

THE COLLEGE OF  
**arts & science**

Celebrating a Century of Great People 1909–2009

FALL 2009

**Putting Canada's North  
Back on the Map**

**Drama & Art Create a  
Spectacle**

**One-of-a-Kind Fieldschool**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN**

College of  
Arts and Science

**Brian Pratt on Victoria Island**

Geologist Brian Pratt hopes the GEM program (geomapping for energy and minerals) will help put Canada's North back on the map.

# An Exceptional Centennial Year

## DEAN JO-ANNE R. DILLON

AS 2009 BEGINS TO WIND DOWN AND I REFLECT on the past year, I am mindful of the momentum and accomplishments achieved during our centennial year, as well as the challenges addressed.

Many of our successes were highly visible. As the College observed its centennial year we held a numerous celebratory events, which culminated with the Alumni of Influence induction ceremony on Oct. 2. The College inducted 100 Alumni of Influence and nearly half were either in attendance themselves or were represented by next of kin. We also had many dignitaries, students, faculty and staff attend this event, which received remarkably positive feedback and was certainly an exceptional end to the College's centennial year.

However, as with most progress, some advances we made as a College in 2009 were not without intensive deliberation.

We were asked by the Provost to review our governance and administrative structure, which has, admittedly, been a sensitive and difficult process for all involved. However, the College voted decisively to remain a unified College with a three divisional structure. This unique structure offers great opportunity for distinctive academic programming and research. I am confident that our College will forge an even stronger unity and identity both within the U of S community and on the national and international stages.

The global economic downturn also meant that our College, like all others at the U of S, was asked to review and adjust its budget. Again, this has been a complex and



Dean Dillon with photographer Courtney Milne at Alumni of Influence gala on Oct. 2. (photo: Karee Davidson)

delicate exercise that forced us all to examine our College activities dispassionately and re-think resource allocations. Although difficult, I have been impressed by the leadership, vision and willingness by our faculty, staff and students to confront this issue and to devise creative solutions. I am confident that we will emerge from this exercise even stronger and that we have created new opportunities, which otherwise might not have been considered.

I would like to thank all of our faculty, staff and students for celebrating with the College during the good times and working collegially through the challenges that inevitably arise. I look forward to continue working with you all in 2010 as we progress past the challenges of this past year and embark on a new beginning in the College's second century.

## Celebrating A Century of Great People

Guided by the theme of "Celebrating a Century of Great People," the College of Arts & Science hosted a series of centennial year events, culminating with the inaugural Arts & Science Alumni of Influence gala on Oct. 2 at TCU Place.

More than 400 honoured alumni, family members, dignitaries, faculty, students and community sponsors attended the formal announcement of the 100 distinguished alumni at the gala luncheon and awards ceremony, and the unveiling of the dedicated alumni display that followed on campus. Dean Jo-Anne Dillon delivered the College's keynote address and President

Peter MacKinnon brought a special message on behalf of the university.

The College of Arts & Science will continue to induct individuals to the Alumni of Influence annually, and nominations are now being accepted. The award recognizes the tremendous individual accomplishments of our alumni throughout their lives and careers, and strongly promotes the value of the Arts or Science degrees our students are pursuing today.

To read about each of our distinguished Alumni of Influence, visit [http://artsandscience.usask.ca/alumni\\_friends/alumni.php](http://artsandscience.usask.ca/alumni_friends/alumni.php)

# Northern Exposure

BY KIRK SIBBALD



Brian Pratt with colleagues on Victoria Island. (submitted photo)

## Geologist hopes GEM program helps put Canada's North back on the map.

After spending 10 days scouring the bedrock of Victoria Island in the western Arctic, geologist Brian Pratt is hopeful that the vast Canadian tundra is finding its way back onto the federal government's radar.

Pratt, professor of Geology, travelled to Victoria Island this past summer as part of the federal government's GEM (geo-mapping for energy and minerals) program. This program will receive \$100M in funding over five years (2008 to 2013), money that will be directed to Arctic geological mapping in order to aid petroleum and mineral exploration efforts.

Pratt said he spent much of the expedition searching for fossils in the island's sedimentary rock strata, some of which is about 1 billion years old. The fossils he found will help geoscientists determine the age and depositional environments recorded in these rocks.

"If we can provide a detailed appreciation of the surface geology there, then oil and mining companies can look for clues for hydrocarbon accumulation and metallic mineralization," Pratt said in explaining the implications of his work. "There's huge economic potential up there.... These companies use this kind of information to help guide their exploration efforts."

While the Arctic has been mapped and explored in what Pratt called a "first-pass way," he said little attention and even fewer government resources have been devoted to understanding the geology of this immense and frigid region

of Canada in recent years.

He said the Geological Survey of Canada, which was once internationally renowned and has done considerable work in the Arctic, has been starved of funding lately. And with the federal government having displayed little interest in exploring the Arctic's vast potential since the 1980's, Pratt said it comes as little surprise that international territorial disputes have again begun to surface.

"I also don't think you can get around the fact that territorial claims require that you have people there," said Pratt. "If you don't have boots on the ground, you're not showing much interest and it become more difficult to stop other countries (from laying claim to the region)."

Pratt admits that the GEM program is a step in the right direction. More funding has also been granted recently to the Geological Survey of Canada, allowing the organization to start rebuilding a staff base that has been steadily declining with retirements and losses to the private sector.

Pratt hopes to return to Victoria Island next year to continue examining the bedrock and identify additional projects with other researchers. He said a Masters' thesis topic has already been identified, and he hopes to find an interested student to take it on in the coming months.

"It's difficult sometimes finding students who are motivated enough to stick around for grad school instead of entering the workforce right away," he said. "But it would be a great adventure. They would get field experience, publications, networking opportunities, the chance to interact with Northern residents, and get paid good money to boot."

# Ethnohistory Fieldschool Breathes Life into History

BY KIRK SIBBALD

Far removed from classrooms, lectures and textbooks, Keith Carlson says his one-of-a-kind fieldschool reflects, in several ways, the changing face of History.



Keith Carlson and students canoeing beside the partially submerged remains of the “Bubble and Squeek”—the last steam ship to ply the Fraser and Harrison Rivers.

Carlson, associate professor with the Department of History, was first inspired to help launch the Ethnohistory Fieldschool 11 years ago while working with the Stó:lō Tribal Council, which represents a cluster of First Nations reserves near Chilliwack, B.C.

“We would have Anthropology and Archaeology students coming through to do fieldwork on the reserves, but the students were usually asking questions that were more historical in nature,” explained Carlson.

“So I thought to myself, ‘Why aren’t History students coming out and doing this same sort of thing? Why are they kept in the libraries or archives all the time?’”

After mulling these questions, Carlson approached the University of Victoria (UVic), his alma mater, and chiefs in the Stó:lō Tribal Council with visions of a unique partnership. His proposal involved graduate students visiting the reserve communities to conduct academic research on issues that would ultimately benefit the Stó:lō Nation.



Left: Stó:lō cultural leader Sonny McHalsie (front right) with UofS and UVic fieldschool students near an archaeological excavation in the Fraser Canyon; Right: Fieldschool students waiting for Spring Salmon to finish cooking at First Salmon ceremony at Sonny McHalsie's home. (photos submitted)

It was, essentially, a win-win proposition, and both sides agreed to give the idea a shot.

Carlson and John Lutz, a History professor from UVic, served as the fieldschool's first co-instructors. They decided to offer the Ethnohistory Fieldschool every second year and, based on its initial success, everything was kept in place when Carlson joined the U of S Department of History about eight years ago. Now, however, the instructors aim to accept an equal number of students from each institution whenever the fieldschool accepts applications.

Having wrapped up its sixth offering this past May, the fieldschool is proving popular with students in both History and other disciplines in the humanities. This year, for example, two English students were accepted for the fieldschool, and Carlson says the door is always open for students majoring in other subjects to apply.

U of S graduate student Mandy Fehr first attended the Ethnohistory Fieldschool in 2007 to conduct research on the sacred Eayem Memorial—research that formed the basis of her Masters thesis. Now a PhD student interested in Native History, Fehr returned to the fieldschool this year.

"You get a real authentic experience that is invaluable," said Fehr. "(The fieldschool) allows you to do oral interviews and see things with your own eyes, rather than just read about it all in a book."

Carlson said a particularly unique aspect of the fieldschool is that the First Nations communities suggest a range of projects they would like the students to work on—research they would like completed but don't have the capacity or time to do on their own.

One student, for example, completed a family biography for two elders, one of whom had spent time both as a student and principal in the residential school system. Another student studied how the language of politics has changed in the communities over time, paying particular attention to the phrases and metaphors used by chiefs when speaking about issues such as land claims.

"I think this is the direction that History is taking," said Carlson. "What we do has contemporary implications.... That connection is even more obvious with First Nations communities, where they're dealing with being displaced from their land and resources, having been through residential schools, or just trying to make sense of their place within Canadian society."

"So this gives students a way to see that History isn't only an academic exercise; it's an exercise with real human meaning and consequences."

While Carlson and Lutz have been the two main drivers behind this course since its inception 11 years ago, Carlson said the fieldschool would inevitably fail without continued support from the College of Arts & Science.

"There is some risk involved, because this is something different from what we might normally do in the Humanities and Fine Arts. So I think it's really to the institution's credit that they allow an innovative and research-intensive program like this to go ahead. They provide the resources to make this work."

The next Ethnohistory Fieldschool will be held in the spring of 2011; interested students can begin applying in September of 2010.

# An Eye to a Spectacle

BY BETSY ROSENWALD

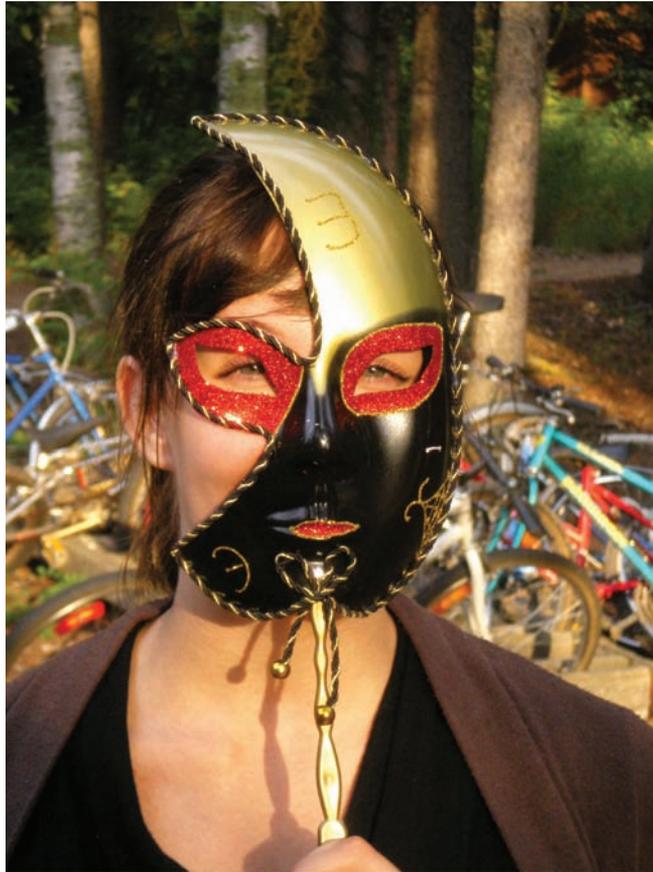
A unique new interdisciplinary course offered Art and Drama students the opportunity to examine elements of performance and artmaking through the tools of puppetry, mask, drawing, costume building and float and sculpture construction.

Alison Norlen (associate professor, Department of Art & Art History) joined forces with Natasha Martina (assistant professor, Department of Drama) to teach the advanced course, *Spectacle: Practices in Art & Drama* (Drama & Art 398.3 Special Topics). The course culminated with the creation of a dramatic and visual event, which took place Nov. 3 in the Bowl, and an installation/exhibition at the Snelgrove Gallery Nov. 9 to 13.

*Spectacle* began with an intensive residency at the Emma Lake Kenderdine Campus from Aug. 23 to 27. The campus, which is located 50 km north of Prince Albert, offers solitude with all the

amenities: good food in a communal dining hall overlooking the lake; a large, airy studio building; and a staff willing to help out wherever possible.

Says Norlen, "Emma Lake was the most amazing place to start a class. You are isolated together, which allows you to talk to people in a way that you can't in a structured classroom. It offers a special kind of communication, the shared experience of swatting mosquitoes together and sitting around the campfire. We even had a bear for two days."



Student participant at Emma Lake. (photo: Alexa Hainsworth)

Martina agrees. "It was a great opportunity to bring these two sets of students together to meet and begin the collaborative process."

To set the stage for the students' arrival at Emma Lake, Norlen and Martina decorated the studio with balloons, streamers, masks, marigold petals and candles, and projected dancing images on the walls. The students entered a carnival-like atmosphere alive with music and visual stimuli.

"They loved it, it looked beautiful, very transformative," said Norlen.

The intention was to bombard the class with sensory material that would help inspire their

mask-building work. Saskatoon puppeteer Krispi Lord was on hand to give a presentation to the students as they worked with puppets.

The course was a natural fit for Norlen, whose monumental mixed media drawings and sculpture reflect a fascination with the structure and meaning of theme parks, roadside attractions, circuses and carnivals worldwide.

Grants from the President's SSHRC Research Fund and the Canada Council for the Arts allowed Norlen to study the building of floats at one of the largest Samba schools in Rio

de Janeiro and also to attend Day of the Dead in Mexico. Her experience at an all-night candlelight vigil in Mexico became the inspiration for the Spectacle course. University funding also allowed her to invite Edson Campos Noqueira, a celebrated designer of floats for Rio's Carnivale and Shauna McKabe, a Canada Research Chair in Critical Theory in the Interpretation of Culture at Mt. Allison University, to speak on campus in conjunction with the course.

Martina gives Norlen full credit for coming up with the idea for the course. "Alison had the idea and approached our department (Drama). I immediately jumped at the chance, first and foremost due to its interdisciplinary nature. Second, because the idea of Spectacle can have so many different contexts within the theatrical world."



Student participant at Emma Lake. (photo: Alexa Hainsworth)

With the unique nature of this first-time course, both Martina and Norlen admitted to feeling challenged, but credited the University for fostering innovative and collaborative research and teaching.

"Interdisciplinary courses force collaboration," says Norlen. "I was not only teaching, but learning from my colleague. We were both absorbed in our research practices and came together to form and teach this very intensive workshop."

Alison Norlen's exhibition *Roller Coaster* was recently on view at the Simon Fraser University Gallery (Sept. 13 to Oct. 25, 2009). *Glimmer*

is on view at the College Galleries, U of S through Dec. 19, 2009. Natasha Martina's theatre piece *Dysmorphia* premiered in Saskatoon in 2009.



photo: AK Photo

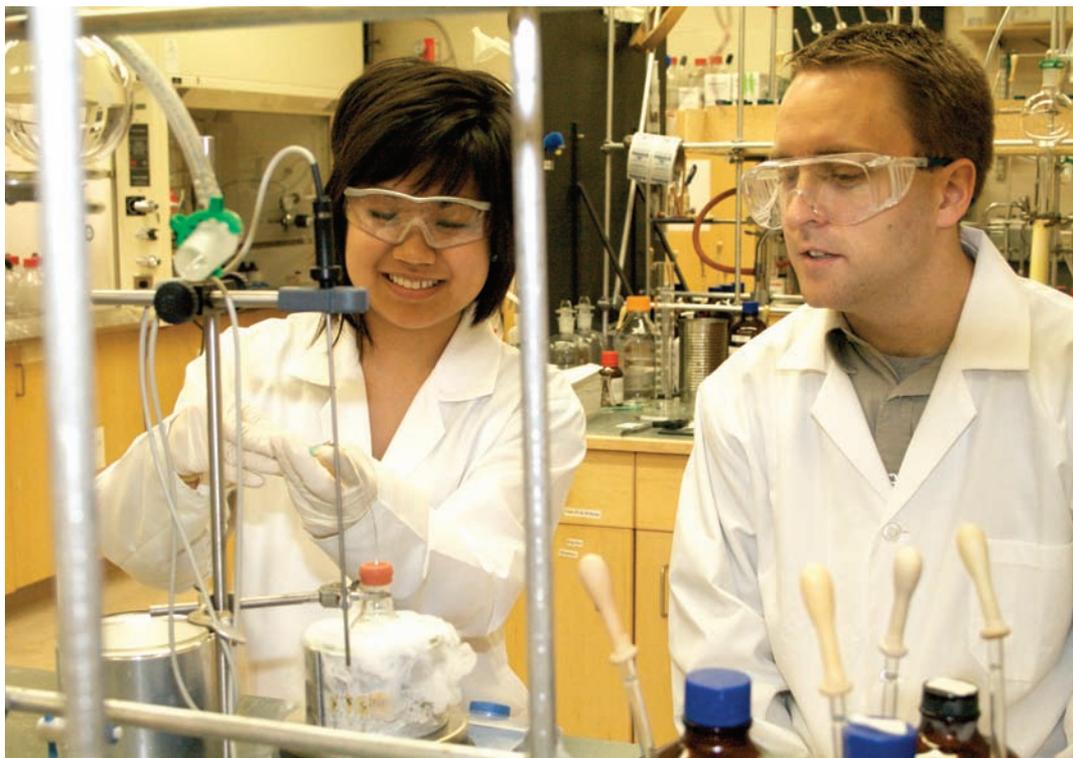
**ALISON NORLEN  
GLIMMER**

Sept. 4 - Dec. 19, 2009  
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Hours: Mon. to Fri. 11-4, Sat. 11-4:40

# Chemistry Student Wins Canada-Wide Award

BY KIRK SIBBALD



Karen Thai with Michel Gravel. (photo: Kirk Sibbald)

A burgeoning chemist selected as the lone recipient for a competitive Canada-wide award will soon be taking her research on the road as part of an initiative from Boehringer Ingelheim Corporation.

Karen Thai, a second year PhD student in the Department of Chemistry, was notified she had won the Boehringer Ingelheim Cooperative Research Award in Synthetic Chemistry earlier this year. The award provides \$20,000 in funding for three years, along with a 3-month stay at the company's research and development site in Laval, Que.

Thai said that the judging criteria for this award included one's research progress, grades and CV. The accomplishments of Thai's supervisor, assistant professor Michel Gravel, were also taken into consideration.

"After I had the chance to digest the news, I was extremely excited and honoured to be the recipient of such a prestigious award," said Thai. "Because of the external funding, I will no longer

be required to instruct four lab sessions in a year. As a result, I can devote more time to my research project."

Thai's current research focuses on hydrogen bonding catalysis by electron-poor guanidines, as well as the use of N-heterocyclic carbene catalysts in umpolung reactions.

She recently completed a manuscript describing her work on guanidine catalysts, and is the co-author of an article titled *NHC-Catalyzed Ring Expansion of Oxacycloalkane-2-carboxaldehydes: A Versatile Synthesis of Lactones*, which appeared in *Organic Letters*.

While Thai is unsure when her internship with Boehringer Ingelheim will take place, she expects it will begin next year or in early 2011.

"This unique collaboration will allow me to interact with experienced scientists and the exposure to the pharmaceutical research environment is a rare opportunity to experience industrial research first hand," she said.

Gravel joined the Department of Chemistry in 2006. His long list of research accomplishments have culminated in various awards, including two NSERC scholarships, an NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowship, and several grants from NSERC and CFI.

Donald Gilchrist is Head of the Department of Economics. His areas of specialization include Public Economics and Urban and Regional Economics.

***How does the current world-wide economic recession measure up against other historical recessions?***

This recession is about the worst in post-war history. It is the first time since 1960 that there is a decline in the world GDP (Gross Domestic Product). For Canada, this is probably the roughest one since World War II. There will not be a rapid recovery. After the events of the 1930s, policies were created to protect people that work pretty well. Employment Insurance (EI) protects workers. Welfare largely helps young mothers with kids, Old Age Security and Pension Plans help the elderly. There are lots of access issues. Today's programs can be improved, but they weren't there in the 1930s.

***How does Saskatchewan compare to other provinces in terms of economic stability and recovery?***

Saskatchewan has had a bit of a boom for the first time in a long time. A commodities boom occurred in the late 1970s; then two flat decades followed. Saskatchewan missed the yuppie boom of the 1980s...and the tech boom that occurred in the 1990s. It was only 2003 when commodities began to pick up around here. The collapse of commodity markets hits pretty hard....Commodities are very volatile. What gets missed is this volatility, spiking up or down. The peak may not be a good reference point.

***What evidence is there of the impact taking place as a result of Ottawa's stimulus packages?***

The impact of these policies is going to be long term...the federal government announces the intention to increase spending. Then it goes through Parliament. Then expenditures need to be planned, and it flows to provincial and local governments. They need to have projects ready to go....There is no guarantee that they will impact the industries and sectors most affected by the recession. It would be responsible to ensure money is well spent; we should be able to evaluate spending..

***How fast can such an economic stimulus be expected to take effect?***

Projected impacts are mostly in 2010 and 2011 actually. Government has not done a particularly good job to manage expectations. Employment Insurance (EI) has immediate effect. EI has been politicized to target some regions of the country. Expanding eligibility for people in other regions, reducing the limits on access, would help. Also, changing eligibility periods and extending the period of coverage.

***How does a stimulus take effect in the economy?***

In a recession, households cut back spending on housing and other durables—they postpone buying a new car—as well as discretionary spending, such as vacations. Businesses cut back. Exports decline if there is recession elsewhere. With a stimulus package, governments step in, create expenditures where households and private business have cut back, and then hopefully government can disentangle itself later. It will be slow to disentangle itself: deficits will run into the future, with increased spending and reduced revenues. Over the next five years, Canada will see \$160 to \$170 billion in accumulated deficits, due to lost tax revenue and increased spending. The provinces have a lot less impact. Saskatchewan can't stimulate the economy in a big way. It's a federal or international exercise.

***If we were all to start "buying local," what is the difference for the community?***

Buying local doesn't work. Well, it's a lifestyle choice. Mom and Pop stores sell stuff sourced in national and international markets, and employ local labour. So do other stores. Wages and benefits at Walmart...well, people do take those jobs and seem to like them. The farmers' market is expensive and not seasonally reliable. We live in a world; let's participate in it. As a route to prosperity, turning inward has never worked well.

***Can you explain how Canada's monetary policy has been exemplary for the rest of the world?***

We managed to avoid the sub-prime problem—we were eligible but it was too late. Some US lenders were starting to get interested in lending here. Major (Canadian) banks did not get involved. We didn't have a sub-prime problem, and didn't have to fix a sub-prime problem. We went into this with a slight surplus. We had low and stable inflation. This allowed us a fair amount of latitude. Bank of Canada's long-term policy has been to maintain a low and stable inflation rate of around 2%. I expect that will continue.

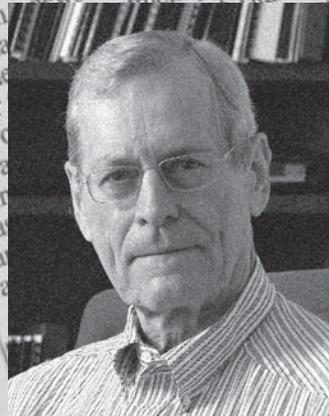
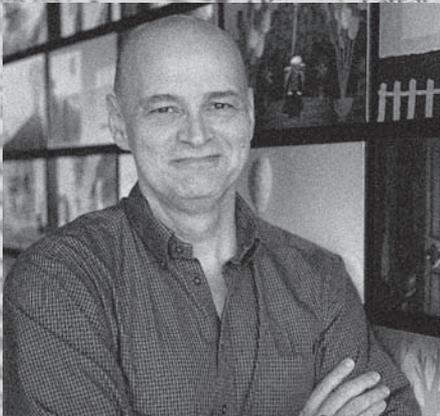
***In the average Canadian household, what are the hardships that are being experienced?***

The average household experienced job loss or income loss; their standard of living is compromised. Households also experienced wealth loss—investment portfolios were hit pretty hard, including retirement income packages. It is serious in concentrated communities.

***Can you offer any advice?***

My advice is don't panic; keep your head. Extending the date of retirement is not a bad long-term strategy. These days people are healthy, and mentally and physically able to contribute (in their later years.)

# Arts & Science Briefs



Left: Darwyn Peachy (submitted); centre: James Till (submitted); right: Mary Longman, *The Hills Never Lie*, 2009, 3-D Lenticular image.

## Alumni Inducted to Innovators Hall of Fame

The W. Brett Wilson Centre for Entrepreneurial Excellence inducted two Arts & Science alumni into its new Innovators Hall of Fame on Oct. 22.

James Till (BA '52, MA '54), conducted groundbreaking work in the 1960s that demonstrated the existence of stem cells and their capacity for self-renewal. In the 1980s, his professional focus shifted to

cancer therapies, quality of life issues and research ethics.

Darwyn Peachy (BSc '78, MSc '83), has worked with Pixar Animation Studios since 1988. In 1993, Peachy and six co-workers won an Academy Award for developing Renderman software, widely used in the visual effects and animation industries.

For more information on the Wilson Centre, please visit [www.usask.ca/wilsoncentre](http://www.usask.ca/wilsoncentre).

## Mary Longman Exhibits New Work at Mendel Art Gallery

A solo exhibition of new work by Mary Aski-piyewiskwew Longman (Art & Art History) is on view at the Mendel Art Gallery from Sept. 25, 2009 to Jan. 10, 2010. Longman is a leading Canadian artist known nationally for her poetic, large scale sculptures based on Aboriginal historical and contemporary issues.

## Brian Pratt Elected Fellow of Geological Society of America

Brian Pratt (Geological Sciences) has been elected to the Geological Society of America (GSA). One of the largest geoscience societies in the world, the GSA bestows about 50 fellowships annually based on scholarly achievement and service to the society. Pratt is a member of the GSA council and on the editorial board of its main journal. He was recognized at the 2009 GSA Annual Meeting Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony in Portland, Oregon, in October.

## Grad Student Awarded Scholarship for Geriatric Research

Nicole Haugrud, a PhD student in Clinical Psychology, has received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarship, a doctoral award of \$35,000 per year for three years.

Working with supervisor Margaret Crossley, Haugrud has been collaborating with Computer Science graduate student Craig Thompson to design a computer program that could help to identify early-stage

dementia by better analyzing verbal fluency tests.

Haugrud has been an active participant with the CIHR New Emerging Team (NET) on Cognitive Aging, led by Debra Morgan, professor in the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture. She recently completed a practicum at the Rural and Remote Memory Clinic, established by the NET to better address the needs of Saskatchewan's aging rural population, including aboriginal seniors.

# Arts & Science Briefs



Braj Sinha (photo by Kirk Sibbald)

## Sinha Receives Internationalization Award

Braj Sinha, head of the Department of Religion and Culture, received the University's George Ivany Internationalization Award during Fall Convocation at the end of October.

Sinha joined the College in 1986, and has been a catalyst for international partnerships ever since. He has been a central figure in the development and delivery of courses in Asian religions, cultures and languages, and has also promoted collaborations between the U of S and several post-secondary institutions overseas.

Numerous Study Abroad programs have been made possible through Sinha's efforts, particularly in India and China. Indeed, his work has proved beneficial to not only students, faculty and staff in the College of Arts & Science, but for the U of S as a whole.

"The University is moving to take advantage of the rapidly expanding opportunities in India, and is able to truly benefit from Professor Sinha's years of hard work and network-building between Canada and India," wrote Bob Stock, the College's International Liaison Officer, who nominated Sinha for this award.



Left: Larry Fowke (photo by Kirk Sibbald); Right: Peter Li (photo by Betsy Rosenwald)

## Peter Li and Larry Fowke Elected to Royal Society of Canada

Two long-time professors in the College of Arts & Science have been elected to the Royal Society of Canada, considered Canada's senior academic honour.

Biologist Larry Fowke and sociologist Peter Li will be among 77 new Fellows inducted into the Society during a ceremony on Nov. 28 in Gatineau, Que.

"This is well-deserved recognition for these two distinguished individuals whose innovative research and scholarship has created new knowledge in their respective

fields, enriched student learning, and directly benefitted the nation," said Karen Chad, acting U of S vice-president of research.

Fowke, described by the RSC as "a leading world authority in cell biology," has forged an international reputation during his more than three decades of experience in plant cell biology. He has won numerous honours and

awards, including the university's Distinguished Researcher Award and the Award of Innovation.

Li, described in the RSC citation as "one of the most accomplished sociologists in North America," has been with the U of S

Sociology department since 1975. His pioneering work has focused largely on race and ethnicity, Chinese Canadians and multiculturalism. He has received numerous awards related to his research, and has served as a consultant and advisor to numerous federal government departments.

Today's announcement brings to 28 the number of current and former U of S faculty who are Fellows of the RSC. After induction into the Society, Fellows are permitted to use FRSC (Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada) after their names.

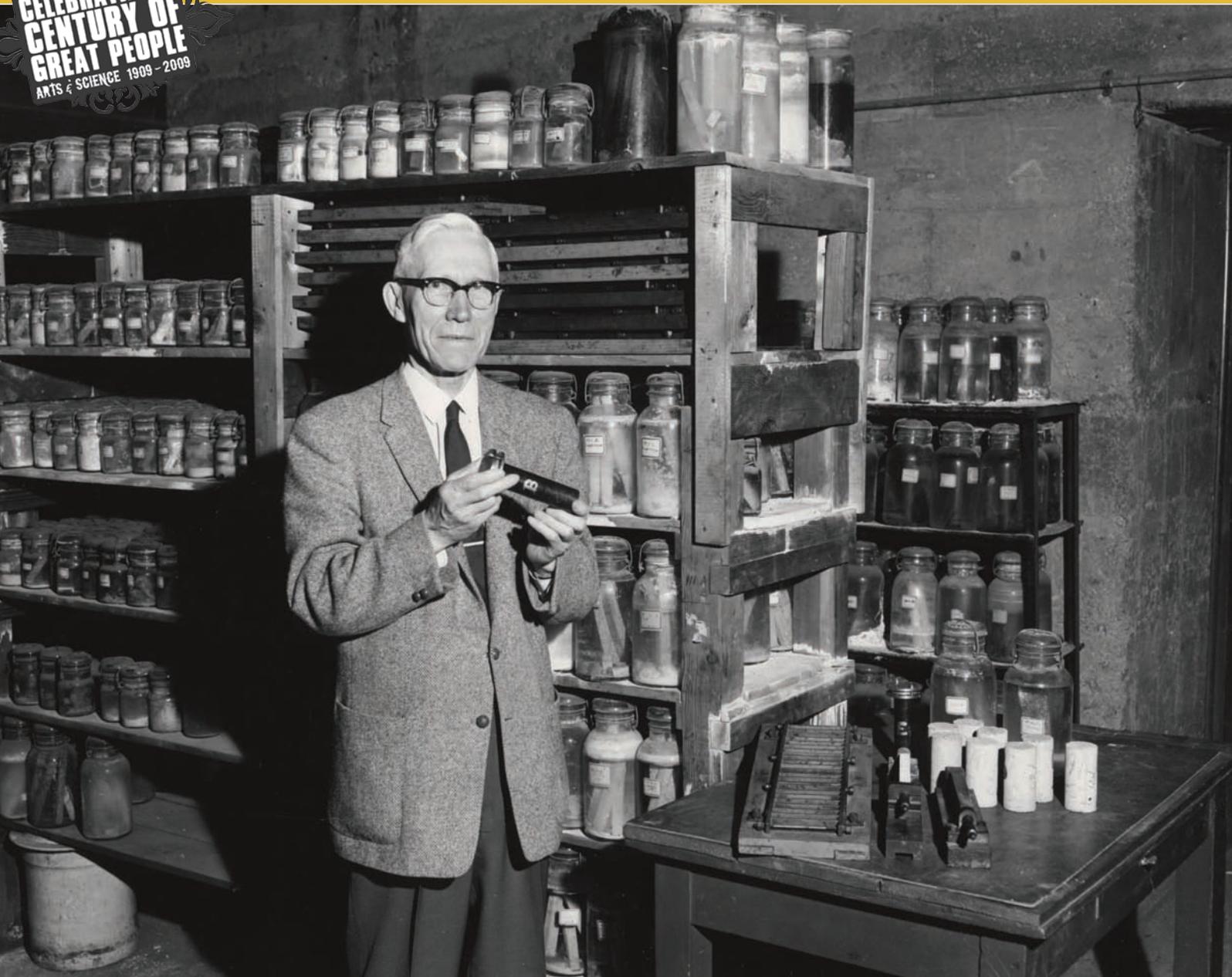
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For information or to let us know what you think of the magazine, email us at: [cdar@artsandscience.usask.ca](mailto:cdar@artsandscience.usask.ca).

**Editorial Advisory Board:** Naomi Kreutzweiser, Betsy Rosenwald, Kirk Sibbald

**Design:** Betsy Rosenwald **Back cover photo:** Courtesy of the University of Saskatchewan Archives (photo A-1640).



## Thorvaldson Leaves His Mark

BY UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES STAFF

On Aug. 22, 1924 the Chemistry Building was officially opened. Perhaps by coincidence, Walter Murray noted in his annual report for that year the ongoing research into decay of concrete, work which had begun years earlier as an interdisciplinary project between C.J. Mackenzie, Dean of Engineering, and Thorbergur Thorvaldson, head of the Department of Chemistry.

The deterioration and failure of concrete structures had been a growing cause for concern throughout Western Canada. Research at the University determined that sulphates in alkaline ground water were causing the deterioration and, for the next decade, Thorvaldson and his graduate students researched means of prevention. The results of their work changed the manufacturing of commercial cement and significantly increased the durability of concrete structures.

In his annual report for 1952, President W.P. Thompson noted Thorvaldson's "remarkable capacity as a scientist," and praised his contributions: "Many of the problems solved by his wide knowledge and experimental ability have been directly related to economic improvement, and the value of his researches could be computed in amounts considerably greater than have been spent on the construction and maintenance of the University during its entire history. He has built up a Department of Chemistry that has carried the fame of the University wherever his students have gone."

In the fall of 1966 the Chemistry Building, including a planned addition, was renamed the Thorvaldson Building. The official opening of the addition and the dedication were held in June 1966, eight months after Thorvaldson's death.