

# LASN News

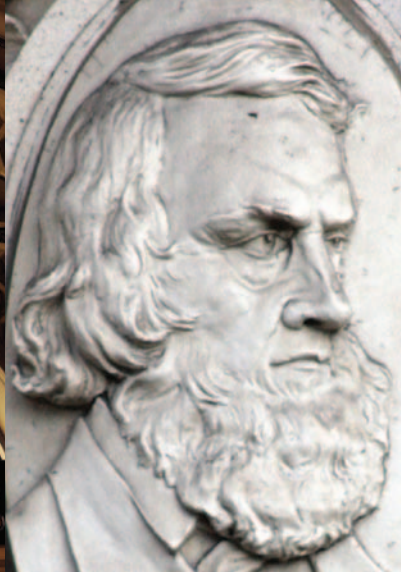
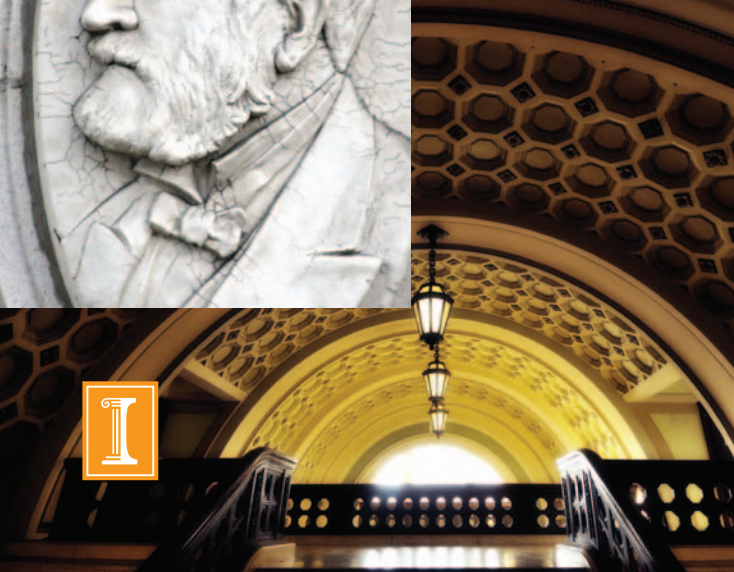
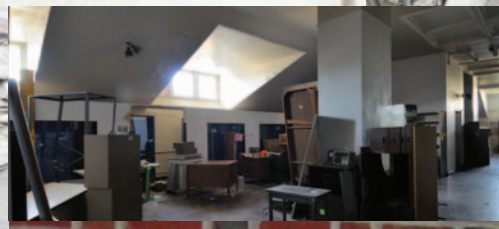
FALL 2009

NOT HALLOW THIS GROUND. T  
AD WHO STRUGGLED HERE HA  
E OUR POOR POWER TO ADD OF  
TTLE NOTE NOR LONG REMEM  
CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY  
IVING RATHER TO BE DEDICATED  
WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT I

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



## THE MANY FACES OF LINCOLN HALL A HISTORY



- The Bourne Reality
- Economic Development by Motorbike
- Shipwrecked
- High Noon for the News
- Emmet Till at the Crossroads
- The Michael Vick Case



FALL 2009

**News 1**

**The Bourne Realty 3**

Amnesia research unlocks mysteries of people lost in time.

**Economic Development by Motorbike 4**

Economics professor applies unconventional methods to Third World problems.

**Shipwrecked 6**

HMS Fowey case still sends ripples through courts today.

**High Noon for the News 8**

Robert McChesney thinks government can save the news—but not without a fight.

**The Many Faces of Lincoln Hall: A History 10**

Few buildings have served the University of Illinois as long and with as many purposes as the ever-evolving Lincoln Hall.

**Emmet Till at the Crossroads 16**

Why an apology may help heal our nation. Journalist and U of I professor Christopher Benson reflects on what Mamie Till-Mobley taught him about reconciliation.

**Around the College 18**

**The Michael Vick Case 20**

LAS alum helps rescue dogs from canine fight club.

*On the cover:* As the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences prepares for the restoration of Lincoln Hall, we pause to reflect on its storied past. (Photos by Thompson-McClellan, Chris Brown, and courtesy of U of I Archives and U of I Facilities and Services.)

**Lincoln Hall Restoration Will Reaffirm Core Values**



This July came the welcome and long-awaited news that funding for the restoration of Lincoln Hall has been included in the state's capital budget. Anyone who has taken classes in this bustling center of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences—as virtually every University of Illinois alum has—knows that the nearly century-old landmark desperately needs not only to be restored to its original beauty and functionality, but also upgraded to a 21st-century learning environment. There is much to do before we open the next chapter in Lincoln Hall's history, but we're certain that this memorial to one of America's greatest presidents will soon resume its role as one of the University's most vital intellectual centers where bright young leaders are prepared for an unprecedented era.

When Lincoln Hall opened in 1911, educators were preparing students for an expanding society, one in which ideas and innovations were rapidly escalating and learning opportunities for high-ability individuals from all backgrounds were increasing. It's humbling to realize that today, while our state of knowledge is more advanced, we're still teaching students to succeed in an ever-evolving world through critical thought, deep understanding of complex issues, and diverse viewpoints. We maintain the land-grant ideal of access for high achieving students. The means may have changed, but not our goals. While the original builders encouraged students to think beyond campus by adding museums to Lincoln Hall, we will encourage the same by equipping classrooms with "smart technology" to efficiently link our scholars and students to a world of ideas.

Yet the renovations will respect our heritage. Lincoln Hall's most historically significant features—the exterior panels depicting Abraham Lincoln's life and quotes, the marble foyer, the theater, detailing in the halls and classrooms—will be restored. The original designers sought to inspire future generations, and so do we.

As the restoration begins this winter I encourage you to follow its progress. After all, it was all of our words and encouragement that finally convinced our elected leaders to usher our dream so close to reality. It's time to be grateful for what has been accomplished, and soon it will be time to celebrate a new beginning in our educational mission.

*Ruth V. Watkins*

Ruth Watkins, *Dean*  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**LAS News** Fall 2009

**Editor**  
Holly Korab  
**Copy Editor**  
Holly Rushakoff  
**Art Director**  
John Bonadies  
**Graphic Designer**  
Gina Manola

**Contributing Writers**  
Laura Weisskopf Bleill,  
Dave Evensen, Doug Peterson

**Office of the Dean**  
Ruth V. Watkins, Dean  
Philip Best, Associate Dean, Biological, Physical, and Social/Behavioral Sciences  
Karen Carney, Associate Dean, Humanities and Interdisciplinary Programs  
Barbara Hancin-Bhatt, Assistant Dean and Director, International Programs  
Ann Mester, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Education and Curriculum, Area Studies Center  
Paul Osterhout, Associate Dean, Office of Advancement  
Deanna Raineri, Associate Dean, Applied Technologies for Learning in the Arts and Sciences  
Mary Macmanus Ramsbottom, Associate Dean, Student Academic Affairs  
Matthew Tomaszewski, Assistant Dean, Facilities and Space  
Carol Wakefield, Director, Budget Resource Planning

LAS News is published twice annually for alumni and friends of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Office of Advancement, 2111 S. Oak St., Suite 100, Champaign, Illinois 61820, (217) 333-7108. The college also publishes a monthly electronic newsletter, *LAS News Online*, which is published during the academic year. Please direct all inquiries about either publication to the editor at [laseditor@illinois.edu](mailto:laseditor@illinois.edu) or at the above address.

**LAS Alumni Association Board**  
Mary E. Slater, Senior Director of LAS Alumni Relations and Special Events  
Eugene N. Hamilton, President  
Peggy J. Ruff, Vice President  
Scott E. Rice, Director-at-Large  
**Members**  
Charles J. Biro, Michael K. Brandt, Alice O. Faron, Gary J. Greenspan, David H. Hays, Erika L. Jones, Walter W. Kurczewski, Jerrold M. Levy, Cheryl A. Warzynski; David G. Goese, student representative

Copyright © 2009 Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

[www.las.illinois.edu](http://www.las.illinois.edu)

**A CRYSTAL CLEAR SOLUTION**

**RESEARCHERS RECEIVE COLLABORATION AWARD FOR PHARMACEUTICAL TECHNOLOGY**

It was a multimillion-dollar mistake. Several years back, a major pharmaceutical company had just put a new drug on the shelves after completely following a process approved by the Food and Drug Administration. But a few months after the drug was in stores, its properties began to change on the shelf in totally unexpected ways. The product was pulled, and by the time they could put the drug back in production, the ordeal had cost the company hundreds of millions of dollars.

University of Illinois researchers, working with the pharmaceutical industry, have since developed procedures that decrease the likelihood of such disasters; and as a result, they were recently awarded the 2009 Collaboration Success Award from the Council for Chemical Research.

The U of I team, led by Richard Braatz, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering, focused on the crystallization process, one of the most challenging steps in the production of pharmaceuticals. As Braatz explains, most drugs are sold in a crystallized form because it tends to be the most stable and cheapest method for drug delivery. Essentially, a tablet consists of drug crystals and other ingredients compacted into the shape of a pill.

During the crystallization process, impurities are removed; however, the process is very sensitive to many factors and can be affected by small amounts of contaminants. Also, when a drug's production is scaled up, the crystals can be affected if the mixing is not done ideally during processing.

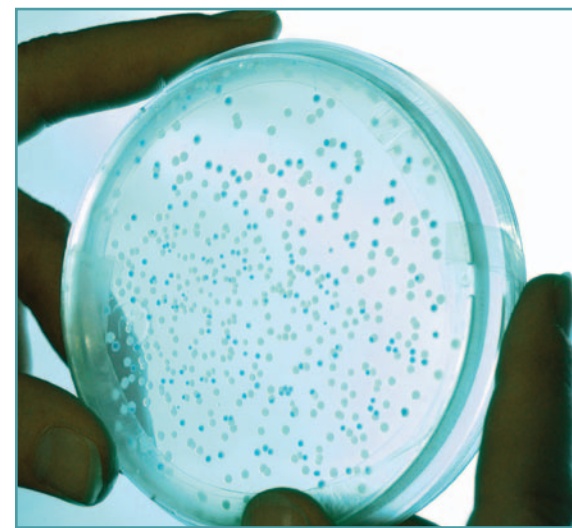
Braatz, along with a team of eight students and postdocs, worked with Merck and Co. researchers to design a set of procedures and statistical methods that made it possible to get very high accuracy in analyzing crystallization processes using real-time, in-process infrared spectroscopy and laser-based, particle-sizing sensor technology. This information was then used to design and control processes for manufacturing crystals with the desired properties.

"The technology helps you get the right purity, the right crystal structure, and the right particle size distribution," Braatz says.

In fact, their technology was so successful with Merck that several other companies quickly came on board. The FDA now recognizes it as state-of-the-art technology. Braatz's work with Merck has since concluded, but he continues to refine the process technologies in collaboration with a consortium of pharmaceutical companies.

As for the multimillion-dollar mistake, Braatz says it never would have happened if the company had fully understood the chemistry of their system.

"Our technology makes the crystallization process purer, safer, and faster," he says.

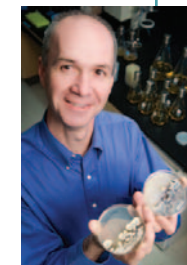


**Research Team Uncovers New Antibiotics in Unexplored Class of Compounds**

For every star in the universe, there are 1 billion bacteria here on earth. In the human body alone, you can find 10 times more bacterial cells than there are total human cells in the body.

"The number is so big that I can't even wrap my mind around it," says LAS microbiology professor William Metcalf, who has long been fascinated with the chemical warfare continuously taking place among bacteria. Now, he and his fellow University of Illinois researchers are looking for ways to tap into this chemical warfare and use it against a variety of medical threats, from malaria to cancer.

The U of I team is tapping into the genetics that guide bacteria to create antibiotics from a little-known class of compounds called phosphonates. It's part of a \$7 million, five-year effort to find medical uses for phosphonates.



**New Brazilian Studies Institute Positions Illinois to Be a National Leader**

As Brazil emerges as one of the world's largest, most vibrant economies, University of Illinois is staging its own emergence—as home to one of the most comprehensive programs dedicated to understanding this new powerhouse.

With a \$14 million gift from Jorge Paulo Lemann and family, of Jona, Switzerland, and Sao Paulo, Brazil, U of I will become home to the new Lemann Institute of Brazilian Studies. The Lemann Institute will build upon the University's existing programs and initiatives related to Brazil to create one of the leading Brazilian studies programs in the nation.

"Our gift stems from our appreciation of the University's contribution in attracting an increasing number of talented Brazilians and in enhancing their education," says Lemann. "They, in turn, positively affect Brazilian development and society, as evidenced by the number of Illinois graduates in important jobs throughout Brazil. The creation of the institute will build on these efforts."

Funds from the gift will support an endowed professorship and lectureship, scholarly exchanges with researchers in Brazil, and will expand the opportunities for students and faculty to study and conduct research in Brazil on any aspect of Brazilian culture and society. The institute also will offer graduate and professional training opportunities as well as support conferences.

## English Professor Wins Recognition for Poetry



For the second time in less than a year, an English professor from the University of Illinois has received a national award for poetry. Janice N. Harrington received one of the six 2009 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Awards, which are

awarded annually to female writers who "demonstrate excellence and promise in the early stages of their careers."

The award was established in 1995 by novelist Rona Jaffe (1931-2005) to honor female writers of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

"Rona Jaffe's legacy is the real story," says Harrington. "She's enabled women to pursue their goals as artists. The award is not only an honor, but also a challenge to meet Jaffe's high standard, and to make a difference in the lives of others."

The award brings with it a \$25,000 prize, which Harrington will use to finish *Night Shift*, a collection of poems based on her experience working as a nurse's aide in nursing homes in Nebraska. She also is working on a poetry manuscript on Horace H. Pippin, an African American folk artist who created his work in the 1930s and '40s.

Harrington's first book of poems, *Even the Hollow My Body Made is Gone*, was published in 2007. It received the A. Poulin Jr. Poetry Prize in 2006 and the 2008 Kate Tufts Discovery Award.

Her poetry also has appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Field*, *Harvard Review* and other journals. Her work has been supported by fellowships from Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Cave Canem and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Conservationists Push to Protect a Symbol of Racial Tolerance



A lost town in Illinois that's become a symbol of racial tolerance has a more certain future now that a conservation group plans to acquire some of its most historically significant plots.

The Archaeological Conservancy has agreed to purchase nine acres of land in the vanished town of New Philadelphia, a historical site near the Missouri border that has been studied by U of I researchers for years. The area is currently held in a land trust.

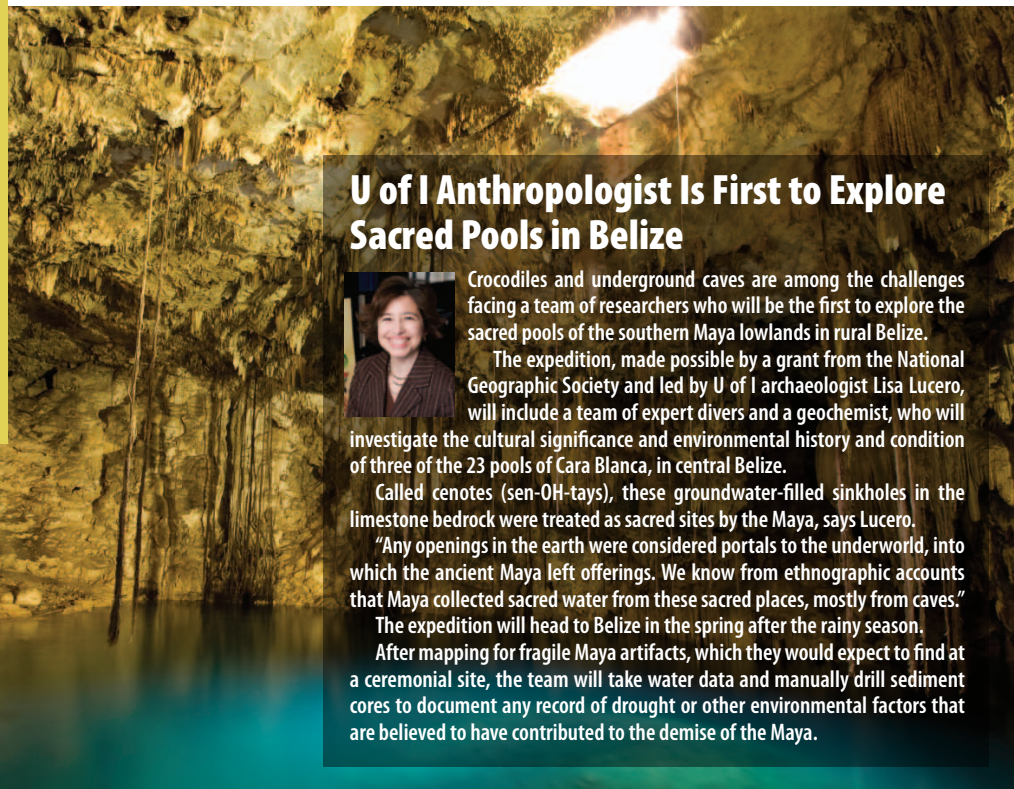
Anthropology professor and archaeologist Chris Fennell says the Conservancy plans to purchase "downtown" New Philadelphia, where archaeological digs have re-of homes and businesses. The assist in conserving this ex-source and further facilitating New Philadelphia," says Fennell. population 160) was founded in

vealed a concentration acquisition "will greatly exceptional historical re-future development of

The town (peak 1836 by Frank McWorter, a former slave who bought freedom for himself and his family. The settlement later served as home to a mix of free African Americans and whites who lived at peace with each other within a region marked by racial strife.

New Philadelphia faded away after it was bypassed by a new railroad in 1869, but archaeologists have excavated tens of thousands of artifacts providing insights into the daily life of biracial communities at the time.

The town is on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, and in January 2009 it was named a National Historic Landmark. A current U.S. Senate bill (S. 1629) would authorize the U.S. National Park Service to study the feasibility of making New Philadelphia a national historical park.



## U of I Anthropologist Is First to Explore Sacred Pools in Belize



Crocodiles and underground caves are among the challenges facing a team of researchers who will be the first to explore the sacred pools of the southern Maya lowlands in rural Belize.

The expedition, made possible by a grant from the National Geographic Society and led by U of I archaeologist Lisa Lucero, will include a team of expert divers and a geochemist, who will

investigate the cultural significance and environmental history and condition of three of the 23 pools of Cara Blanca, in central Belize.

Called cenotes (sen-OH-tays), these groundwater-filled sinkholes in the limestone bedrock were treated as sacred sites by the Maya, says Lucero.

"Any openings in the earth were considered portals to the underworld, into which the ancient Maya left offerings. We know from ethnographic accounts that Maya collected sacred water from these sacred places, mostly from caves."

The expedition will head to Belize in the spring after the rainy season.

After mapping for fragile Maya artifacts, which they would expect to find at a ceremonial site, the team will take water data and manually drill sediment cores to document any record of drought or other environmental factors that are believed to have contributed to the demise of the Maya.

## THE BOURNE REALITY

### AMNESIA RESEARCH UNLOCKS MYSTERIES OF PEOPLE LOST IN TIME

By Doug Peterson

Neal Cohen still remembers his days at MIT in the early 1980s, when he would drive a patient known as HM from Connecticut to Massachusetts for testing. HM had no idea who Cohen was or why they were even in the car. That's because HM, the most famous neurological patient in the world, had one of the most severe cases of amnesia on record.

HM was 27 years old in 1953 when he underwent an experimental surgical procedure to find relief from severe epileptic seizures that struck multiple times per day. The surgery successfully controlled the seizures, but it also left him without an ability to create new enduring memories of facts and events. HM could remember his life through age 16; but as Cohen, an LAS professor, says, "He had poorer memory for the events of his life since age 16 than anyone you will ever meet."

HM passed away this past year. As for Cohen, he now directs the University of Illinois Amnesia Research Laboratory, where he has been tracking more than 20 subjects over a considerable span of time. He says the most common depictions of amnesia in pop culture are usually off base. In typical TV scenarios, people lose their sense of identity after a severe blow to the head—who they are, who they owe alimony to, or how many kids they have. But according to Cohen, "The loss of identity almost never happens after brain injury."

The main time you see a loss of identity comes from "psychogenic amnesia," the kind of amnesia that follows a severe psychological stress or horrific event. These cases are rare and the memories often return quickly, sometimes within a week, he says.

The more common amnesia cases result from structural damage to the brain. When this happens, patients don't forget who they

are, but they are unable to form new enduring memories. Take the case of Lucy (not her real name), a woman whom Cohen studied. After receiving a drive-up flu shot, Lucy had a severe allergic reaction and drove into a tree, resulting in a severe closed head injury and amnesia. She could not form new enduring memories of facts and events.



According to Cohen, Lucy devised one of the best coping plans he had ever seen. She kept meticulous notes in her memory book, which she used to record what she had done during the day as well as other vital information, such as what her car looks like.

Until she devised her system, even simple tasks such as showering could go on forever. Lucy would wash her arm, then wash her hair, and then wash her arm again because she had forgotten she already washed it. Lucy taught herself to use a laminated checklist in the shower and to use very detailed checklists at her job.

Cohen says that movies such as *The Bourne Identity* get it partly right. In the movie, after a head injury, superspy Jason Bourne loses his identity (wrong), but he retains his superspy skills (right). Cohen's research has shown that people can retain their skills and learn new skills, even when they cannot form new memories of facts and events.

In the lab, for instance, they teach computer game skills to amnesia subjects, who learn and retain these skills at the same rate as non-amnesia subjects of the same age and intelligence. But when Cohen tells amnesia subjects that they're "doing great, an improvement over yesterday," they inevitably respond in puzzlement by saying, "I came here yesterday?"

Cohen's work has been key to showing that our brain is organized into multiple memory systems, and that damage to certain regions of the brain does not affect all types of memory. Among these systems are declarative memory (the facts and events of our lives), procedural memory (our skills), and emotional memory. Emotional memory enables us to remember fine details of certain emotional events, such as exactly what we were doing during the attacks on 9/11.

Research at the lab has also probed the vital role played by the hippocampus. Specific memories are distributed throughout the brain—the language information in one part, information about people and objects in another, spatial information in another, etc.

"The hippocampus binds these different elements together, so you can remember the whos, the whats, the whens, and in what order," he says.

"Everything about who we are and how we came to be—that is our memory at work," he adds. "We're only in the present at this moment, and then it's gone. As Tennessee Williams once said, 'Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by so quick you can hardly catch it going.'"

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY MOTORBIKE

Economics professor applies unconventional methods to Third World problems.

By Laura Weisskopf Bleill

One way for an economist to study the struggles of an impoverished nation is by toiling through mathematical formulas in a comfortable room thousands of miles away. Then there's Salim Rashid's way, which includes leaving his desk and buzzing on a motorcycle through cyclone-ravaged plains and forests in Bangladesh.

Rashid, who joined the University of Illinois faculty in 1981, visits Bangladesh—a south Asian nation of 150 million people that is roughly the size of Illinois—once a year in a mission to steer his native country away from what he considers a disastrous path. As housing devours more than 1 percent of Bangladesh's agricultural land each year, the population is projected to skyrocket to 250 million by the year 2100.

"What I've been doing over the last 10 years is going back and repeatedly trying to emphasize this point," he says. "You have to think 30 years ahead and then bring that backwards in order to get something effective happening. You can't just look at the current budget and the next year's budget and the next year's budget and think that just because Bangladesh

has staved off disaster for the last 50 years it will necessarily stave off disaster in the future."

This is a good point in which to define Rashid. He grew up as the son of a bureaucrat in what was then East Pakistan (which became Bangladesh in 1971). His family was middle class but spared no effort or expense on education, and Rashid eventually left home to study at the London School of Economics.

Though trained as a mathematical economist, he whispers that over the years he evolved into "an outlier." That is, Rashid deems the mathematical models that developed into the bed-

**"You can't just look at the current budget and the next year's budget and think that just because Bangladesh has staved off disaster for the last 50 years it will necessarily stave off disaster in the future."**

rock of modern economics as inadequate in tackling real issues. He believes that intangibles—values in particular—play a role in economics, and that economic systems must be embedded within a social framework.

You cannot solve problems in a nation like Bangladesh solely through market forces, he adds, because market forces would dictate that the best people and ideas would abandon the Third World for more developed countries.

"I was taught that economics deals with real world problems, and mathematics deals with precision. So initially I thought this was a way to get a precise solution to the world's problems," he says. "As soon as I started seeing what the models actually do, I realized there was an enormous gap between real world problems and the model formulations I was producing. So I slowly started distancing myself from that area and moved into other areas where I thought I would get more insight."

He hasn't given up hope that economists can help the Third World, but he believes culture specificity is the key in evaluating and solving problems.

"That is why I work on Bangladesh, because I think I understand Bangladesh," says

Rashid. "I tell everyone else to focus on one country. Try and understand that one country and see what you can do for them. Don't make a universal model because those don't work."

Rashid's focus on Bangladesh has been extensive. In past ventures he has helped establish a private university, and has worked with the World Bank, Asian private research institutions, the Planning Commission, and other groups on monetary issues, roads, and local government infrastructure.

He recently spent his sabbatical in Bangladesh developing grass-roots support for an idea he developed and has written about called compact townships, which he believes can address the country's economic problem. He envisions creating some 7,000 of these townships in rural areas, with each one consisting of about 20,000 residents brought in voluntarily in an agglomeration of housing, schools, hospitals, and local government. The small size would enable non-motorized traffic within each.

The townships would have urban amenities—such as Internet and other communication access to conduct business—and provide safe drinking water and crucial flooding protection. This would stem migration to cities. He acknowledges that it would

be a "mammoth" undertaking, but he spots fundamental problems in all the alternative plans he's seen.

He decided to take this concept directly to the people because he felt he exhausted his connections and has not been successful influencing Bangladeshi policymakers. Rashid and some of his students traveled around asking villagers if they'd be willing to relocate



Salim Rashid, right, is seeking solutions for poverty and other social ills by combining his economic analyses with cultural understanding. He is shown here with his wife, Zeenet, and his brother, Haroun er Rashid, in Bangladesh.

to a compact township, and a survey of multiple communities revealed that up to more than 80 percent of residents would be willing.

So Rashid began talking of the disadvantages, such as paying a long-term mortgage in the new townships, and the percentage of those approving of such a drastic change dropped, but only to around 50 percent, a result that defied the "educated people and

the bureaucrats who were convinced that villagers were 'backward' and would never move," Rashid says.

"Over 30 years, Bangladesh has to reorganize its entire spatial mode of living and producing," he says. "That's my proposed solution, but regardless of whether people accept my solution or not, the important thing is that they see the problem—how do 250 million live and prosper in a land the size of Illinois?" ■

## HIGH HONORS

SPURLOCK MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

The Spurlock Museum at the University of Illinois has moved into a select circle that includes less than 5 percent of the museums in the United States. It has received accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition for a museum.

Of the nation's 17,500 museums, only 775 have received AAM accreditation, according to the association. Twenty-four museums in Illinois have received accreditation, with half of those in Chicago.

"Accreditation really gives you credibility in the museum community," says Spurlock director Wayne Pitard.

The Spurlock Museum contains about 43,000 cultural artifacts from around the world, including ancient Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Rome. The museum traces its roots to 1911, but it didn't move into its own state-of-the-art facility until 2002. This new building, which features five permanent galleries and one gallery that changes twice per year, is what made accreditation a possibility.

Accreditation "makes it more likely that you can bring in higher-quality visiting exhibits," adds Pitard. "It simply makes us much more visible around the state and country."



*The Fowey sank in 1748, but when it was discovered in the 1980s, legal issues about claims to shipwrecks came rising to the surface.*



# Shipwrecked

HMS FOWEY CASE STILL SENDS RIPPLES THROUGH COURTS TODAY

By Doug Peterson

Russell Skowronek recalls the day in the early 1980s when his Florida State University team was unloading a cannon recovered from the shipwrecked HMS *Fowey* in Biscayne Bay, just south of Miami. As they hoisted the 2,000-pound cannon onto the dock, a local man sidled up to him and growled, “By all rights, that belongs to us.”

The next day, when Skowronek’s team returned to the shipwreck, they found that someone had dragged an anchor across their archaeological site, ripping apart the rope grid they had set up, and wrenching from the seabed parts of the ship that had been preserved for almost 240 years.

Such confrontations have not been unusual for Skowronek, a 1979 LAS alumnus in anthropology who has even been shot at over

disputes with treasure hunters. Skowronek was one of the leaders of the Florida State team that explored the *Fowey* and defended the government’s claim to the vessel, which sank in 1748. He says this landmark case continues to influence underwater jurisdiction cases today, including the recent battle over the shipwrecked HMS *Victory*, which is believed to hold up to 500,000 gold and silver coins.

The *Fowey* was a British man-of-war captained by 24-year-old Francis William Drake, a descendant of the more famous British captain, Francis Drake. During his court martial, the young Drake claimed that poor maps were the reason they blundered onto the reef where the ship sunk. Skowronek believes Drake’s famous name probably kept the captain

from being court-martialed, although he was relegated to a much smaller ship.

Skowronek and George Fischer explain the dramatic history of the ship in their just-published book, *HMS Fowey: Lost and Found*.

Prior to the discovery of the *Fowey* in the 1980s, Skowronek says abandoned wrecks were claimed on an informal finders-keepers basis. But that all changed with the *Fowey*, which was originally claimed by a Florida man who stumbled upon the ship in 30 feet of water in Biscayne National Park.

“Even though there were laws going back to Teddy Roosevelt about historic things found on government property, underwater jurisdiction was always cloudy,” says Skowronek, who was a



Russell Skowronek

graduate student at Florida State at the time of the ship’s discovery. Because he had studied the laws of the sea during his undergraduate years at the University of Illinois, he was brought onto the project and eventually led the recovery of artifacts on the *Fowey*. Today, he is with Santa Clara University in California, specializing in the Spanish colonial world.

The *Fowey* case concluded that the ship belonged to the government; and this decision set the precedent for the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987, which stipulated that if an abandoned shipwreck found in U.S. waters is not claimed by a sovereign nation, the ship’s title goes to the individual state—Florida, for example.

As Skowronek sees it, pilfering artifacts from a wreck is like “taking things from the Parthenon.”

The Florida man who discovered the *Fowey* never lived to hear the results of the court case, for he was murdered during a hold-up at his wife’s restaurant. But Skowronek says the man’s friends were upset by the court’s decision in favor of the government, setting the stage for the confrontation over the cannon.

In another case, Skowronek was part of a team exploring a wreck at the end of the Florida

Keys when bullets started whizzing overhead, and they threw themselves flat on the deck. A treasure hunter on a nearby boat claimed it



While hunting for artifacts along the sandy bottom, 30 feet below the surface, Skowronek and his team had to be on the lookout for stingrays and sharp objects.

was an accident and that he was shooting at sharks. But Skowronek recalls that officials told the treasure hunter, “It’s interesting that you were shooting at sharks, but the bullets are going over the government boat out there.”

Skirmishes with treasure hunters are only part of the occupational hazards for researchers such as Skowronek. He has spotted hammerhead sharks, an aggressive species, and in one case he was on the bottom, exploring the *Fowey* wreck, when a huge shadow passed overhead. Thinking it was a boat, Skowronek glanced up to see a giant manta ray, with a span of 20 feet, passing over him.

In another case, he was descending down a water column, trying to fix his air regulator, when he finally glanced down and saw that he was about to land right on top of a stingray.

“It’s amazing how you can kick your legs hard enough to overcome gravity when you see an angry animal,” he says.

Skowronek and his team often found themselves on their hands and knees on the ocean bottom, looking for artifacts in the sand, so they always had to be care-

ful—especially since, as he puts it, “It seemed that every stingray came to mate in the sand” near the wreck.

Skowronek’s team uncovered cannons, cutlasses, guns, and more from the *Fowey*, but his most memorable discovery came when he spotted something small, about two inches long and coated in coralline growth, sticking out of the sandy bottom.

“As I began to fan away the sand, the thing kept getting longer and longer, and I’m sucking air down, trying not to hyperventilate,”

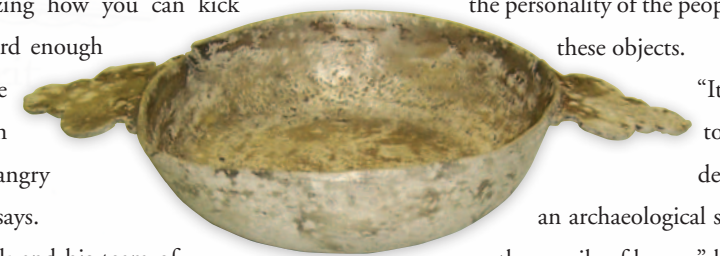


Skowronek’s research team uncovered a treasure trove of artifacts from the *Fowey*, everything from cannons and cutlasses to plates, cups, and bayonets.

he recalls. Before long, he had uncovered an 18-inch-long bayonet still encased in a remarkably well-preserved leather scabbard.

“I’ve gone to London to the National Archives a couple of times, and I know the names of the marines who served on this ship,” he says. “So when I look at an artifact, I know this was personally used by one of those men. It feels as if I’m reaching into the past and bringing out the personality of the people through these objects.”

“It allows me to better understand that an archaeological site is more than a pile of bones,” he adds. “It puts a face on these people. It allows me to understand the real story.” ■





Robert McChesney thinks government can save the news—but not without a fight.

By Dave Evensen

**A**re you ready for another big bailout? If you're like many Americans—that is, fists clenched at the very thought—give Robert McChesney a chance to explain. In short, democracy needs journalism, says the influential media scholar and activist, and journalism desperately needs a life-preserver.

Keep him in proper perspective. McChesney has worked in the news business, but he left that career long ago to study the industry as a historian; now he's one of its most scathing critics. McChesney, the Gutsell Endowed Professor in the Department of Communication, describes American news with words and phrases such as “an abject failure,” “tepid,” “weak-kneed,” and “an antidemocratic force.”

News outlets have been acquired by giant corporations “determined to generate the same sort of return from them that they received from their film, music, and amusement park divisions,” he writes. “This meant laying off reporters, closing down bureaus, using more free PR material, emphasizing inexpensive trivial stories, focusing on news of interest to desired upscale consumers and investors....”

On this subject you could spend days reading his writings, viewing his videos, or listening to his commentary—the “dean of media historians,” as one colleague describes him, has written or edited 17 books and written 150 journal articles or book chapters—but suffice it to say McChesney makes a thorough case that American journalism took a wrong turn in the mid-19th century when newspapers resorted to advertising for revenue. They were previously largely funded by enormous government subsidies (newspapers accounted for 90 percent of U.S. mail in the 1830s, but thanks to subsidies they provided only 15 percent of mail revenue).

“Our founders understood that press was so foundational to having a Constitutional system that it was the first duty of the state to guarantee you had a viable press,” McChesney says. “There was no sense that you turned it over to rich people and hoped you got lucky. That wasn't the thinking until rich people started making money at it.”

If this viewpoint reminds you of, say, corporate critic and former presidential candidate Ralph Nader (a recent guest on McChesney's radio show), you're not alone. McChesney draws similar response. Critics have called

his ideas “naïve” and “Marxoid” (he did in fact co-edit the independent socialist magazine *Monthly Review* from 2000 to 2004, a fact he proudly includes in his curriculum vitae), and in 2006 prominent conservative author David Horowitz included McChesney in his book, “*The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*.”

Yet McChesney's ideas also resonate deeply, and for reason. You'd be hard-pressed to find an opponent whose criticism has stumped McChesney, and people fed up with the American way of news look to McChesney for leadership. He is co-founder and former president of Free Press, a national media reform organization with 600,000 members, and his 2000 book *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communications in Dubious Times* still receives awards. He's made 500 conference appearances or guest lectures, appeared on TV and radio more than 600 times, and hosts “Media Matters,” a weekly radio program on NPR-affiliate WILL-AM radio. In 2008 *Utne Reader* called McChesney one of “50 visionaries changing the world.”

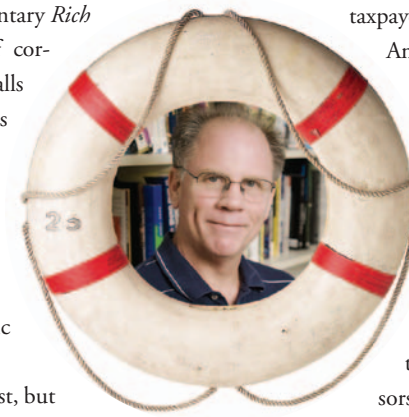
Mark Crispin Miller, professor of media ecology at New York University, appeared with McChesney in the documentary *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, detailing the influence of corporations upon news coverage. Crispin Miller calls McChesney a “dedicated public intellectual” who “has done far more than anybody else to help us understand the close interrelationship between democracy and media.”

McChesney's commentary and study of media history has helped people understand that you can't have democracy without a media set up in the public interest, Crispin Miller says.

“Bob's work is not just of immense historical interest, but provides the basis of a very powerful critique of the commercial media system now in place—a system that is now collapsing, making Bob's work timelier than ever,” Crispin Miller says.

That means McChesney has a lot of listeners—sympathetic or not—in this watershed moment. Newspapers are downsizing or closing, journalists are being laid off, and newspaper advertising revenue was down by 25 percent in 2008. Increasingly, government business is going unreported or underreported, and the rise of bloggers can't possibly fill the void left by full-time journalists, McChesney says. He believes the country is facing a democratic emergency.

“Now that advertisers, for a variety of reasons, have found more effective ways to reach audiences or regard journalism not as effective as other methods, they're jumping ship,” McChesney says. “While some will say some advertising will remain, it won't be sufficient to bankroll the caliber press system that our society needs at a local and national level.”



In a March 2009 article in *The Nation* and in a new book set to be released in September, McChesney and his colleague, John Nichols, proposed a three-year, \$60 billion economic stimulus for journalism, including eliminating postal rates for periodicals that garner less than 20 percent of revenues from advertising.

In return, publications would make at least 90 percent of their content free to access online. The plan also calls for funding a student newspaper and low-power FM radio station at every middle school, high school and college, to increase young people's connection with the industry.

“The last thing I'm interested in is bailing out the same companies that destroyed journalism in this country,” he says. “We want to urge them to continue the process of getting out of journalism before they wreck it any further.”

Free speech advocates, however, and even some in the news industry, oppose the idea for fear that government intervention could lead to censorship or jeopardizing journalists' independence. “The cost to the American

taxpayer would be at least \$60 billion, but the cost for the First Amendment and our democracy would be incalculable,” responds Adam Thierer, senior fellow and director of Center for Digital Media Freedom, in *City Journal*.

Mike Reed, chief executive of GateHouse Media Inc., tells Reuters in a recent story that the industry must reinvent its business model. “That's not really the government's problem,” he says.

McChesney counters that there won't be much news industry left to argue over if nothing is done. He adds that government intervention doesn't necessarily mean censorship, as shown in the 1800s, when subsidies were available to any newspaper despite its political slant.

“We're in a deep crisis, and the sort of ideology that freedom of the press means that government does absolutely nothing about journalism, even to create positive institutions and funding for journalism, that's not very productive,” he says.

There has been some movement toward intervention. Both the U.S. Senate and House have held recent hearings on the issue (McChesney's colleague, Nichols, testified in the House), and U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin, of Maryland, introduced legislation to allow newspaper organizations to become not-for-profit organizations. McChesney feels the crisis is so profound that some kind of government intervention may come within months.

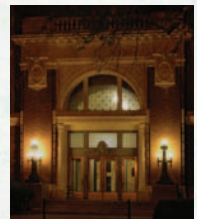
“Crises also force some kind of resolution,” McChesney says. “The lingering problems that have been growing for decades have to get resolved one way or the other and I think we can come out of this with the best journalism this country has ever had.” ■

# High Noon for the News



# THE MANY FACES OF LINCOLN HALL A HISTORY

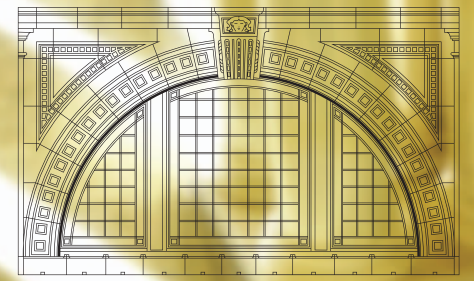
*By Dave Evensen*



Few buildings have served the University of Illinois as long and with as many purposes as the ever-evolving Lincoln Hall. Opened in 1911, and expanded in 1929, the four-story building on the southwest corner of the Quad has held theater productions, history museums, libraries, and offices for faculty and staff. Virtually every student who attends the University takes at least one class in the building.

The much-needed restoration that begins this winter will ensure that this memorial to one of the greatest U.S. presidents continues to serve the many needs of campus. It also will uphold Lincoln Hall's noble and colorful history.

A GIFT FOR THE AGES  
THE LINCOLN HALL  
RESTORATION PROJECT



A LEGACY HONORED. A FUTURE PRESERVED.

I HOLD THAT IN CONTEMPORARY  
UNIVERSAL LAW AND OF THE  
THE UNION OF THESE STATES

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

## THE NAMES BEHIND THE NAME

In 1909 the Illinois state legislature approved \$250,000 to construct a new building in an area occupied by a stand of trees northwest of Foellinger Auditorium, thus creating desperately needed study space and helping fulfill campus plans to form a Quad.

Though initially referred to as New University Hall, it was quickly changed to Lincoln to honor the late president in the centennial year of his birth as well as for his role in founding public universities.



## LEAVING CRAMPED QUARTERS BEHIND

Lincoln Hall's predecessor, University Hall, was a four-story building which stood roughly in the same spot as the Illini Union does today before the dilapidated building was torn down in 1938. Even by the early 1900s, University Hall was the object of complaints.

## A BOOST FOR THE HUMANITIES

From the beginning administrators fought to make the building a cornerstone in the study of humanities. The building initially housed seminars and libraries for studies of language, social sciences and logic, and two historical museums.

"Now is the time," President Edmund James wrote to Dean Evarts B. Greene, when the Board of Trustees was opening bids to construct and furnish Lincoln Hall, "to present the needs of the literary departments for equipment in the same sense as engineering or chemistry.... Some of our trustees here never believed that English or German or Economics needs anything for equipment. Now is your chance to drive it home... in connection with this building."

## MEMORIAL ENTRANCE HALL: FIT FOR A PRESIDENT

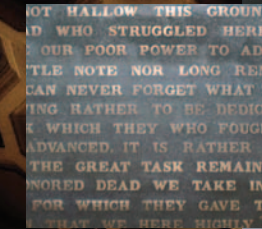
Original bids to construct Lincoln Hall were too costly, so the architects curtailed certain "ornamental considerations."

Plans for the lobby inside the Quad entrance, however, also called Memorial Entrance Hall, were left relatively intact. In a letter, President James told the architect, W. Carby Zimmerman, that the entrance should reflect the building's name. "This would give you an opportunity to do a great thing which would linger in the memory of succeeding generations."



## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

A bronze plaque bearing the Gettysburg Address hangs on the south wall of the foyer. It was originally placed in the floor but it was moved in 1955 to prevent people from walking on it.



## WRITING ON THE WALLS

The 20 quotes on the building's north and south faces were chosen initially for how they reflected an important aspect or incident in Lincoln's life, and also for their length, so the panels were uniform. Some quotes are: "Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature – Opposition to it in his love of Justice" (1854); "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." (1858). Only 10 of the quotes were inscribed by 1911. The remaining 10 were added to the north and south sides as part of the 1929 addition.

The 10 original quote panels are each flanked by two medallion portraits of men who were important in Lincoln's life. The north wall has portraits of Illinois leaders and the south wall has national leaders. The portrait shields bracketing 10 quotes added in 1929 were left blank.



## DESIGNING THE EXTERIOR: COMMEMORATING LINCOLN

Early designs called for a series of 3-foot by 9 1/2-foot terra cotta panels adorning the front and sides of Lincoln Hall that depicted Abraham Lincoln's quotes and scenes from his lifetime. Calling it a "labor of love," the American Terra Cotta and Ceramics Company of Chicago produced 10 scenic panels and 10 quote panels for \$1,000 (10 more quote panels were added in the 1929 addition).

For the 10 scenic panels, mounted between the second and third floors facing the Quad, designing artist Kristian Schneider created scenes that shaped Lincoln's life, including the Lincoln-Douglas Debate, the first inaugural address, splitting rails, and others.

The scenic panels were meant to convey the spirit of Lincoln (in three panels Lincoln doesn't even appear) as the "patient, conserving force of the man who stood strongly against public clamor for measures he believed to be right," according to an April 1912 article in *The Clay-Worker* that detailed the effort.



## EXTERIOR DEBATE

The scenic panels were not welcome at first, with faculty complaining that they "subtracted from the building's individuality and suppressed its height, and that the scenes were too shallow to see from the ground." These objections were famously dismissed by the angry company president, who said memorably: "Your professors will have to live with it."





## THE BUST OF LINCOLN

The Lincoln bust that overlooks the entranceway, its nose yellow from students rubbing it for luck before exams, did not arrive until years later. The University wanted their bust of Lincoln to resemble Gutzon Borglum's sculpture, which was displayed in the U.S. Capitol Building's main rotunda for years. However, officials were turned down by Lorado Taft, the eventual designer of the Alma Mater, who disliked the sculpture. But his friend and sculptor Hermon Atkins MacNeil had no aversions, and in 1928 his bust of Lincoln assumed the niche it has occupied ever since, except for a day in 1979 when thieves stole the bust and mounted it on a tree stump at a local golf course.



## REACHING OUT TO THE WORLD: THE MUSEUMS

In 1911 the Board of Trustees authorized the north and south wings of the fourth floor to serve as museums. The north wing contained the Museum of European Culture, and the south wing contained a Museum of Classical Archaeology and Art.

The 1911-1912 academic year was spent acquiring materials including a selection from the frieze of the Parthenon; parts of the cartonnage of an Egyptian mummy, suits of armor, early musical instruments, early church and monastery art, pottery, casts of Romanesque, Gothic, and early renaissance sculpture, a reproduction of the Magna Carta, Babylonian tablets, and more.

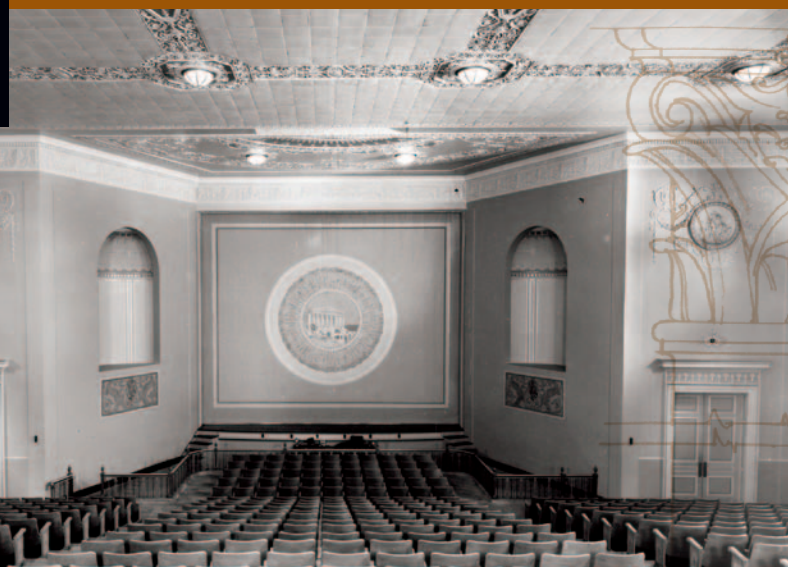
In 1918 they added the Oriental Museum, which combined with the Museum of Classical Archaeology and Art in the 1929 addition. Both museums combined in 1961 to form the Classical and European Culture Museum, and in 1971 it was renamed the World Heritage Museum. The museum relocated to the William R. and Clarice V. Spurlock Museum in 2002.

## THE "LITTLE THEATER"

James White, supervising architect on the original structure, designed the 1929 addition that doubled its size. Following calls for more centrally located classroom space, he added a large lecture hall that also served as a theater.

The "Little Theater" had stage lights and a slightly curved cyclorama extending from the back of the stage, serving as a light reflector and sounding board. The ceiling was made of perforated metal blocks to absorb sound, and the walls were decorated with Adamesque panels, niches, and medallions.

The theater's first production, *Beggar on Horseback*, by the Illini Theater Guild, was performed in March 1930. Productions continued until 1968, when the theater was rendered obsolete by the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.



## CONSTANT EVOLUTION

In the beginning Lincoln Hall housed the Departments of Classics, Economics, Education, English, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Political Science, and Psychology. Growth necessitated that many of them move out over the years—for example, psychology moved to its own building in 1969, and the Illinois Historical Survey moved to the main library in 1966. Lincoln Hall also converted from a center for graduate studies to undergraduate studies. During the 1929 addition departmental libraries and seminar rooms were moved to the then-new main library.

Through the changes, however, Lincoln Hall has maintained its strong identity with the liberal arts and sciences. Upon completion it's expected to once again become one of the busiest sites on campus. ■

\* Sources—University Archives; John Hoffmann, curator, Illinois History and Lincoln Collections; Muriel Schienman, adjunct assistant professor, art history.



## RESTORING A LANDMARK

### EXPECT A FAMILIAR YET DRASTICALLY UPDATED LINCOLN HALL IN 2012

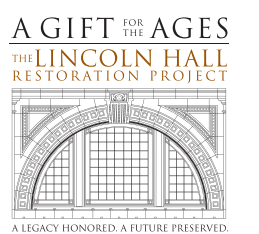
When it opened in 1911, Lincoln Hall was a landmark in world-class education, but changing times have required an upgrade to maintain that status. A \$57.3 million appropriation from the state legislature along with \$8.3 million from the University will pay for a near-complete restoration of Lincoln Hall's interior while maintaining its most architecturally significant features.

The restoration will include new wiring for "smart technology" in classrooms and mechanical and electrical upgrades to include air conditioning and new plumbing and safety standards. Rooms and spaces will be rearranged, and a unique area that was once a smoking lounge under Lincoln Hall theater will be converted into a café so that students and staff will have an informal gathering space.

While the interior will be largely gutted, workers will retain and improve key architectural features that honor our heritage, including the exterior terra cotta panels depicting the life and quotes of Abraham Lincoln.

The ornate marble foyer off the Quad and Prairiesque detailing throughout the first floor will be restored. The theater will be modified to meet accessibility standards, and it will receive new paint and plaster to match the original colors it displayed when it was built in 1930. The stage curtain and seats will be replaced.

The project is expected to begin in December and be open for classes in about three years.



A LEGACY HONORED. A FUTURE PRESERVED.

lincolnhall.illinois.edu Follow Us on facebook



## JOURNALIST AND U OF I PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER BENSON REFLECTS ON WHAT MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY TAUGHT HIM ABOUT RECONCILIATION.

By Christopher Benson

# EMMETT TILL AT THE CROSSROADS

## WHY AN APOLOGY MAY HELP HEAL OUR NATION

Recently I found myself at an intersection on Chicago's South Side, waiting for the light to change. Absently, I gazed from the traffic signal to the street sign. I had been in this place before and under pretty much the same circumstances, stopped at a red light at the corner of 71st Street and Stony Island Avenue in Chicago—just one part of a seven-mile stretch of 71st Street that in 1991 had been renamed in honor of Emmett Till.

As I sat there, I began to do what I always do at that spot. I began to think about Emmett, an African American from Chicago who, at age 14 in 1955, was lynched in Money, Miss., for whistling at a white woman. What captivated me about the intersection before me was not so much the crossing of two streets as it was the connection of two thoughts. Not long before this moment, the United States Senate had voted to issue an apology for slavery. The announcement of that decision, coming about a year after a similar decision by the House of Representatives, touched off a national conversation about whether an apology was nearly enough to make up for the atrocity of slavery. Or whether it was too much. A similar debate had been struck at one point over the plea by Emmett's mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, that the state of Mississippi should issue an apology for young Emmett's lynching.

The tension in both these cases is between those who believe we should move forward—forget about the past—and those who believe we cannot move forward until we come to terms with the past.

For Mother Mobley, there was crystal clarity on this issue as we worked together during the last six months of her life to document her story in the book *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America*. It was vitally important to her that her story would live beyond her. Certainly it is a compelling story of a mother's love, tragic loss, and redemption. But the critical thing for her—and for me—was that her story would have a take-away value beyond the personal impact.

What she wanted was for coming generations to understand the true meaning of the great sacrifices that had been made in order to move our country forward. She believed that we could not fully appreciate the challenges we face in reaching racial reconciliation in this country unless we first came to appreciate the history of the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That we could not fully appreciate that history without understanding the Civil Rights Movement. That we could not possibly understand the Civil Rights Movement without coming to know Emmett Till.

For one thing, it is in learning the Emmett Till story that we come to grasp just what racism has cost us in this country. We see Emmett as a promising kid whose contributions to this country were cut short by a brutal lynching. By extension, we must recognize the effect of racism on so many other children—children who might not have been killed as Emmett was, but whose potential was cut short because of the insurmountable obstacles they faced resulting from racism.

Mother Mobley understood all this and I came to appreciate it all so much more fully in the brief time we spent together, plumbing the depths of a mother's pain and guilt and duty. It is a sense of duty that is born of the pain she experienced for the remainder of her life, dedicated to helping people understand the context for hate crime. It is a fundamental point so few really appreciate even now. It is a point I share with students of my hate crime class here at Illinois. That hate crime is about bias more than hate. It is about power more than bias. It is about enforcing a power hierarchy based on socially constructed difference.

It is this deep sense of understanding that caused Mother Mobley to call on the state of Mississippi to apologize for the death of her son. She recognized the systemic nature of racism. Two white men were accused, tried, and acquitted of Emmett's lynching. They confessed to their horrific crime in an infamous *Look* magazine article months after their acquittal, describing in graphic detail what they had done to her son in order to send a message to other African Americans.

Still, Mother Mobley recognized the context of the crime, the culture of hate that existed during a period of American apartheid in which people came to believe they could get away with the murder of a black person because black life had become so devalued. That is why, had she lived, Mother Mobley would not have viewed the 2007 apology issued by officials of Tallahatchie County, Miss., to have been enough. Not nearly enough. That apology addressed only the injustice resulting from the acquittal of Emmett's murder-

ers. Mother Mobley saw this as part of something much larger. It was the people in the highest positions of power in Mississippi during this period who could have led, but chose instead to incite. They are the ones, Mother Mobley believed, who had blood on their hands.

That is the basis of her call for an apology. She understood the great impact of an apology as did leaders in South Africa during that country's truth and reconciliation hearings following the end of apartheid. She knew that it is in first recognizing wrong that we may begin to set things right. As

my friend and colleague Gutsell Professor James Anderson has observed, we never have had our moment of racial reconciliation in this country. Instead, we have been urged to accept that with the stroke of a pen and the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that everything has been resolved, and that the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States stands as evidence a new post-racial America.

Mother Mobley would recognize the rich irony that only few have seen. Obama's historic acceptance speech for the Democratic nomination for president was delivered on August 28, 2008. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963. Emmett Till was lynched on August 28, 1955. A connecting link. An arc of an American story that moves from the violent enforcement of difference to the vision of a better place, to the confirmation that that the realization of that vision just might be possible. One day, maybe.

Mother Mobley died on January 6, 2003, having never heard the apology she wanted for us all to hear. After her death, a cousin of hers told me that she once had asked him to drive her the full seven miles of 71<sup>st</sup> that had been designated in honor of Emmett Till. She wanted to count the street signs to make sure the City of Chicago had kept its promise to her. It says a lot about her determination, but also her recognition of the street sign as text for a story she believed we should never forget.

An apology, she believed, was not just about looking back. It is a step in our movement forward. ■

**Christopher Benson is a journalist and an associate professor of African American Studies and journalism at the University of Illinois. In 2003 he co-authored with Mamie Till-Mobley her memoir *Death of Innocence: The Hate Crime That Changed America*. He recently completed a screenplay based on the book.**



Mamie Till-Mobley was overcome with emotion in 1955 when the casket arrived from Mississippi carrying the body of her son, Emmett. (Bettmann/Corbis)

### Researchers Strike Genetic Gold in Search for Natural Products

There's a goldmine at the University of Illinois. But in this case, the nuggets being uncovered are genes that can produce new natural compounds for pharmaceuticals and other human uses. It's all part of a collaborative effort among five labs known as Mining Microbial Genomes for Novel Natural Products.

In 2007, the U of I team struck gold by discovering an enzyme that can perform an unprecedented chemical reaction. This year, they announced the mechanism behind that unique chemical reaction, a discovery that could boost production of an important weed killer and even help uncover natural compounds to develop new antibiotics.



The key behind the effort, taking place at the Institute for Genomic Biology, is to look for specific genes, rather than the natural compounds themselves, says Wilfred van der Donk, a chemistry professor who runs one of the program's five labs.

"The 1960s and 1970s were the heyday for discovering natural compounds for all types of uses, including antibiotics," he says. "But it was like picking low-hanging fruit." Natural products were abundant and easy to find.

As the years passed, it has become more difficult to keep up the same discovery rate. According to van der Donk, an estimated 99 percent of the natural compounds being found turn out to be compounds already discovered.

One solution, he says, is to search for genes rather than compounds.

Bacteria can produce natural products for many human uses, such as controlling weeds or fighting other bacteria. Therefore, research-

ers are exploring the genomes of bacteria, looking for the genetic triggers behind natural products. He says it has been "eye-opening."

In the past, researchers believed that certain types of bacteria typically create two or three natural compounds for human use. With this new approach researchers are

finding that bacteria can actually produce closer to 20 or 25 natural products.

The U of I team has been moving on many fronts, including a probe of phosphinothricin (PT), a bacterial compound used in top-selling herbicides. While studying PT, they discovered an enzyme that could break carbon-carbon bonds without requiring anything except oxygen.

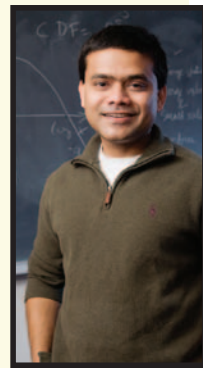
Now they believe they have pinpointed the mechanism behind this unique chemical reaction, which may boost the production of PT. This knowledge may also help in the discovery of other important natural products.

By developing new ways to discover natural products, the U of I team hopes to give new life to the antibiotic discovery effort. It costs about \$1 billion to develop a new drug; to recoup these costs, companies are focusing on more profitable drugs that people with chronic diseases take all their lives, rather than antibiotics, which might be taken for infections for only two weeks. Also, the high rediscovery rate in hunting for new antibiotics drives companies away.

"We know we have this problem of antibiotic resistance in bacteria, but very little is being done to head off the coming problem," van der Donk says. "It's like we're on a train heading for a tunnel that has caved in."

### Not Just Tilting at Windmills

When Don Quixote mistook a windmill for a giant in the famous Spanish tale, he was facing the kind of quaint structure you see in postcards. But today's windmills are true giants, with turbines reaching heights of 100 meters (328 feet), not counting their 100-meter-diameter rotor blades. When windmill turbines this big are clustered, they can affect temperature and humidity, so LAS researchers are studying locations where large-scale wind farms would have the least effect on weather.



University of Illinois researchers have found that wind farms would have the least impact on weather in large parts of central and eastern Africa, western Australia, eastern China, southern Argentina and Chile, northern Amazonia, Greenland, eastern Canada, and the New England region in the United States, says Somnath Baidya Roy, U of I professor of atmospheric sciences.

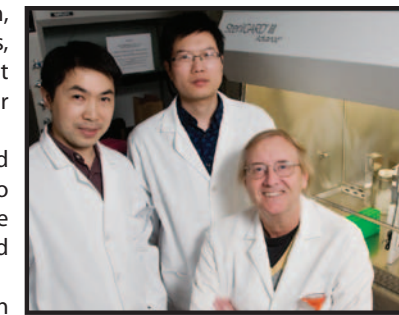
In earlier work, published in 2004, Baidya Roy found that the large blades of a windmill create turbulence in their wake, much like the propeller of a boat. The turbulence caused by one turbine can disrupt airflow to nearby turbines, significantly reducing the wind farm's efficiency.

In addition, the turbines mix upper level air with air near the surface of the ground, which can either raise or lower surface air temperature slightly, depending on conditions. If the upper level air is cooler than the surface air, this mixing will cool the surface temperature slightly; but if the upper level air is warmer than the surface air, the mixing will warm the surface temperature.

In most cases, the mixing will also reduce humidity because upper level air generally tends to be drier than the surface air.

### New Drug Agent Knocks out Multiple Enzymes in Cancer Pathway

A team of researchers from the U.S., Europe, Taiwan, and Japan, and led by University of Illinois scientists, has engineered a new anti-cancer agent that is about 200 times more active in killing tumor cells than similar drugs used in recent clinical trials.



The new agent belongs to a class of drugs called bisphosphonates, compounds originally developed to treat osteoporosis and other bone diseases. They were recently found to also have potent anti-cancer and immune-boosting properties.

Drug developers have tried for years to design drugs to inhibit cell survival pathways in tumor cells, focusing on a protein called Ras since nearly a third of all human cancers involve a mutation in the Ras gene that disrupts cell signaling. These efforts have met with limited success.

Bisphosphonates act on other enzymes that are upstream of Ras in the cell survival pathway. Inhibiting these enzymes appears a more effective strategy for killing cancer cells.

When used in combination with hormone therapy in a recent trial, the bisphosphonate drug zoledronate significantly reduced the recurrence of breast cancer in premenopausal women with estrogen-receptor-positive breast cancer. Similar results were reported for hormone-refractory prostate cancer.

### Those Unsure of Own Ideas More Resistant to Views of Others

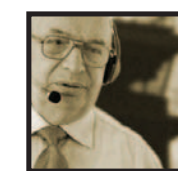


We swim in a sea of information, but filter out most of what we see or hear. A new analysis of data from dozens of studies sheds new light on how we choose what we do and do not hear. The study found that while people tend to avoid information that contradicts what they already think or believe, certain factors can cause them to seek out, or at least consider, other views.

The analysis, reported this month in *Psychological Bulletin*, published by the American Psychological Association, was led by researchers at the University of Illinois and the University of Florida, and included data from 91 studies involving nearly 8,000 participants. It puts to rest a longstanding debate over whether people actively avoid information that contradicts what they believe, or whether they are simply exposed more often to ideas that conform to their own because they tend to be surrounded by like-minded people.

"We wanted to see exactly across the board to what extent people are willing to seek out the truth versus just stay comfortable with what they know," says University of Illinois psychology professor Dolores Albarracín, who led the study with University of Florida researcher William Hart. The team also included researchers from Northwestern University and Ohio University.

### Older Air Traffic Controllers Perform as Well as Young on Job-Related Tasks



Air traffic controllers possibly are being put out to pasture sooner than necessary, according to new findings from LAS psychology professor Arthur Kramer.

Air traffic controllers in the United States are required to retire at age 56. The problem is that most of the country's 14,800 air traffic controllers were hired in the mid-1980s when President Ronald Reagan fired more than 11,000 controllers who went on strike. Now, many of them are nearing retirement, and the government warns that the upcoming wave of retirements could undermine the safety of the nation's aviation system.

"The question we were interested in was whether older controllers could continue to do the job," says Kramer.

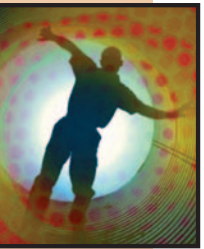
Kramer's research team turned to Canada, where the mandatory retirement age is 65. They compared Canadian air traffic controllers from two age groups—ages 53 to 64 and ages 20 to 27. Older air traffic controllers performed as well as their young colleagues on complex, job-related tasks.

Older subjects were slower on simple memory or decision-making tasks not directly related to air traffic control. But on the tests that simulated the tasks of an air traffic controller, the older and younger controllers were equally capable.

Older controllers have "gained decades of knowledge in their profession," says Kramer. "That's allowed them to offset the costs of not having quite the memory they used to have, and certainly not being able to respond as quickly as they once could."

### Society Wanted its Men Strong and Rational—Even When it Wasn't True

By now we're all aware of the flaw in your basic fairytale. That is, a fragile woman breaks down in the face of adversity, and her only hope is a steely-eyed man. Hillary Clinton may have lost the Democratic primary, but it's safe to say that old stereotype is under review.

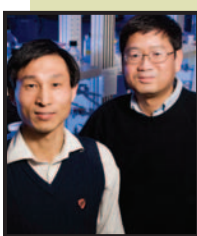


Mark Micale, however, challenges the male side of that stereotype.

The LAS history professor reveals how doctors in the past—he studied generally the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries—suppressed the fact that men also suffered so-called "hysteria," a broad diagnosis for psychological illness that hasn't been used in half a century. In other words, if Prince Charming's epaulettes ever shook in fear, his doctor likely would have covered it up for him.

Micale, who studies and teaches history of psychiatry, analyzed years of medical records in America and Europe and wrote a book, *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness*, detailing how doctors went to lengths to avoid saying men had hysteria, even while women with identical symptoms were regularly diagnosed as hysterics.

"For a couple hundred years the medical community continued to gender hysteria and other neuroses as female or feminine," Micale says. "[They] refrained from drawing some obvious conclusions...that of course both men and women are susceptible to nervous conditions."



### Researchers Discover a New Pathway that Regulates Inflammation

In a finding that bodes well for treatment of diseases and conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and asthma, researchers in LAS have deciphered a molecular code that controls inflammation.

The finding sheds light on a protein complex called NF-kappa B, often called the master regulator of the immune system. Researchers determined that a methyl group could influence the protein.

# The Michael Vick Case

By Doug Peterson

NAME Vic, Michael  
OM

No. 342



The dogs were doomed.

Almost everyone expected that the 51 dogs, most of them pit bulls, would be put down. Even the organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, advocated that the dogs be euthanized. After all, these were the dogs discovered in the notorious dog-fighting ring on the property of NFL quarterback Michael Vick. They were beyond redemption.

However, Stephen Zawistowski, an LAS alumnus, thought otherwise. When the public expressed great interest in the fate of Vick's fighting dogs, a federal attorney turned to Zawistowski, a University of Illinois psychology graduate now serving as executive vice president and science advisor for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

According to Zawistowski, an ASPCA forensic veterinarian had been brought into the Vick case to determine the cause of death for numerous dogs on the property. Dogs that did not make the grade as fighting animals had been electrocuted, shot, drowned, hanged, or slammed on the ground, reported a *Sports Illustrated* cover story.

But what about the surviving dogs? This ASPCA colleague recommended that Zawistowski be brought in to evaluate the dogs and determine if they might be saved. So Zawistowski, a certified applied animal behaviorist, pulled together a team to do just that.

"We looked at how responsive the dogs were to people and other dogs, and how they reacted to novel situations," he says. "One of the first things you do is find out if the dogs allow you to touch them. Can you put your hands around their ears, feet, or muzzle? Are they comfortable being handled?"

Working in teams of three, one person would keep the dog on a leash, a second person carefully attempted to interact with the dog, and the third person observed and evaluated.

Zawistowski has investigated many cases of aggressive dogs, and he was surprised to discover that most of Vick's animals were not as aggressive as expected.

"Our impression," he says, "was that these were more similar to dogs you would find in hoarding cases," in which people keep large

numbers of animals but give them little care and attention. In the end, only one of the 51 dogs had to be put down for aggression—although a couple of them had to be euthanized for medical reasons.



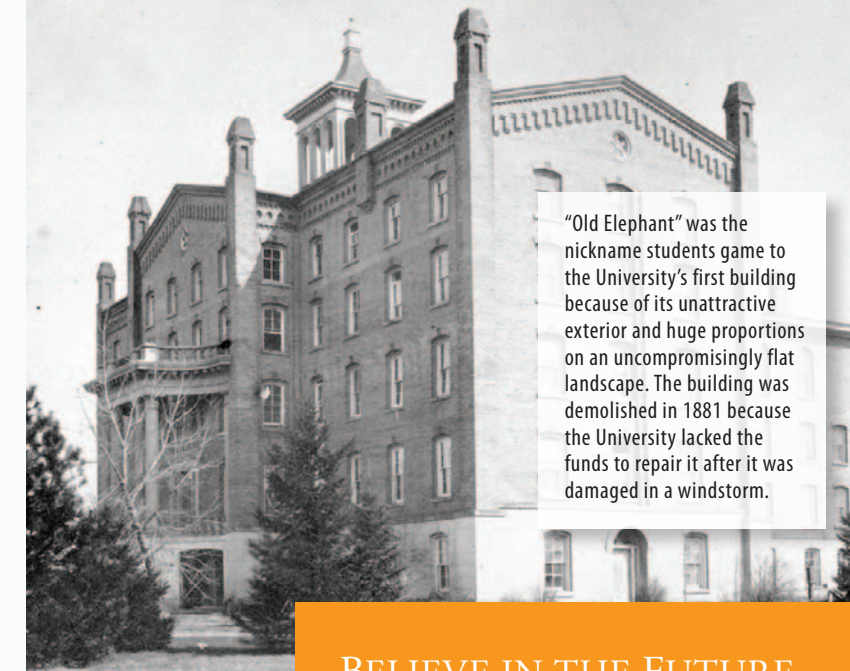
For Zawistowski, caring for animals has been a lifelong passion. "I was the kid in the neighborhood who brought home all the birds and critters around town, would fix them up, and let them go," he says. He and his father even bred beagles when he was growing up.

Zawistowski completed his master's in psychology at U of I in 1979 and his PhD in 1983, focusing on behavior genetics—with an emphasis on animal behavior. He worked with the U of I's Jerry Hirsch, a pioneer in behavior genetics, and they studied the influences of both learning and genetics on animal behavior. Specifically, they used classical conditioning techniques to change the feeding behavior of blowflies.

After teaching at two universities, Zawistowski found that the ASPCA was looking for someone with a background in animal behavior. He fit the bill, so he joined the ASPCA in 1988 and helped start an animal behavior evaluation program. He also began as director of the education department, which had a staff of only two or three—"me, one guy, and a chicken." Today, 400 of the ASPCA's staff of 500 report to him.

Although dog-fighting cases may capture headlines, he says he is most proud for helping to bring scientific management techniques to animal shelters. In fact, he helped to establish a new field known as shelter medicine, which combines the management of large numbers of animals with traditional companion animal medicine.

According to Zawistowski, attitudes on animal welfare are changing, as evidenced by three landmark events, including the Michael Vick case. The other two were the outpouring of concern over animals in Hurricane Katrina and the massive pet food recall in 2007. The



"Old Elephant" was the nickname students gave to the University's first building because of its unattractive exterior and huge proportions on an uncompromisingly flat landscape. The building was demolished in 1881 because the University lacked the funds to repair it after it was damaged in a windstorm.

Photo: University of Illinois Archives

BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE.  
INVEST IN TODAY.



Vick case also led to this year's raid on a dog-fighting ring in five states, in which authorities seized 350 dogs and arrested 30 people.

"They had been working on the case for two years," he says. "So it shows they're taking it very seriously."

Dog fighting is illegal nationwide, but there is a large subculture, complete with glossy magazines and an Internet underground. In certain areas, he says, weekend dog fights are major events that even include rides for children.

Once again, most of the dogs seized in the recent raid were pit bulls, which raises the question of whether pit bulls are aggressive by nature or have it trained into them; and this goes right back to the behavior research that Zawistowski did at the U of I.

He says it's a combination of breeding and training. "Just as it's easier to teach a Labrador how to retrieve a ball than a beagle, it's easier to teach a pit bull how to fight. Pit bulls are natural athletes. But it doesn't mean every Labrador is going to retrieve and every pit bull is going to be a fighting dog."

As for Michael Vick's dogs, he asks, "Will they ever be like a dog that has never been fought? No. They'll always bear the legacy of both their breeding and training. But it doesn't mean they are killers for life." ■

For nearly a century, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has been changing lives—with discoveries that improve the world, with knowledge that enlightens and inspires, with an educational environment that prepares students for lives of impact.

Through a contribution to LAS, you are ensuring that LAS remains a place where dreams begin and brilliant futures unfold.

Give online at:  
[www.las.illinois.edu/giving](http://www.las.illinois.edu/giving)

Send Us Your Class Notes

For many years, the Class Notes section of LAS News has been a place for alumni to reconnect and find out the latest about former classmates and old friends. Changing with the times, though, these printed notes have now been moved online so you'll have more room to submit photos and exchange news.

[www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/magazine/classnotes](http://www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/magazine/classnotes)

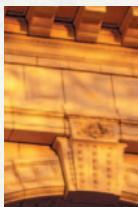


## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

# LINCOLN HALL RESTORATION KICK-OFF

Friday, October 23, 2009  
4:00-5:00 p.m.  
Quad-side steps of Lincoln Hall

Celebrate the beginning of the long-awaited restoration of Lincoln Hall as U of I thanks the people of Illinois for their support of this historic project. Join us on the Quad for a few words of appreciation and a final walk-through of the first floor before the building closes to the public.



### SHARE YOUR MEMORIES OF LINCOLN HALL

Tell us what this grand old campus landmark has meant to you!  
Send your memories to:

[lincolnhall.illinois.edu](http://lincolnhall.illinois.edu) or [facebook](#)

**LASNews**

College of

UNIVERSITY

IN THIS EMAIL: News | Events | Get Involved

If you have trouble viewing this page, go to [www.las.uiuc.edu/email/newsletter/2](http://www.las.uiuc.edu/email/newsletter/2)

News

### An Unlikely Magazine Photo Shines Light on World War II Hero

A few years ago, Maj. Gen. Edward Giller (Ret.) would have been surprised to see even a color photograph of one of his old World War II fighter planes, much less a magazine photo of one in flight more than 60 years after the war.

## Subscribe to LAS's Monthly E-Newsletter

More news, more alumni profiles, more notices of events that you won't find in the magazine.

To receive the monthly e-newsletter, fill out a simple form at [www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/contact](http://www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/contact) or send an email to [laseditor@illinois.edu](mailto:laseditor@illinois.edu). Include your full name and the word "subscribe" in the body of the message.