-raising, not just drawing on the generosity and gratitude of former Schepp Scholars, but perhaps reaching out to other, larger foundations and philanthropic organizations.

We have not yet made any decisions and would welcome your input, suggestions and insights – you are, after all, members of the Schepp family – as to the direction we should pursue in the future.



Eleanor doing outreach work in Sierra Leone

ADVOCATING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BY DRAWING ON A WORLD OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Eleanor Thompson, J.D., Schepp Scholar 2010-2011

I sat and strained to listen as the boy timidly revealed bits and pieces about what happened to him during the two years that he had held a gun in the wilderness of Southern Sudan and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. I could tell that there was a lot of pain and vulnerability inside him. It showed so clearly, yet he had never been to see the school's counselor because he thought that he did not need help. After all, he was not an orphan and was better off than some of the other children. He kept it all inside – the unanswered questions about why he had been abducted and forced to fight, what was to become of him, and whether he should cry or feel sadness. It seemed as though it was only a matter of time before the floodgates burst wide open and all that this young man – still a boy in so many ways – was holding inside would spill forth. However, he was not going to open up to me or anyone else. Not even his friends seemed to know everything about him.

This was my experience with 15-year old Oceru, a boy that I worked with in Northern Uganda, who was attending a primary school built specifically for formerly abducted children. I spent hours, week after week, with him and other boys and girls who suffered from the traumatic experiences of being forced to engage in war or live with the effects of being displaced by it. From talking to Oceru, I discovered that he only took consolation in two things – his older sister's company the few times he got to see her and music. Carrying around a Walkman and also very engaged in the Music, Dance, and Drama program at his school, he seemed to lose himself in the sounds and beats, as if the music were able to drown out the images and sounds from his experience in captivity.

Unfortunately, this was the story of many war-affected children who I came in contact with during the seven months that I spent in Northern Uganda in 2007. Although these children may have committed serious crimes, they were also victims of the crimes of others in society who had failed them. The commanders that abducted or recruited them into armed groups had failed them. The state that did not provide a safe environment where they could learn, grow and develop into productive citizens had failed them. The communities that rejected and stigmatized them when they attempted to reintegrate into society had failed them. It begs the question: who will seek the interest of the children, especially those who have become perpetrators of violence? Answering this question essentially fueled my passion to become a human rights advocate.

Generally, my career path seems to be centered around two things: children and Sierra Leone. In fact, the beginning of my career path can be traced to one particular encounter with a boy on the streets of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone, 1998

In the spring of 1998, my family made a trip to my parents' homeland, Sierra Leone, where there was civil unrest at the time. As my mother and I ventured out one day along the main thoroughfare in the capital city, Freetown, my eyes settled on a boy who was slightly over five feet tall and dressed in army fatigues. I wondered how this child did not buckle under the weight of the large gun and heavy ammunition wrapped around his chest. As we walked by, the boy, whose face was as hardened as that of a mercenary, stared back at me and clenched the gun tighter, sending me an unspoken message that the power to kill lay in his hands. Later reflecting on that moment, I

realized that a generation of children had had their innocence and their childhoods ripped away from them.

The District of Columbia, 2008-2011

Unwilling to view children who have been involved in violence merely as perpetrators, I became interested in the fields of children's rights and juvenile justice. My work in Uganda with child soldiers had provided me with invaluable child rights advocacy experience and insight into the need for children, who had been involved in committing serious crimes, to be rehabilitated rather than subjected to a correctional system. Thus, in law school I began to explore how legal and judicial mechanisms could offer appropriate rehabilitative measures for young people. Through an internship with D.C. Lawyers for Youth, I learned a great deal about the challenges facing juvenile defenders due to systematic problems in the juvenile justice system. This inspired me to think critically about creative trial and policy advocacy tools in representing juveniles. Outside of the classroom, I mentored a young man while he was at the New Beginnings Youth Development Center, the District of Columbia's secure youth detention facility. My involvement in juvenile justice issues has taught me that socioeconomic status and/or racial discrimination often play a large role in how juveniles are treated in the criminal justice system. Therefore, broader criminal justice reform is needed to ensure that juveniles who come into contact with the criminal justice system – often from poor and/or minority backgrounds – are not fed into a cycle of violence and destruction. "New beginnings" appropriately describes the opportunities that young people, whether in the District of Columbia, other parts of the U.S., Sierra Leone, or anywhere, should be given to realize their full potential.

Sierra Leone, 2012 to the present

Moving to Sierra Leone after law school has been a new beginning for me in that it may allow me to realize my full potential as a human rights lawyer. Although I was born and grew up in the United States, I consider myself to be just as much Sierra Leonean as American, not only because it is my parents' homeland (and therefore my own), but also because there is something within me that draws me to the country – not out of a sense of obligation or pity, but something intangible that cannot be expressed. Sierra Leone is a country that signifies more than just the war that has long-since ended, poverty or human development index rankings. Its complexities, like those of other countries in Africa cannot be encapsulated in a newspaper article or a 30-second sound bite.

I have been traveling to Sierra Leone since I was three months old, but none of those past experiences has compared to living and working here for the past year and a half. During this time, I have monitored corruption cases and high-profile cases in the courts for a local non-governmental organization, helped to develop informational booklets on gender-based crimes and children's rights for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and qualified to become a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone. While monitoring cases at the High Court, it became very clear to me that there is still a great need to ensure that the justice system as a whole functions more efficiently and in a manner that ensures fairness and is accessible by individuals and communities that have limited resources or are part of vulnerable groups.

Sierra Leone has made significant strides in creating legal protections for vulnerable groups by enacting a series of laws that are meant to protect children's rights, hold perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence accountable, and provide legal aid to indigent persons who are before the court. These enactments are in part due to the fervent pressure of civil society to ensure that the legal framework exists to protect human rights and civil liberties. However, the work that needs to be done goes beyond advocacy. It will require having more legal practitioners in Sierra Leone who are representing victims and testing the justice system's enforcement and application of these laws. It also means contributing to the continued development of laws and the reform of institutions that protect civil and human rights. I decided to become a legal practitioner in Sierra Leone to do just that.

It has been said that a person cannot know where he is going until he knows where he has been. Throughout the years, it has become increasingly more evident to me that my destiny is tied to my history. My journey to become a human rights lawyer began in Sierra Leone so it is only fitting that it has come full circle and continues in Sierra Leone now. For some people, to discover their passion in life means venturing out to an unfamiliar place and meeting unfamiliar people who open their eyes to a new world. For me, following my dreams simply meant going home.

NOTE: Eleanor Thompson is an attorney licensed to practice in New York State and the District of Columbia. In October 2013, she will be called to the bar of Sierra Leone.

A LIFE OF SERVICE: DR. PERRY HENDERSON SCHEPP SCHOLAR 1954-1958

By Banning Repplier, Trustee



Dr. Perry Henderson, Schepp Scholar 1954-1958

Perry Henderson has come a long way. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, the youngest of eight children. His father was a laborer, his mother a teacher and later a domestic worker. As a child, whenever people asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he used to say a doctor, not because at that point he really thought about being a doctor, but just to shut them up. When he was a teenager, however, he realized that, for most young African-Americans living in Cleveland in those days (the 1930's and 40's), the best jobs available were on the assembly line at a local auto factory. He knew he wouldn't be able to bear that kind of monotony and started thinking more seriously about medicine as a career. He took pre-med courses in high school and later as an undergraduate at Morehouse College in Atlanta (class of '54). Morehouse College was the only all-male, black institution of higher education in the United States.

After graduating from Morehouse College, Perry applied to medical school at Case Western Reserve University, one of only a handful that accepted black students. One of the reasons he chose Western Reserve was because it was in Cleveland and he would be able to save money by living at home. In his class, there were only three black students out of a total of seventy. An African-American physician on the clinical faculty told him about the Schepp Foundation. Perry applied and received grants throughout the four years of medical school.

During his internship, Perry realized that he preferred Obstetrics and Gynecology to other specializations because bringing babies into the world is considered a happy specialty. Over the course of a long and distinguished career, Perry completed four years of residency in OB/GYN in Cleveland, and then had a three-year fellowship in hematology at the University of Washington in Seattle. Following this, he joined the medical school faculty at the University of New Mexico. While there, he received a government grant to set up and direct multidisciplinary, pre-natal care clinics for underserved populations. He did this for eight years. His next and last move was to the University of Wisconsin where he was a professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology for 22 years and directed a regional high-risk pregnancy program. In 1984, Perry was a co-founder of the Perinatal Foundation. This foundation has given more than \$1 million in grants and awards for education, scholarships, support and service in perinatal care.

While working in the high-risk pregnancy program, Perry realized that a great deal of his job involved helping people cope with stillbirths or losing a newborn infant. He also realized that this was an area most obstetricians were not equipped to handle. After doing considerable research, studying authors like Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, he incorporated what he learned into medical protocols at the University to help doctors counsel patients suffering from perinatal grief and loss. He gave lectures on the subject around the country and set up grief seminars for couples who had experienced a stillbirth, had lost an infant or were expecting a new baby after having lost the previous one.

Even while teaching a full load at the University, Perry continued to see private patients. When he told one of his annual gyn patients, whose first two children he had delivered, that he was planning to retire in a year, she became visibly upset. She went home and got pregnant right away so he could deliver her third child.

Perry and his wife Virginia married during his final year at medical school. Virginia has an MA in psychology from Boston University and a PhD from the University of New Mexico. While at BU, she met Martin Luther King Jr., who was getting a PhD there, and they became friends. Virginia's father was a pastor in Ohio who knew King's father. Perry himself also knew Martin Luther King Jr. and, of course, admired him tremendously.

Perry and Virginia have three children. Sheryl, the oldest, is a pediatrician and earned her MD/PhD in infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins (the first African-American woman to do so). She now teaches at the University of Wisconsin. Jasmine, their second child, went to Oberlin then got her MA in psychology and education at the University of Pennsylvania. After working in rape counseling and later as a TV screenwriter in Hollywood, she is now Director of Multiculturalism and Inclusion at an independent k-12 school in southern California. Perry Jr., the youngest, played soccer professionally for a few years after college before he entered law school and obtained a J.D. degree from Northeastern University. He lives in Boston with his wife and two sons and practices intellectual property law.

Perry is a strong believer in giving back and has played a meaningful role in the Madison community, especially among the young. For years, he has mentored a middle school student and a high school student, meeting with them once or twice a month and helping them plan their futures and cope with sometimes difficult home

situations. One former mentee of Perry's is now a college student.

He has also been very active in the Madison chapter of 100 Black Men of America, a volunteer organization dedicated to fostering academic achievement, mentoring, health and wellness, and financial literacy. The 100 Black Men of Madison chapter hosts an annual Back-to-School Picnic for elementary and middle school students and provides them with free backpacks filled with school supplies. They give away 1700 backpacks a year. The group also sponsors an African-American history contest for middle school students. The winning team gets an all expense paid trip to the 100 Black Men national conference, held in cities like Miami, Atlanta, New York and New Orleans.

Perry's contributions have not gone unrecognized. In 2010, he won the "Candle in the Dark Award," given for extraordinary service by Morehouse College. Other awards and honors include the 2003 Dade County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Recognition Award for Leadership in Dade County (a joint recipient with his wife), the State Medical Society of Wisconsin's Meritorious Service Award in 1994, the National Perinatal Association's Award for Individual Contribution to Maternal and Child Health, the Whitney M. Young Jr. Award from the Urban League of Greater Madison (2000), the Student Service Award from the Medical Students for Minority Concerns at the University of Wisconsin (2002), and Father of the Year in 2002 from the American Diabetes Association's Father's Day Council.

We at the Schepp Foundation are extraordinarily proud that the faith we had in Perry all those years ago, when we helped him with his medical school tuition, has certainly more than been justified.

THE RIGHT ROAD TAKEN

Damon Grant, M.A.Ed, Schepp Scholar 2006-2007



Damon with students from Oakland Unity High School

There was a time when I thought of teaching as my default profession. After four years of college, I hadn't really cultivated what others may have viewed as "marketable" skills, but I sure did like to read and English had always been my favorite subject. So pervasive is the ideology of "those who can't do teach" in our society, that it had even permeated my mind—in spite of the fact that, throughout my own very privileged education, I had always held my teachers in the highest esteem. Surrounded by the investment bankers, future lawyers, and countless other corporate professionals that my college seemed to pump out by the barrel full, I somehow came to the idea that I wasn't "good enough" for that world or that I wasn't "right" for it. Somewhere along the line I thought, "I guess I will just go into teaching." Few things have been more rewarding over my now seven-year teaching career than to fully discover that that corporate world and life—coveted by so many—would simply not have been right for me.

A series of happy accidents led me to where I've spent the seven years of my teaching career—an unassuming public charter school of about 300 students in Oakland, California, called Oakland Unity High School. Tucked away behind an old church and not even visible from the street, some of our closest neighbors don't even know we exist. And yet, quietly, something special is happening here. While I very literally did not know what I was getting myself into, it has been in this tiny little school that I have truly begun to master the art of teaching. I have learned that nothing in good teaching is an accident, but must rather be the symphony of a meticulously planned lesson inside the classroom walls and a well-supported system of rules and norms outside these walls. I've also learned that while teaching can often be a happy career, it is more often just plain hard work and supremely unglamorous—no inspirational music plays over a montage of me earning my students' trust through a series of unconventional, yet meaningful activities. No breakthrough moments when we all start crying because we're finally learning from each other. They don't all pass the test in the end. Most days, I'm lucky if I can get the copier to work.

Unity is a Title I school. On paper, this means that 85% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch, 100% are black or Latino, 35% qualify as English language learners, and the overwhelming majority come from families where no one has ever gone to college. In the daily life of the teacher, this means a whole host of other things.

It means that the majority of the students come in to the classroom with skills below their grade level. It means you have to know the local gang signs, colors, and lingo so that you can notice when a student starts to present as a gang member. It means you have to practice how you're going to react when a sophomore tells you that she is pregnant. It means that on any given day you are not just an English instructor—in fact, delivering your content was probably the least important thing you did—but a counselor, coach, fundraiser, cheerleader, enforcer, and most of all, a steady presence in the constantly unsteady world of low-income children.

A teacher is not someone who just extracts precious knowledge from a dusty textbook to disseminate only to those who always have sharpened pencils and are willing to sit still for forty-five minutes. A teacher is a guide: between the students and the page, the students and their world, the students and each other, the students and themselves. A teacher is a root that holds things steady while the limbs are stretching, growing, reaching, shriveling, flailing, or falling. A teacher is a gloriously flawed human being who shows other human beings how to be flawed and still be glorious.

During my first year teaching at Unity, my junior English students were discussing where I got my education. When they found out that I had gone to Stanford for my Master's degree, a tall, gaunt student with a sharp intellect named Jesus chimed in with a wry smile, "You went to Stanford? Why would you work here?" I was flumoxed at the time and I'm not sure of the answer that I gave him, but I never forgot the question or place that it came from. There are moments in teaching where you desperately wish for a "do-over." In my "do-over" fantasy, I would have told Jesus, "Because you deserve it. Because in spite of what this system has been telling you for the past 11 years, you are so important to the future of this community and this world that you deserve to be educated by someone fortunate enough to have been given the quality of education that you should strive for. You should go to Stanford, too, and then come back to Oakland, become a teacher, and tell the students how hard you worked for your education and how the best thing you could think of to do with it was to dedicate it to them because they deserve it too."

Teachers believe that being satisfied is never enough and that, while you may never reach the goal, the power lies in striving towards it. Teachers know that this goal is different for every student, that it may even be different for the same student at different moments.

In spite of our challenges at Unity, or really because of them, my students' striving is unparalleled. It was exemplified for me in a student named Abraham, with whom I worked closely for four years. Throughout high school, Abraham had somehow remained above the fray of his teenage male counterparts. He was never lured into the darkness of gang life, yet he maintained friendships both with those who were and those weren't. He was an exceptional soccer player and made up for some of his academic short-comings with his will to succeed.

Abraham was a Unity success story when he started his freshman year at U.C. Santa Barbara. He often sent me emails during that year, sometimes just updates and sometimes to ask for a specific resource—like my handout on how to cite works properly—then he went radio silent. When I saw him at Unity's graduation ceremony a few months later, he finally told me, with tears in his eyes, why he hadn't been in touch. He had been put on academic probation for low grades and eventually lost his financial aid package, forcing him to drop out. He felt so ashamed of having "failed," that he hadn't wanted to face me. My first thought was to wonder how we, how I, had failed him. However, I then clumsily tried to impart to Abraham what my teaching career at Unity has imparted to me: no, it doesn't always look pretty, you don't always come out of each individual challenge on top, but if you can truly say that you are taking steps forward, even if those steps are starting further back than you would like, you are moving in the right direction.

Abraham took many steps forward after his "failed" freshman year and I learned from his resilience, perseverance and steady drive. The day before school started, Abraham sent an email to tell me he had been re-admitted to U.C. Santa Barbara and was starting his sophomore year. The bitterness of his first attempt made his success all the more sweet. Being a teacher has allowed me the privilege of being there to see it happen.

So now that I'm a teacher, I've joined the ranks of those who have had the greatest influence on my life. I don't presume to be on their level yet—they are the stuff that legends seem to be made of—but I am deeply proud to be among them. I am also proud to look in the eyes of those who have chosen different routes—the routes that may offer more tangible rewards, the routes that all the "doers" seem to gravitate towards—and tell them that I am a teacher. I am doing.

MEET NANCY GROSSMAN, SCHEPP TRUSTEE

by Banning Replier

Nancy Grossman is a powerhouse, a dynamic woman who has passionately devoted her life to pushing back the boundaries of education and enriching the minds and experiences of thousands of students. If you wanted to describe the ideal Schepp trustee, you need go no further than Nancy.

Nancy was born and raised in Livingston, New Jersey. Her father was a New Jersey Supreme Court judge who served on one of the most groundbreaking courts in the country. He was socially conscious, liberal, and fair -- and Nancy was in awe of him. Her mother was a teacher who later served as president of the Board of Education of their local synagogue. In later years, she became director of a consumer affairs office in New Jersey. Her parents' commitment to community service inspired Nancy and set an example which she has more than lived up to.

In high school, Nancy was a cheerleader, class president, and an all-round extrovert. When she went on to the University of Pennsylvania, she continued to be involved in student government and many social and cultural organizations. She majored in history and minored in music. Because she always loved school and the opportunity to learn and help others learn, she determined that education was her true vocation. After college, Nancy taught social studies for a year at a New Jersey middle school where she also coached dance and gave guitar lessons. She created and implemented a first-ever humanities curriculum for the school district which brought another dimension to the study of history by integrating art, music, theater, and the culture of the times.

Nancy's next move was to New York City, where she pursued her goal of helping students get the most out of their educations. She worked at General Learning Corp, a collaboration between Time/Life Books and Westinghouse that produced educational products. While there, Nancy worked on a video program entitled Microteaching, a professional development tool that assisted teachers in improving their classroom teaching techniques.

Nancy left General Learning Corp to take a job as Assistant Director of College Activities at Barnard College, where she was responsible for the opening of a new student center and developed a full program of extracurricular activities for the students. It was there



Nancy Grossman, Schepp Trustee

she met Suzanne Guard with whom she established an enduring friendship. At the same time, she was working on her MA in Communications and Media in Education at New York University.

After five years at Barnard, Nancy moved to FIT as Director of Student Activities. That was in 1973 – the same year she married and was completing a PhD program at NYU in Higher Education Administration. Nancy's husband, Stanley, is a prominent New York attorney who, among other things, was at the forefront of class-action litigation. They met on a blind date – and recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

Nancy continued her career in education at FIT for 37 years (she retired three years ago), eventually becoming Director of Student Life, which concerned just about everything students did outside the classroom: leadership training, student development programs, orientations, graduations, all extracurricular events, clubs and organizations, sports, the radio station, college newspaper, yearbook, student government, etc. Her goal has always been to help students develop the skills necessary to be successful in school and life: communications skills, values clarification, conflict resolution, problem solving, critical thinking, and human relations skills, among others. While at FIT, she established the Student Volunteer Community Service Bank, which matched students to volunteer opportunities throughout New York City, at homeless shelters, food kitchens, Toys-for-Tots, and numerous other community organizations.

During this same period, Nancy returned to teaching. As an adjunct professor at New York University's Steinhardt School, she created and taught a course for masters and doctoral candidates entitled Higher Education and the Law – legal implications for college administrators.

Though Nancy misses working directly with students, she has continued her commitment to education with her own volunteer work. As well as being a Schepp trustee, Nancy is on the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Education Board, whose mission is to promote Lincoln Center's educational goals, programs and community outreach. The educational cornerstone programs of the Lincoln Center Institute work with students, faculty and administrators to encourage and stimulate imagination, creativity and critical thinking skills through art education programs in the public schools.

Nancy also represents the Lincoln Center Education Board on the boards of two newly established charter high schools in the Bronx. The mission of these charter schools is to ensure that New York City's highest need students have the skills and content knowledge to succeed in school and beyond. Innovative teaching techniques, including the Capacities for Imaginative Learning, developed by the Lincoln Center Institute, are emphasized and a challenge and problem-based curriculum is used.

If Nancy ever worried about how to fill her retirement days, she needn't have. Along with her volunteer work, she travels extensively with her family, plays bridge and tennis, frequently goes to the theater, art galleries and museums, and spends precious time with her children and grandchildren. They are her greatest joy. Nancy and Stanley's daughter, Jillian, is an attorney and corporate litigator, who lives in Massachusetts with her husband Jason, a vice president with the American Tower Corporation, and their two boys, Dylan and Trevor. Her son, Judd, is a Manhattan attorney who specializes in art law. He and his wife, Meredith, a pediatrician, have two daughters, Eliza and Sydney.

Happily, Nancy is able to see a good deal of her family at the house she and Stanley have in Sagaponack, Long Island, where they have recently planted a vineyard and hope to produce their own wine this year. While their primary home is in Harrison, NY, they also have a home in Scottsdale, Arizona (Nancy says Stanley secretly wants to be a cowboy), as well as a pied-a-terre near Lincoln Center.

When I asked Nancy about transformative moments in her life, she mentioned two: one was when she was in college and realized that teaching, not the law, was her passion; the other was when she gave birth to her children and understood that "this was the reason I was born". She knew then that, in order to be the mother she wanted to be, she would have to adjust her career goal (she had wanted to be vice president or dean of a college) - a choice she has never regretted.

HELPING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET ON TRACK FOR COLLEGE

By Teresa McCune, J.D., Schepp Scholar, 1979-80



Teresa McCune, J.D. Schepp Scholar, 1979-80

The sign outside tiny Williamson, West Virginia, proudly welcomes visitors to “The Heart of the Billion Dollar Coalfield.” Given that introduction, you might imagine I live in a place of great wealth, replete with beautiful parks, the very best schools, and state of the art healthcare facilities.

In reality, however, Williamson lies in Mingo County, one of the 100 poorest counties in America. If not for neighboring McDowell County, we would be the poorest county in the state. If not for Mississippi, we would be the poorest state in the union. According to the Census Bureau, our per capita income for 2011 was \$18,610. Twenty-three percent of our citizens live below the poverty level. Less than 9% of our population has obtained a bachelor’s degree.

When I recently re-connected with the Schepp Foundation (I received a scholarship long before the days of the internet and social media), Suzanne Guard sent me a copy of my original application and photograph. Looking back, I’m happy to report that I’ve spent most of my time as a lawyer doing exactly what I told the Foundation I planned to do. In 1990, after working for two different Legal Services programs, and a brief stint in a private practice, I was recruited to open Mingo County’s first public defender’s office. This past January, I celebrated twenty-three years as Chief Public Defender for the 30th Judicial Circuit. Happily, as my staff has increased over the years, I’ve been able to focus more of my work on juvenile cases. Currently, about 95% of my cases involve representing children and teenagers.

Sometimes I refer to myself as the world’s only fan of teenagers. I spoke about this when I recently offered testimony before the West Virginia Senate Subcommittee on Children and Poverty. In our culture, teenagers are often looked upon as frightening, reckless people. I believe this is because teens haven’t yet learned to assess risk, and risk takers make older folks uncomfortable. But I find that it is this very willingness to take risks that can also make teenagers the most fascinating and creative people. I have two quotes about teenagers taped to my computer at work. One is from Catholic author Bernadette Snyder: “How easy it is to criticize or make jokes about teenagers, those terrible teens, those tedious, trying teens. Yet Mary was a teen when God chose her above all women.” The other is from Magic Johnson: “All kids need is a little help,

a little hope and somebody who believes in them.” I like to remind myself that Joan of Arc led an army and Gustav Mahler wrote dark and complicated music -- both as young teens.

I keep these quotes in mind as I work representing troubled and in trouble teens in my practice. And I am always looking for new ways to positively influence our youth. My own family's experience helped me find one way that has been particularly successful. In 2003 my son began college and, I, likewise, began a new journey. When Ryan started considering his options, I hadn't seen a college application in 30 years. We learned so much that year, and sadly, one of the things we learned was how little help with the application process even a highly motivated student, with a college-educated parent, received from his high school. Afterward, I felt compelled to share my knowledge and experience with others in the same or worse circumstances. Thus began my new avocation and consuming passion.

When the next school year rolled around, I offered my help to about five other students. One received a full ride to a private Catholic university. The next year I worked with about twelve kids, two of whom were accepted into Ivy League schools. From that point, I was off to the races. “On Track for College” got a name and a regular meeting time. After 10 years, I have worked with approximately 125 students. Folks I worked with on college applications are coming back to me for grad school advice. And one of the most wonderful aspects of the process is that I have to keep learning.

Take for example one of my favorite challenges, a young man with a solid “B” average and his heart set on a woodworking career. The catch: His parents insisted he pursue a four-year degree. After an exhaustive search, we discovered one of the few college woodworking programs that exist, at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Now, with his bachelor's degree in hand, Bubby has been accepted into a renowned artists' colony and graduate program.

Bubby's story is unique for our county, not only because of his choice of discipline, but because he had two college-educated parents who expected him to continue his education after high school. As mentioned earlier, our college matriculation rate is extremely low, and our high school dropout rate is high. Most of the students with whom I work will be the first in their families to even think about going to college. People who have grown up in a culture in which everyone is expected to acquire an

education beyond high school can hardly imagine how difficult the process can be for a first generation college-bound student.

My program is designed to help students find and explore college opportunities, and to teach them exactly what they need to know to prepare admissions and scholarship applications. I coach them on writing essays, drafting a CV, test taking, interviewing, and more. I seek out chances for my student to meet with current college students for inspiration and Q&A sessions. One avenue I've employed takes advantage of students from Notre Dame and other universities and colleges, who come to Appalachia every spring and fall break to perform community service.

And the cost? Zero, except time and effort. My board of directors has allowed me to use our office as a meeting place and I've received donations to put together a small library of resources. I have the support of several community groups and our local superintendent of schools.

I recently received this email from a professor at Concord University who is working on ways to increase college attendance rates in southern West Virginia:

“I was moved to write today because I was speaking about my project with someone on campus yesterday and they told me that their research showed some dramatic and unexplained success regarding successful college matriculation in Mingo County. I told my colleague that I actually knew something about the explanation, telling her about you. One of the nice things about where we live is that we're small enough to actually know and meet those interested in academic success and that our efforts can make noticeable and profound differences.”

When I applied for a scholarship from the Schepp Foundation, my goal was to make a difference for children living in southern West Virginia. I like to think Mr. Leopold Schepp would be particularly pleased with the outcome.



Jivan Lee
"In the Valley of Giants"
24" x 72", 2013

MY ADVENTURES AS A PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARIAN

Shannon G. McCook, DVM, MPH

Schepp Scholar 2010-2012



Shannon with members of the Sabinyo group in Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda

I traveled by bus from the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest of Southwestern Uganda to Musanze, Rwanda, in October of 2010. The Congolese backdrop of the Virunga Mountains, a chain of magnificent, verdant volcanoes, reminded me of the movie “Congo,” which I watched so many times as a child. My plan of action was to assist the veterinarians of the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP), known popularly as the Gorilla Doctors, with a public health surveillance project involving cross-species transmission of diseases from rodents to humans around Volcanoes National Park. This work was part of my David L. Boren National Security Fellowship. By some stroke of luck, MGVP’s Executive Director, Dr. Mike Cranfield, asked me to accompany him on a field intervention to remove a snare from the neck of a baby mountain gorilla; at this point, we were unsure of how serious the injury was. In order to recover the snare, both the baby and his mother, Inshuti, would need to be temporarily anesthetized by remote darting; my task was to monitor Inshuti while she was under anesthesia.

On that early, crisp November morning, Dr. Mike, Dr. Fred, a Ugandan Gorilla Doctor, and I waited stealthily in a small bamboo patch near the peak of Mount Gahinga in Uganda’s Mgahinga Gorilla National Park. The bamboo shoots were plentiful and we could hear the mountain gorillas of the Nykagezi group munching away peacefully. I could smell the group nearby – they have a unique odor that is pleasantly sweet. It took us several hours to hike up the mountain from our base camp and find the Nykagezi gorillas. Drs. Mike and Fred advanced towards the group with the Ugandan Wildlife Authority trackers. My adrenaline spiked as I heard the first dart discharge – Dr. Mike had darted Inshuti – and almost instantaneously, Mark, the head Silverback male of the group, screeched loudly and charged us. This was a particularly tricky intervention: the Nykagezi group had three silverback males, two younger blackback males, and two adult females, each with her own baby at the time. The females were well protected and the vegetation was thick. The intervention required seven attempts over nearly two weeks to successfully dart Inshuti’s son and remove the snare. To my disappointment, I had returned to the U.S.A. prior to that triumphant day. Nevertheless, I celebrated the Gorilla Doctors’ success with my family and friends in Boston, MA. It was a tremendous opportunity of which I was lucky to be a part.

When I arrived in Rwanda, the sheer number of people walking along the roads in one of sub-Saharan Africa's most densely populated countries struck me – humans, not cars or trucks, owned the streets. With just under 800 mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) left in the world – all of them living at the intersection of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo – MGVP's mission is a critical one.

I believe that my passion for the natural world and wildlife conservation was truly ignited during my semester-long study abroad program in Ecuador, South America. In January of 2005, I set off to discover the South American tropics with 22 eager classmates. Our head instructor, Dr. Kelly Swing, whom my classmates and I endearingly refer to as “Kelly,” has been an inspiration ever since I met him. His mindset and much of his advice has stuck with me over the years. During our lectures on the great apes, Kelly encouraged us to visit Africa to see the mountain gorillas; he did not believe they would be around for much longer than 10 years due to dramatic habitat destruction and human encroachment upon their remaining territory. During my work in Rwanda with MGVP, I fell in love with those gentle forest giants and I will do everything in my power to safeguard their future on this planet.

Throughout my educational endeavors, funding has been a daunting task. Since my plans included a medical education, I knew that student loans would inevitably be an integral part of funding my studies. The Leopold Schepp Foundation's generous support was instrumental in the achievement of my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Master of Public Health degrees. Thanks to the Foundation's scholarship, as well as other scholarships I received, I was able to travel widely for externships during my senior year at veterinary school to pursue my specific interests in zoo, wildlife and comparative pathology. I was able to spend four elective weeks at the San Diego Zoo's Wildlife Disease Laboratories, training in diagnostic pathology for zoo and wildlife species, and three weeks at a private practice zoo pathology diagnostic service near Seattle, WA. I also spent three weeks working in a clinical zoo setting at the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, RI. While at the Roger Williams Park Zoo, I was able to participate in examinations and treatment plans for a three-toed sloth, an African Wild Dog and a white-faced saki monkey!

My combined interest in veterinary and human medicine is undoubtedly what led me to commission as an officer in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. Veterinary Corps Officers (VCOs) are true public health veterinarians. As a VCO, I provide medical and

surgical care to Military Working Dogs (MWDs), other government-owned animals, as well as service members' personal pets. Along with our general veterinary medicine mission, VCOs are tasked with supporting the public health mission for communities in which we work and to which we deploy. We work closely with physicians and preventive medicine experts to develop and execute zoonotic disease prevention strategies. Rabies is still a serious concern in many areas of the world, especially in combat zones where stray animals are ubiquitous. We also supervise teams of enlisted soldiers who specialize in food inspection to ensure that all the food sold to military service members and their families comes from safe sources and is stored and prepared in a sanitary manner.

As I begin to settle into my first assignment as a VCO at Fort Benning, GA, the learning curve is vertical! One of the most important things that I, along with other Army veterinarians, must accept is that we are not ultimately in control of our lives and careers during our time in service. Although we can express our preferences about what assignments we would like and whether or not we want to be deployed to a combat zone, at the end of the day it is always the Army's decision to utilize us how it best sees fit. One of my favorite parts of being an officer is wearing the uniform; it is a privilege to do so and I love feeling that I am part of something bigger than myself. It keeps me going on days when I feel less courageous than I ought to.

In order to provide excellent care for the dedicated bomb-sniffing, patrolling, and narcotics-detecting Military Working Dogs, who devote themselves to protecting our soldiers and our way of life, I count on my broad background in veterinary medicine and public health in addition to the military-specific training I have received. During basic officer training, I spent four weeks learning warrior tasks and drills, including marksmanship and land navigation techniques, which are necessary to carry out our missions. I am unsure at this point if I will sign on for additional time after my initial three-year service obligation is up. It will depend on many factors, including the wishes of my partner, Ian, who has been incredibly supportive of my crazy adventures, and where we want our careers to take us.

My ultimate goal is to become a veterinary pathologist and I have a keen interest in wildlife and zoo pathology. Some people find this odd – but I have wanted to be a pathologist (a doctor who examines deceased patients to determine cause of death) as far back as I can remember and it is this love for pathology that keeps my professional

interest piqued on a daily basis. The U.S. Army boasts one of the best veterinary pathology training programs in the world at the Joint Pathology Center (formerly the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology). This educational opportunity was a large draw for me when I commissioned and continues to be one of my top choices for training. Who knows – maybe I will get to play the role of Gorilla Pathologist some day! As I work towards my ideal job, I often think of this Jane Goodall quotation to keep myself and my friends motivated to follow our dreams: “If you really want something, and really work hard, and take advantage of opportunities, and never give up, you will find a way.”



A silverback from the Sabinyo group eying Shannon in Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda



Dayla in Antalya, Turkey

**COMPLICATED THINKING:
LIFE AS A WITNESS AND PARTICIPANT IN TURKEY**

Dayla Rogers, M.A., Instructor and Professional Development Assistant at Dragoman, Inc., Schepp Scholar, 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 (Peace Corps Fellows Program, Teachers College, Columbia University)

“America is an imperialist nation. It says that it’s trying to help smaller, weaker nations but it’s really just forcing itself on them.”

I was eighteen when my Turkish host mother, a fervent Marxist during her university years, made this pronouncement at the dinner table. Although I can’t remember exactly what prompted her to say this, it was probably an expression of a deep-seated resentment that came out every now and then in snide comments when I bought things, implying that I must have so much money I was oblivious to its value.

The year was 2001 and I was in the middle of my term as an exchange student in the Rotary Club's year-long high school program. In America, I had been a passionate student of history at my mostly white, suburban high school just south of Detroit. I brought a certain optimistic worldview with me to Izmir, Turkey, one in which the United States was more or less the pinnacle of development. All nations were slowly on their way to becoming like America. Why? Because in America things turned out right in the end, despite problems like slavery, racism, etc. The bottom line is that in America everything just had a way of working out for the greater good.

According to the history taught at school at that time, this was logical. Which is why when my host mother said this, I felt uncomfortable not just because I had to live side-by-side with this woman, but because I experienced a kind of intellectual dissonance: the narrative of America that I had formed in my mind could not exist harmoniously with the one that was suddenly released into the air over the dinner table. Throughout the remainder of my stay, I would have more conversations and witness anti-American demonstrations that would further challenge the vision of my country that I had grown up with. Many of the charges were unfounded conspiracy theories mixed with truth such as America toppling democratically elected leaders and replacing them with dictators, using the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to force countries into debt slavery, inciting uprisings among ethnic groups such as the Kurds in Iraq and then abandoning them, along with a whole host of other accusations. In discussions about politics, it was difficult for me to find ground to stand on, as many Turks seemed to know more about the history of U.S. foreign policy than I did. The desire to gain strength in these discussions—to be able to splice fact, fiction, exaggeration and understatement—was a big factor in my choosing history as a college major.

When the World Trade Center came down a month after I returned home, it was as if the cacophony that I had heard in Turkey echoed across the ocean into a cheerfully oblivious American life. Among the many desperate, confounded questions asked following that horrible day was 'Why, WHY do they hate us?!' Although nothing can justify what happened on that day, my time in Turkey had given me some answers to that question.

Now it's August 2013 and I'm an English teacher in Turkey. I work for an agency that has contracts with various firms around Istanbul to provide instructors to meet their staff's English education needs. I go two to three times per week to companies

such as FOX TV, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, ING Bank, etc. to give English lessons to hardworking employees before work, during lunch or after work.

Since my time as an exchange student, Turkey has experienced unprecedented economic growth. Skyscrapers have sprouted up all over the city of Istanbul, the IMF debts have been paid off, most Turks enjoy a higher standard of living and healthcare has greatly improved. Most thank the Islamic Justice and Development Party, which has been in power since 2002, and its leader, the current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdo an, for this success. For many religious people, middle-class people and poor people, this leader is a strong, attractive, pious man of action who is putting Turkey on track to become a major world power, similar to the days of the Ottoman Empire.

It didn't take long for me to see that not everyone was so enchanted with the direction the country was taking. In November of 2011, the government arrested hundreds of journalists, academics and activists associated with the Kurdish Communities Union as 'terrorists.' In 2012, an army helicopter accidentally gunned down thirty-four villagers and the government ordered the media not to report on it. In the same year, large demonstrations took place against proposals to kill off all street animals, to bulldoze poor neighborhoods to make way for luxury condominiums and to impose laws limiting access to abortions.

Of course, in the eyes of Erdo an and his supporters, the political opposition parties can't stand their success and are always trying to 'throw a wrench into their plans.' In 2013, the government began to place tighter restrictions on public demonstrations—denying permission to hold them and tear gassing those who protested anyway.

On May 31st, I came home from work and my roommate immediately said, 'Dayla, a war has broken out!' She showed me live streaming videos from CCTV cameras around Taksim Square, one of the busiest and most touristic parts of Istanbul: police officers in riot gear were vigorously using their shields to repel sidewalk stones being hurled by protestors. Other angles showed police firing round-upon-smoking-round of tear gas canisters into mobs of hundreds of people. High pressure water cannons knocked people onto the ground or against walls. The police used so much tear gas that day that we could smell it in our apartment three miles away.

Earlier that day, police officers had attacked a group of protestors that had been camped

in Gezi Park, as relatively small green space in Taksim, to oppose its destruction to make way for a new shopping mall. The police burned their tents and sprayed them with tear gas. In fact, the police used tear gas indiscriminately, spraying tourists and passers-by as well. This led to thousands of citizens marching on the park in an explosion of anger over not just Gezi Park but over Erdoğan's policies, many of which were not part of the glorious narrative of success: environmental destruction caused by building projects, corruption and nepotism, intimidation of the news media, jailing of legitimate political opponents as 'terrorists' and a host of other measures that had been infuriating the left and non-religious segments of society for years.

My roommate and I were forced to rely on CCTV cameras for live coverage because the mainstream news media refused to broadcast any of it. Instead, there were documentaries about penguins and various talk shows. For most citizens, this was a confirmation that the media had been thoroughly bought by the ruling party. Despite the media self-censorship, images and footage from the riots taken on smartphones spread quickly via the social media and before long there were demonstration across the country.

The reaction of the Prime Minister was to label all of these citizens as vandals, bums and terrorists and to escalate the violence. The police used an entire two-year supply of tear gas in three days, maimed and in some cases killed protestors by firing tear gas canisters at their heads. Tens of people lost eyes because of rubber bullets as well.

Like most Istanbul residents, I barely slept during the first three days of the protests. It was impossible to fall asleep with crowds chanting 'Arm-in-arm against fascism!' outside my window as they tried to march up the hill to Taksim Square. The chants would be followed by the 'PAT PAT' of tear gas canisters being fired. Bus stops, sidewalks and fencing were uprooted and thrown into the middle of the road to block the police's riot-control tanks from advancing. Groups of protestors took shelter from tear gas in our apartment. Other citizens spent the whole night hanging out their windows, banging pots and pans in a show of disapproval of the government and the police. One of my students complained during her lesson, 'I can't focus, I work all day, and then I go to work again at night (protesting, that is).'

The police became overwhelmed on the second day of the protests and had to withdraw from the park altogether. This led to ten days in which the park and the area

surrounding it had absolutely no police. It was anarchy in the true sense of the term. Thousands of people flocked to the park and the square, setting up what the New York Times would call a 'utopic free town.' There was a clinic, stage, kitchen, supply area and hundreds of people living in tents in the park. It was a euphoric feeling to visit the area—to see the impromptu artwork, the concerts, the speeches and the feeling of joy and triumph.

Despite this victory, I worried about the direction the country was taking in a larger sense. I worried that Erdoğan would try to mobilize his base to violently attack protestors. Following a giant rally he held in Istanbul in response to the protests, videos emerged of his supporters running through the streets with knives and clubs chanting 'Allahu Akbar!' and 'Recep Tayyip Erdoğan!' That night they chased a group of protestors into the headquarters of the main opposition party and threw stones at the window. In a separate incident, a man wielding a machete strode into the middle of a protest scene, cut one man's ear, and kicked a female protestor in the back. This man was later released by the police and allowed to escape to Morocco before charges were filed against him. It seemed like anyone who was on Erdoğan's side could do anything with impunity, while those who opposed him would be targeted.

On the morning of the fourth day of protests, I sat with one of my students, a chief financial officer at an Islamic bank, a workplace that is decidedly pro-government. I was clearly very tired, as there had been chanting and tear gassing in my neighborhood all through the night. He himself, while not particularly religious, is one of the secular middle class people who voted for the government because they 'get things done.' He would always try to convince me or reassure me that Erdoğan knew what he was doing, that he had everything under control.

'Yes, maybe he has made some mistakes, but he understands...he will do the right thing...you should trust him.' He would say this with a big smile on his face and a look in his eyes as if to imply, Dayla is just a young, inexperienced person. These people are always leftists until they grow up.

Days went on and the police eventually raided the park to force the remaining protestors out and close it to the public. The night of the raid, the park was actually quite empty—a court had cancelled the project to build a shopping mall on the site, so many protestors had gone home. Near dark, the police made an announcement

that the park must be evacuated. After about fifteen minutes, they fired tear gas and pressurized water to get them out, which attracted mobs of people and created wider clashes throughout the city.

I met with my student the Tuesday after the incident and he predictably defended the police actions. ‘They gave them a warning before they started the operation.’

‘They fired tear gas into the Divan Hotel!’ I objected. After spending the weekend witnessing footage of police firing tear gas canisters directly at peoples’ heads, dragging a reporter along the street and grabbing a headscarved protestor—a pious, Muslim woman—and slapping her across the face, I was in no mood to tolerate this nonsense propaganda. ‘You can’t use tear gas indoors. It can kill people. And Erdo an says proudly that he personally gave those orders!’

The Divan Hotel sits at the northern end of the park. The owner insisted on keeping the doors open so that protestors could come inside to escape the tear gas [inside]. The police fired canisters directly into the lobby, exposing protestors and guests alike to the fumes. Footage of people crowded into the hotel’s hallways and children crying from the fumes spread across the social media.

My student paused. ‘I don’t know...I’m confused,’ he said. For the first time, he was unable to defend the Prime Minister, had no hopeful comeback. After a long silence, we began our English lesson.

At that moment, I was proud because I felt I had given my student a gift. In his mind, there was now the same dissonance that I had experienced as an exchange student, the same sense of incompatibility between his basic assumptions and a piece of truth that had been released into the air.

Even more recently, we had a conversation about the possibility of a U.S. strike against Bashar Assad’s regime in Syria. Erdo an, who wants to be some kind of savior of Sunni Muslims across the globe, has been harboring radical militants from the Free Syrian Army in Turkey for over two years.

‘This will be very bad for Turkey,’ I said. ‘Look at the bombing in Beirut that Hezbollah did. That could happen in Turkey.’ Hezbollah, a Shi’ite group operating out of Iran,

retaliated against Lebanon for harboring Free Syrian Army forces by staging a deadly car bombing in a Beirut suburb.

Rather than looking me in the eye in that condescending way, he looked down at the table.

‘I know,’ he said.

At this point, you might be thinking that I’m getting satisfaction from promoting my own liberal values in a foreign country. I would like to conclude this piece by assuring you that, while, like any human being, I have my own opinions about political events, my satisfaction comes from helping students complicate their own thinking—not from making them think like me.

In order for people to think in a complicated way—that is, to handle different perspectives, to form an argument, to accept some things as only partially true or false—they must feel comfortable with complexity. In my classroom, I create an atmosphere in which students must listen to each other, paraphrase one another and express agreement and disagreement supported by evidence. Rarely do I directly give students the answer, so even checking something as simple as a verb conjugation can unfold into a discussion that reveals the nuances of English grammar. When discussions involve provocative topics, these intellectual habits allow the conversation to blossom, as students are forced to defend and often challenge their own assumptions.

How are these teaching methods connected with the protests over Gezi Park? The way I see it, one of the problems with the transition of a society like Turkey, which has been governed for centuries by authoritarian figures like sultans and generals, is that people seek definitive answers from those at the top. They feel uncomfortable with complexity, so they are attracted to leaders who offer them simplicity. Rather than making myself, as a teacher, into that figure-on-high, I try to empower my students to participate in healthy public debate, which is no doubt a more democratic way of solving disagreements than with rocks, tear gas and water cannons.

ON THE BATTLE LINE OF HIV

Sonia Rastogi, student,
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Schepp Scholar 2013-14



Sonia serving milk and porridge in Mzuzu, Malawi

I lay in bed restlessly tossing and turning. I was upset and somber, but I was not sure why. Like clockwork, the pack of dogs outside my window in Mzuzu, Malawi, began to howl. Then, I began to think about the faces and voices of the people I was working with. And I asked myself: “How long will they live?”

In Malawi, life expectancy is 47 years of age. The HIV epidemic wiped out a whole generation of vibrant, productive parents, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and community members. Many children are orphans who lost one or both of their parents. Other children and youth are living with HIV – some know their status and some do not.

I spent three months working on an HIV Needs Assessment project with Kwithu CBO in collaboration with Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health with the goal of building and expanding a community-based organization’s HIV programming, especially for orphans, vulnerable children, and their families. I thought I understood the HIV epidemic. After working, living, and breathing HIV for six years, I thought that nothing would surprise me. But I came out of those three months realizing how little I knew.

Flarey, a bright, energetic 11-year-old became my companion in Mzuzu. Whenever she came to Kwithu, I could feel her smile. She would find me in the office or outside in the courtyard and swing her arms around my waist.

As a part of our research, Flarey and her friends talked about the obstacles they were facing around their status. They shared their experiences and concerns, from “feeling pain underneath” to being discriminated against by friends at school. For some of them, their families would say “you are dead already.”

The medications in Malawi, like many other countries in the Global South, are from the 1990s – AZT, d4t and 3TC. The intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical companies and patents commonly referred to as TRIPs prevent access to locally produced generics and cheaper drug options.

However, even more devastating is the lack of funding to meaningfully address deep-seated homophobia and transphobia (discrimination against transgender identity and people who are transgender); land and property rights, often of women who lose their partners due to HIV and then have their houses, clothing, farms and belongings taken away by in-laws on grounds that they have brought HIV into the family; the lack of spaces like parks and libraries and services for children and youth to mentally, psychologically, and emotionally develop; the dire state of food insecurity; the frequency of intimate partner violence and child abuse; workplace discrimination and the lack of jobs; and the list continues.

Small, grassroots organizations scrape by or fold. Larger NGOs mold themselves to meet donor demands. It is not that we have not learned how to support people living with and vulnerable to HIV, it is our poor implementation of these lessons. Because of this, the global response to HIV is weak. The best medications and the most cutting-edge biotechnologies are victories. But our lives are more complex than popping pills. Medical care is necessary, but it is not sufficient.

At the end of my time in Malawi, we held a one-day Youth Summit. The facilitators were hand-picked by the participants, who ranged in age from 15 to 19. This was probably the first time many in the room were able to ask questions about sex, alcohol use, and pregnancy myths. They discussed early marriage and what it means to be “a real man.” At the end of the day, they proposed a series of solutions, most of which pointed to increasing youth leadership and power in decision-making.

A month after returning to New York, I attended a United Nations General Assembly event titled “Youth, HIV, and the Post-2015 MDG Agenda.” A panel of beautiful, articulate, and committed youth from Uganda, Brazil, Ghana, and the U.S. spoke about the pain and resilience of their communities.

More importantly, they shared how they and their networks are inventing and implementing solutions. Now more than ever do I understand the need to support and prepare youth to be leaders.

I think about Flarey – her firecracker personality and her sharp wit. I cannot wait to watch her grow and see her leadership bloom. While HIV unearths a lot of our personal and societal traumas, it also brings out the best in us. It reminds us of our humanity. It pushes us to be better people. It forces us to uphold the rights of every human being regardless of their sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, class, use of drugs, engagement in sex work, color of their skin, religion, or ethnicity.

HIV is the best thing that ever happened to me. It has given me a perspective and a humility that very little else could. As I finish up my Masters in Public Health at Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health, I am ready to create paths that will allow the next generation to dream and to act. I cannot back down... Flarey is counting on me.

A JOURNEY OF SERVICE

Michael McNamara, student, Georgetown University
Schepp Scholar 2013-2014



Michael with children at St. Vincent de Paul

A heart willing to serve is not inherent, but developed. Everyone knows there are problems in the world, but the majority of people struggle to believe they can personally make a difference. This realization, that any hour spent or dollar donated does have a lasting effect, is the first step in developing a serving heart.

For me, the journey of giving back started early. When I was very young, my family and I volunteered regularly at a family dining room in Phoenix managed by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This experience planted a seed within me, a seed that continues to grow to this day.

My seed underwent a life-changing growth spurt during my junior and senior years of high school. I continued my work at St. Vincent de Paul, eventually finding myself in various leadership positions. I designed projects for the children of our guests and at times coordinated the food-serving volunteers as well. I saw the smiles the children wore while completing activities I had organized. I saw their parents enjoying meals with friends and experiencing the sense of community I helped to create.

As I grew closer to the families who attended regularly, I began to learn their stories. I knew our guests were contending with a wide variety of life's problems, but coming to the dining room gave them joy. Seeing this right before my eyes erased any doubt that my personal actions could make a difference. I created irreplaceable bonds with many guests at St. Vincent de Paul, but my journey continued, taking me across the country to Georgetown University.

Coming from a Jesuit high school, I knew what to expect at a Jesuit university. Jesuit education is famed for "educating the whole person." In application, this means one's learning is not confined to the classroom, but extends locally, nationally, and globally. This core tenet was summed up by Fr. Pedro Arrupe S.J. when he proclaimed that those with a Jesuit education are called to be "Men for Others."

Once at Georgetown, I was immediately presented with multiple service opportunities. I eventually decided to spend my time serving both children in the pediatric intensive care unit of Georgetown Hospital and incarcerated members of society. I serve

the children in the hospital through the Chemistry Club, and prisoners through an organization called Prison Outreach, which just celebrated its 30th year on campus.

The Chemistry Club organizes groups of science students who want to put their skills to use in an atypical setting. These groups meet up to plan a simple, yet entertaining experiment, which is then replicated for the kids in the ICU. Many of these kids have been in a hospital bed for most of their lives, so even a small break in the monotony is greatly appreciated.

My favorite experiment involved dishwashing soap, pepper, and old-fashioned water. Crushed pepper normally spreads evenly on the surface of water, but if you dip a finger with a dot of dish soap on it into the middle of the water, the pepper “magically” rushes to the edges. What made a lasting impression on me was not the amazed looks on the children’s faces when I dipped my finger into the water, but when I offered them a turn at being the “magician”. When it was their finger that worked the magic, the look of elation on their faces was indescribable.

Although my time spent with the children is unforgettable, the work I did with the prisoners was much more significant to me. I will always remember my first day tutoring with Prison Outreach, which is dedicated to helping prisoners earn their GEDs while incarcerated. I was eager, yet not without a measure of apprehension. Would I know the material well enough to teach it? Would my tutee like me? Would I be safe? And, above all, would I actually be able to help? With these questions weighing on my mind, I walked through the metal detector and produced my identification for inspection.

Once my driver’s license had been replaced with a shiny visitor’s badge, I proceeded with the other tutors through the double steel doors that separated the lobby from the inmates’ quarters. The actual tutoring takes place in a small classroom on the second floor. We prepared packets addressing various mathematical concepts such as fractions and algebraic expressions. When the inmates began to arrive, some quickly moved to the familiar faces of returning tutors. Finally, a man in his late 50s sat across from me and introduced himself as Tarzan.

My tutoring experience with Tarzan was unforgettable. He was having trouble understanding the distance formula and humbly asked for my help. I walked him through the formula and then solved an example problem for him. It was his turn, but

he seemed apprehensive, so I went through it with him again. Then I asked him to solve the problem without assistance.

After he finished, he looked at me expectantly. When I told him his answer was correct, he sat back, looked at the paper, and summed up his feelings with a simple, “Wow, thank you so much.” At that moment, I knew I had already made a difference in this man’s life. Regardless of the eventual outcome of his GED test, I had helped him to feel the joy of success. When it was time to leave, I could not believe the session had passed so quickly. As I said goodbye to Tarzan, I knew Prison Outreach would become very significant to me.

I tutored various prisoners over the course of the next year. Some came every week, while others rarely showed their faces. One man’s story, however embodies everything for which Prison Outreach stands. Alvin is in his late fifties and is now actually out of jail. One day, his tutor asked why he wanted to get his GED in the first place. He told her that he recently became a grandfather and he wanted to be able to help his granddaughter with her homework when she reached middle and high school. Alvin worked hard and eventually passed the GED, but he did not stop there.

Alvin is the first inmate of the Alexandria Country Sheriff’s Detention Facility to begin taking community classes while still incarcerated. After earning his GED, he asked for help to go even further. His tutor found a program through Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) where he could begin taking classes in jail and then continue his education once he was released. With our help, Alvin prepared his application, putting together the required information and essays, and eventually began the NOVA program. He wanted to use his experience as the jail barber to open up his own shop. Alvin came to us without a GED and was released from jail with an attainable dream.

My journey of service is far from over. After college, I plan on attending medical school. I want to pursue a career that marries my love for science with my ever-developing heart for service. Becoming a doctor provides this unique opportunity. I have seen the change I can affect in other’s lives and want to continue doing so for the rest of mine.



Michael with child at St. Vincent de Paul

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2013-2014

Barbara McLendon, President

William L. D. Barrett, Vice President

Kathryn Batchelder Cashman, Vice President

Sue Ann Dawson, Vice President

James G. Turino, Chairman, Finance Committee

Frank Poli, Treasurer

Linda McKean, Asst. Treasurer-Secretary

Edythe Bobrow

Louise M. Bozorth

Susan Brenner

Anne Coffin

Emily Crawford

Diana P. Herrmann

Nancy Jacobs Grossman

Michele A. Paige

Elizabeth Stone Potter

Bruno A. Quinson

Robert F. Reder, MD

Banning Repplier

SuzanneClair Guard, Executive Director

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Rob Caples

Ed Hodges

Priscilla Perkins

Paul Marks, MD, Science Advisor

EDITORIAL STAFF

Banning Repplier, Editor and Contributing Writer

SuzanneClair Guard, Editor

Beth McLendon, Designer

Barbara McLendon, Advisor

Kathleen C. Smith, Executive Secretary

LEOPOLD SCHEPP FOUNDATION

551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3000

New York, New York 10176

(212) 692-0191

www.scheppfoundation.org

Leopold Schepp Foundation
551 5th Avenue, Suite 3000
New York, NY 10176-3000

