Scholarship Luncheon

---by Dave C. Delucia ’79

Ask anyone who has established a scholarship at Penn State Berks what is most rewarding about their gift and they will tell you it is knowing their donation is making a difference in the lives of students. That reward is even more special when given the opportunity to meet those very students, up close and personal. This past February, the college celebrated philanthropy through the annual scholarship luncheon, which brings together donors who contributed scholarship funds and the students who are recipients of those funds. Eighty people attended the event.

After opening words by Dr. Susan Phillips Speece, Chancellor of Penn State Berks, and Christopher Brittin, Director of Development, the scholarship donors and their recipients enjoyed lunch while exchanging life stories and getting better acquainted.

Following the meal, Dr. Martha Aynardi, Director of Academic Support and Projects, gave “A Donor’s Perspective” in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, with many fascinating anecdotes about the life of the late Harold A. Pfreimer, a relative of Aynardi. Through his generosity, the Harold Pfreimer Trustee Scholarship was established, as well as endowments for faculty development and for engineering projects, all of which will benefit many students for years to come.

For the 2006-2007 academic year, Penn State Berks awarded more than $212,000 in scholarships funded by private support to 209 students. One of those students, Amro Fadel, a sophomore majoring in Business Administration, had the opportunity to share his gratitude. Fadel is a native of Egypt and a recipient of the Irvin and Lois E. Cohen Trustee Scholarship. He described the challenges he faced as an Arab student growing up in a Western culture, and the opportunity a college education is giving him to pursue his life goals.

“Without the generous people in this room this afternoon I’d most likely be working extra hours, while studying less in order to pay off my tuition bill,” states Fadel. “To our donors: thank you for the bottom of our hearts for believing in us and for giving us the opportunity to succeed!”

These gifts truly are making a difference in the lives of students. If you are interested in more information about establishing or contributing to a Penn State Berks scholarship, please contact the Office of Development at (610) 396-6056 or visit our Web site: berks.psu.edu/giving.

Turkes Receives Atherton Award

---by Dave C. Delucia ’79

Dr. Doris Turkes, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies at Penn State Berks, has received Penn State University’s 2007 George W. Atherton Award for Excellence in Teaching. Turkes began her career at Penn State Berks in 1969 as an instructor in English, and was named assistant professor in 1992. During her time at Penn State Berks, she has received the Outstanding Teaching Award four times, most recently in 2006. In addition, she has served as past chair of the faculty senate and is currently a member of several college committees. As program coordinator and advisor for Penn State’s bachelor of arts degree in Organizational Leadership, Turkes works with adult students interested in leadership in both the workplace and the community. Her research interest deals with the approaches that women with stressful jobs utilize to foster connection with other women, engage in productive activities, and reduce job-related stress. The George W. Atherton Award for Excellence in Teaching, named for the seventh president of the University (1882-1907), is presented each year to four faculty members who have devoted substantial effort to undergraduate teaching.

Gamberg Awarded College’s DOE Grant

---by Dave C. Delucia ’79

Dr. Leonard Gamberg, Assistant Professor of Physics at Penn State Berks, has been awarded a grant for $120,000 from The Office of Science of the United States Department of Energy (DOE). This is the first DOE grant received by Penn State Berks. In addition, this was the only new proposal and one of only six research grants awarded by the DOE’s Office of Nuclear Physics this year. Gamberg’s research focuses on unlocking the substructure and properties of the nucleus. The grant for Gamberg’s project, “Transversity and Transverse Spin Correlations of Quarks and Hadrons in QCD” began December 15, 2006 and expires November 14, 2009. This three-year grant includes funds to pay student research assistants to work with Gamberg, a sub-atomic nuclear particle physicist.

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uring January of this year, thirty students and two professors from Penn State Berks traveled across the Atlantic to spend a week in Venice, Italy studying Shakespeare. The idea for the trip came from the two professors who accompanied the students: Dr. Sandy Feinsteins, Honors Coordinator and Professor of English, and Dr. Peter Campbell, Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts. The two professors explained, “We will be able to contrast the space of [Shakespeare’s] plays and our imagination with the geography we find; we will wrestle with myths about place and reframe our understanding of culture and theatre, interpretation and performance.”

The trip consisted of experiencing two key areas: Venice and Verona. Both areas were selected because they were the setting for three plays by Shakespeare, “Romeo and Juliet,” “The Merchant of Venice,” and “Othello.”

The six-day trip started on January 8 when the students and professors met on campus. As part of the coursework, the students chose scenes from the three plays and performed those scenes in the streets of Venice or Verona, with the rest of the class and any random onlookers as their audience.

Student response to the trip was extremely positive. Sara Kukulka summed up her feelings by saying, “It was so much fun and an awesome experience.” Deanna Biase said, “It was great to experience a different side of Italy, one aside from tourism and more connected to theatre.”

Upon their return from Italy, the students had a choice of three topics about which to write a paper. Each topic forced the students to think about the trip and their experiences in a new way, from describing how seeing a specific place caused the student to rethink an idea about one of the plays, describing how the student would adapt a certain scene from one of the plays after having seen “Shakespeare’s Italy,” and discussing comparisons between the characters and scenes of Shakespeare’s plays to Commedia Dell’Arte.

Experiencing a new culture always has a lasting effect; every student that made the trip came back with something new. Whether that something is a greater appreciation for Shakespeare or Italian cuisine, or simply a new idea makes no difference. The important thing is that everyone came back with a slightly expanded knowledge of the world, and that in itself is life altering.

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