



A life of learning

by Lindy Brophy

A retired South African science teacher could well be the oldest student to receive a degree when he graduates later this month.

Donald Lowe will be just six weeks shy of his 82nd birthday when he receives his Masters of Education.

He migrated to Australia from Zimbabwe 11 years ago, following his three adult daughters. Although he was already retired, one of the first places he visited was the University: a visit which sowed the seeds of another foray into education.

Mr Lowe has degrees in science, history and education from three universities: Witwatersrand and the Universities of South Africa and Zimbabwe. He also studied medicine, but didn't complete the course.

"I've never stopped studying. When I retired, I decided I was going to read the classics. As a young man, I'd always thought novels a waste of time. But I read them all, from Omar Kayam to Dickens. And they have enriched my life.

"My proudest qualification is that I am an accredited Methodist preacher," he said. "I don't preach much any more, but when I do, I always refer to the classics."

Mr Lowe said he left South Africa as a young man because he had grown up with the knowledge that racial discrimination was unchristian.

"I opposed the apartheid system and all it stood for, but Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was when I first went there, was a good country, with idyllic conditions for raising my three daughters."

He said that while South Africa had developed its own education system, Zimbabwe followed the British system. British education authorities published a journal called *Oversea (sic) Education*, for its colonies. It is this journal, published between 1929 and 1963 that Mr Lowe examined for his Masters degree, a study that took him five years.

"Unfortunately, the journal never reached the grass roots. The education administration read it but it was not passed on to the teachers in the field. But reading the journals now I can see that the English were really genuinely dedicated to educating the people in their colonies.

"When I taught in Zimbabwe, education was rightly looked upon as a blessing, not a right. I myself feel blessed

to have studied at all the universities I've attended," he said.

"The professors here, Professor Clive Whitehead (my supervisor), Professor Keith Punch and Professor Tom O'Donoghue, have introduced a new dimension into my life.

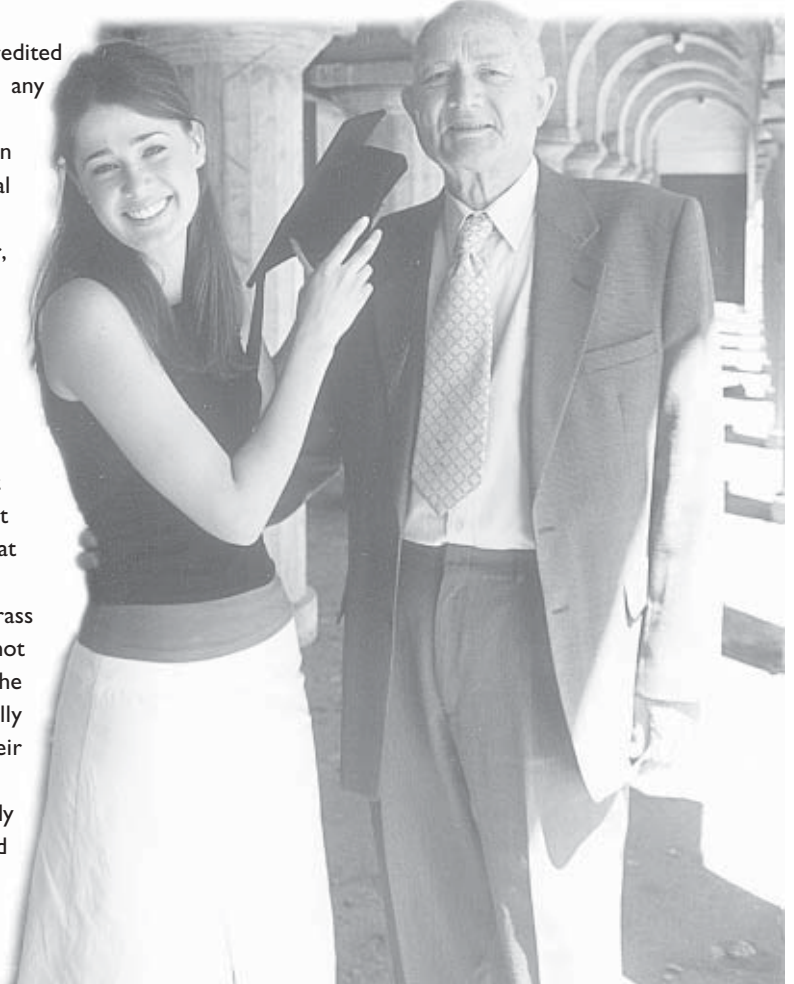
"The hard straightforward thinking scientist has had to bow down to subjective thinking and realise it is real!" he said.

Mr Lowe speaks almost reverently of the teachers in the Graduate School of Education. "They are all younger than me, but I pay them the respect due to them because they are my teachers," he said.

"I am very Calvinistic and I sometimes find the way of life here difficult. There doesn't seem to be the respect that I am used to."

Mr Lowe has five granddaughters, the eldest of whom (Karen Taylor) is studying commerce at UWA. They will all be in Winthrop Hall to see their 'Papa' receive his degree.

But he hints that it won't be the end of his academic career. "I haven't reached my use-by date yet!" he laughs.



Graduate Donald Lowe is delighted that he and his granddaughter, Karen Taylor, have been studying at UWA together. Karen is in her third year of a commerce degree



The huge Moreton Bay fig tree behind Hackett Hall is already a favourite with the new Curator of Grounds, Ron Pease

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Going from curator of grounds at one Perth university to the same position at another one might seem like an easy transition.

But the two campuses are so different and the jobs of looking after them so diverse, that, even after 38 years in horticulture, it was like a brand new job for the new Unigrounds curator, Ron Pease.

Ron had just 15 staff to help him care for 227 hectares of land at Murdoch University for more than 20 years. But much of it is still bush and a big part of his work there was supervising fire breaks.

"We were also responsible for the maintenance of the irrigation of the veterinary school farmlands," said Ron, "and the gardens were indigenous landscapes. We dry planted in winter and just waited to see what survived the following summer."

At UWA, where he took over as curator in January, there is a staff of 28 to look after the Crawley campus and off-campus grounds, that add up to a total of 178.2 hectares.

"But it is very different work, much more intense, with heritage gardens to maintain, instead of big tracts of minimally developed areas, and indigenous plantings," he said.

Restructuring at Murdoch meant the position of curator was removed and Ron moved to the university's Rockingham campus as facilities manager for two years.

"But I'm a horticulturalist and I just wanted to get back to my real work again. I couldn't be in a better place. I consider this to be the best horticultural job in the state."

Ron says he is generally very impressed with the way all the grounds work is managed at UWA, but he is still "getting a grip on what we manage and what we don't and who does what."

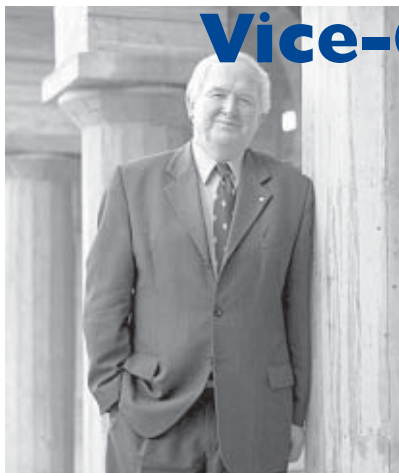
He has read as much as he can about the history of the grounds at UWA, but in the near future, former curator (and long time friend) Glen Sproule will take him on a walk through the campus. "Then I'll get the Glen Sproule history — and that will be an important aspect for me," said Ron.

He has no plans for immediate changes but he is keen to continue and expand in two areas: staff development and the employment, where possible, of people with disabilities.

"The Office of Facilities Management (of which Unigrounds is a part) is very much in favour of both staff development and the employment of disabled staff. I am very keen for all the staff in Unigrounds to take advantage of the training opportunities available to them to assist in furthering their careers," he said.

Ron is enthusiastic about future employment of people with disabilities. Unigrounds already has two disabled staff in the team, and looks forward to assisting more to gain employment or work experience in the future

"UWA has a great record in this area, and I want to keep it going. In my 'other life' I'm an equity and diversity adviser for the Air Force Reserve, and I feel very strongly that we should all do whatever we can for people who are not easily able to take advantage of the opportunities the rest of us have. Five out of my fifteen grounds staff at Murdoch had disabilities," he said.



Vice-Chancellor's column

Leading any university as Vice-Chancellor can be a challenging and at times daunting prospect. At our University, it is especially so as we intensify our efforts to excel in achieving the twin goals of serving our State, while at the same time pushing forward the boundaries of our claim to international excellence.

The need for strong and clear leadership is essential. This is exactly what I believe we have with the new executive team which will be in place from April. We have a balance – not only in gender terms — but in experience both within and external to the direct university system. And there is a balance between those with knowledge of this University, and those who come from other institutions.

The University community already knows our Deputy Vice-Chancellor Margaret Seares and Executive Director (Academic Services) and Registrar, Peter Curtis. Doug McEachern joined us towards the end of last year as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). And next month we will be joined by Belinda Probert, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Gaye McMath, Executive Director (Finance and Resources).

The broad areas of responsibility of the new Executive will be as follows:

Vice-Chancellor

Overall leadership of the University, including broad responsibility for the academic, administrative and financial business of the University.

Portfolio: Planning and resource allocation.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

General Deputy to the Vice-Chancellor, including and broad line management of the Deans of Faculties, School of Indigenous Studies and University Librarian.

Portfolio: External relations, community activities

PVC (Research and Innovation)

Portfolio: Research and research training, industry liaison and commercialisation, IT policy.

PVC (Academic)

Portfolio: Teaching and learning, undergraduate students, staffing policy.

Executive Director (Academic Services) and Registrar

Portfolio: Academic services, including student, research, planning, legal, secretariat, international, public affairs, development, and general administrative services.

Executive Director (Finance and Resources)

Portfolio: Finance and resources, including human resources, facilities management, finance, and computing services.

In addition, members of the executive represent the University in a number of external committees and forums and either chair or are members of, a wide range of University committees.

The executive team is nothing without a dedicated staff – both academic and administrative. At UWA, our performance at national and international levels suggests that is the case, and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Alan Robson
Vice-Chancellor



An executive celebration

As International Women's Day is celebrated across the world this week, UWA sends an excellent signal that it has been working for many years to give women more of a voice in university affairs.

Three of the six members of the new UWA executive are women: the first time a gender balance has been achieved at this level.

Professor Margaret Seares, the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, says the balance on the executive reflects both the proportion of women in the UWA student cohort and the University's total workforce.

"The representation of women in the student body, on the staff and, most recently on the University Executive is reflective of the changes that have come about for women on this campus in recent years. I was typical of many women of an earlier generation for whom the juxtaposition of family and work was made very difficult by the institutional environment," she said.

"The whole notion of continuous career with continuing superannuation and other entitlements just passed me by. I look with great pleasure now at what's available for women in the UWA workforce. I am now very keen on

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working with everyone here to get the work-life balance right.

"It's not just about staff who have young children, and it's not just about women. Increasingly, our staff are needing time to care for and support elderly parents. It is now very important that we, as an institution, support staff in balancing the demands of home and of work in a meaningful, not tokenistic, way."

Professor Seares brings a wealth of experience to the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, particularly in the area of government relations, at a time when relations with both State and Federal governments are becoming increasingly important.

Before returning to UWA as Director, then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Community Relations) in 1997, Professor Seares was Chief Executive Officer with the (now) state Department of Culture and the Arts. In 1997, she was appointed to a four-year term as Chair of the Australia Council. She has served on many government boards and is currently on the Australia-Japan Foundation (which gives her links with Foreign Affairs and Trade) and the National Portrait Gallery (with links to the Department for Communications, IT and the Arts) and will soon relinquish her place on the Australian Research Council's Expert Advisory Committee for the Humanities & Creative Arts.

"Our future depends, to a significant extent, on the places we are given by



Professor Belinda Probert



Gaye McMath

the Federal Government, and the support we get, in both dollar terms and recognition and understanding from all levels of government. . I have worked in both federal and state government spheres and I have an understanding of the way things work there – which can be a bit depressing sometimes!"

Professor Seares has both a long history within UWA and one where she was outside, looking in, and brings all this experience and knowledge to the Vice-Chancellery.

She will be joined next month by two other women on the executive, Professor Belinda Probert and Gaye McMath.

Professor Probert has a background in economics and politics and her research for the past decade has centred on the changing nature of work and employment, new patterns of inequality, and social policy and women's work. She comes to UWA from RMIT University.

Gaye McMath is, until next month, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Resource Management) and Chief Financial Officer at Murdoch University. Before her appointment at Murdoch, she had a 23-year career with BHP, after an education in commerce and business administration.

UWAnews will feature Professor Probert and Ms McMath in future issues.

• *International Women's Day* will be celebrated at UWA this Friday March 12 with a morning tea in the Tropical Grove from 10.30 to 11.30am.

A fair to remember



While solar energy is one of many power options for western civilisations, it is the only choice for some people in third world countries.

The importance of solar cooking to sustain the Tibetan nomadic culture is one of the seminars to be presented during Perth's first solar expo, Perth Sun Fair, in the grounds of the University on Sunday March 21.

Dr Dave Webb, a senior lecturer in information management and marketing, is involved in helping the nomadic tribes of Tibet. He will talk about how well solar cooking fits in with the nomadic lifestyle, enabling people to eat well even though they are on the move.

"Even in winter, at their altitudes, the days are fairly cloudless, so solar energy can be used year-round," Dr Webb said.

A solar oven, using the same concepts as those used in Tibet, will be on display at the Sun Fair, along with solar hot water systems and other technologies for sustainable living in Perth.

Physicist and alternative energy advocate, Jonathon Thwaites, initiated and is co-ordinating the fair for UWA and the Alternative Technology Association, to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable technology, in a fun and relaxed venue, on the Oak Lawn.

A series of short seminars (including Dave Webb's) will run in a marquee while, outside, there will be trade and community group displays, plenty of keen people to talk to, and activities for children, including building a straw bale house.

The Sun Fair will run from 9am to 5pm on the Oak Lawn. For more information, especially about the seminars, log on to www.sustainability.ofm.uwa.edu.au

Making a new start



Renata Owen, Vivienne Blake and Kenn Martin from the Centre for Staff Development ... making a new start smoother

When a journalist arrived for her first day of work, several years ago, at what was then the University's Media Liaison Unit, she found workmen in her new office, smashing down the wall.

"I'm supposed to start work here today," she said. "Not here, you're not!" was the reply. At 8.30am, there was nobody else around. Not an auspicious start!

A new induction process, formulated by the Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS), should ensure that new staff at UWA never experience such a start.

Lecturer in higher education development, Vivienne Blake, said OSDS has formed an advisory group, made up of staff from across the campus, and introduced a new online framework to help both new staff and the current staff who are easing them into their new positions.

"New staff need to learn about the big picture — the University's position and policies — as well as procedures in their local area," said Mrs Blake. "The online guide is not intended to replace human contact, but it provides an effective platform for co-ordinating the process of induction."

The site has a checklist for new staff and their supervisors, with lots of information from how the hierarchy of the University works, to how to get a parking permit.

Twice a year, an orientation morning (*Welcome to UWA*) is held for new staff, but for staff who join at other times, the talks at that orientation are now available as an i-Lecture which new staff can access at any time.

This year, for the first time, OSDS has extended the *Welcome to UWA* program with two-hour orientation sessions for new staff in three areas: teaching and learning; research; and leadership.

"From the latest working life and exit surveys from staff, we realised that induction for new staff was patchy.

"The sooner new staff understand exactly where everything is, how things are done, what is expected, and are connected to the relevant systems, the sooner they will start to be productive and feel happy.

"The University goes to a great deal of trouble to recruit high quality staff and we need to ensure that they are introduced smoothly and effectively."

The *Welcome to UWA* program gives new staff the big picture, then it is up to current staff in their local areas to help them get to work and feel happy. Mrs Blake said that, in addition to local induction programmes, they were encouraging a peer support system for up to six months, for each new staff member.

"We don't want the responsibility to fall always on the administrative assistants. Anybody in a school or office can help a new staff member. It's not intended to be a high-powered mentoring scheme, just low-key friendly assistance and support."

The OSDS team feels staff retention will improve with effective induction processes. The final part of the new process, monitoring of new staff by Human Resources, is still being developed.

Vivienne Blake and the OSDS team will be visiting offices and schools over the next month to offer help with induction programs.

The online framework is at <http://www.induction.uwa.edu.au/>

Top teachers

With an emphasis on research, and with so many high profile awards, prizes and scholarships won by staff and students from UWA, it could be easy to forget a core activity of the University — teaching.

Each year, Excellence in Teaching Awards are presented to UWA staff, most of whom have been nominated by their students, some by their peers. The Awards were a Guild initiative which began in 1991, and are now a joint initiative with the University.

The awards for 2003 were announced late last year and will be presented at the coming graduation



Professor John McGeachie

ceremonies, so that teachers receive them in front of their students and colleagues.

Among those being awarded this year is one for individual teaching within a faculty, won by Professor John McGeachie, who was nominated by a near record 81 of his anatomy and human biology students.

Guild President, Susie Byers, says the students are very serious about their nominations. "It's obviously very important to us that our teachers are really good. It's something we talk about a lot."

She said approachability and accessibility were high on the list of students' priorities. "We also want clarity of the objectives of the course so we know where each lecture is going," she said.

"After that, we appreciate teachers who organise extra-curricular activities, those who are always there when you need them, even after hours, and of course those who are just fascinating, interesting people and you love listening to them!"

Award winners:

For excellence in teaching first year students

Martin Forsey (Social and Cultural Studies, Anthropology)

Linda Pontre (Humanities, French)



Dr Jane Balme



Associate Professor Richard Weller

For excellence in individual teaching across the faculty

Dr Jane Balme (Social and Cultural Studies, Archaeology)

Associate Professor Richard Weller (Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts, Landscape Architecture)

Dr Chris McDonald (Computer Science and Software Engineering)

Professor John McGeachie (Anatomy and Human Biology)

Associate Professor Geoffrey Riley (Medicine and Dentistry)

For excellence in teaching – Honours research supervision

Dr Hélène Jacomard (Humanities, French)

**For excellence in teaching –
postgraduate coursework**

Dr Philip Hancock (GSM)

**For excellence in teaching –
postgraduate research supervision**

Dr Gregory Acciaioli (Social and
Cultural Studies, Anthropology)

Professor David Groves (Earth and
Geographical Sciences)

Associate Professor Jill Sweeney

(Information Management, Marketing)

Professor Chari Pattiaratchi (Centre for
Water Research)

**For excellence in teaching –
inclusivity and also excellence in
teaching a specific unit**

Daniel Stepniak (Law)

Daniel Stepniak's unit is Law and Religion, which also went some way to his award for inclusivity. "That unit and my Law and Contemporary Society unit, the work I do in the pre-Law course for Aboriginal students, my involvement in the Ally project (for sexual minorities on campus) and just the way I teach my courses and treat my students: I guess they all add up to a good record in inclusivity," Mr Stepniak said.

The inclusivity award and a diversity award for general staff are both administered by the Office of Equity and Diversity. The Diversity Award for general staff went to librarian Jenny Wildy for her excellent and effective work in ensuring that the needs of students with disabilities were accommodated within the teaching and learning process.

Jenny works in the Music Library but is the disability liaison officer for the entire library system. "It's very rewarding work," she said.

Although most of the Excellence in Teaching awards are open to general staff, they are usually won by academic staff. The Diversity Award was created specifically for general staff to promote inclusivity in the provision of services to students, outside of actual teaching activities.

Some of the student commendations were glowing. Two nominations of Dr H el ene Jaccomard read:

"...(she) possesses the incredible ability to spark students' interest in the subjects she instructs with her

consistent enthusiasm...the immeasurable patience she exhibits is exemplary, illustrating her deep commitment to her students and never failing to help out in any way imaginable."

And: "She is by far one of the hardest working teachers I have had the pleasure to meet ..."

Professor David Groves: "David's thorough and insightful reviews indicate a fierce dedication to the highest standards of postgraduate research supervision..." And: "For his undeniable



Dr H el ene Jaccomard

prioritisation of students as number one, on both a personal and professional level, and unwavering enthusiasm throughout the year, I would like to nominate David for excellence in teaching."

Two students who nominated Dr Jane Balme said she was "the best teacher I have had at university" and "Jane give the best lecture I have experienced at UWA."

Associate Professor Richard Weller's students praised him for challenging them not only to develop their ideas but "indeed themselves."

One of the shortest and simplest accolades went to Professor John McGeachie: "He understands teaching."



Professor Chari Pattiaratchi



Daniel Stepniak



Jenny Wildy

a taste of bush medicine

The national shortage of doctors and other health professionals in the bush cannot be addressed solely in the classrooms of Australia's medical schools.

Associate Professor Sally Reagan believes young medical students need to get out into the country to learn about rural health and to see why they are needed and where they might fit in to rural communities.

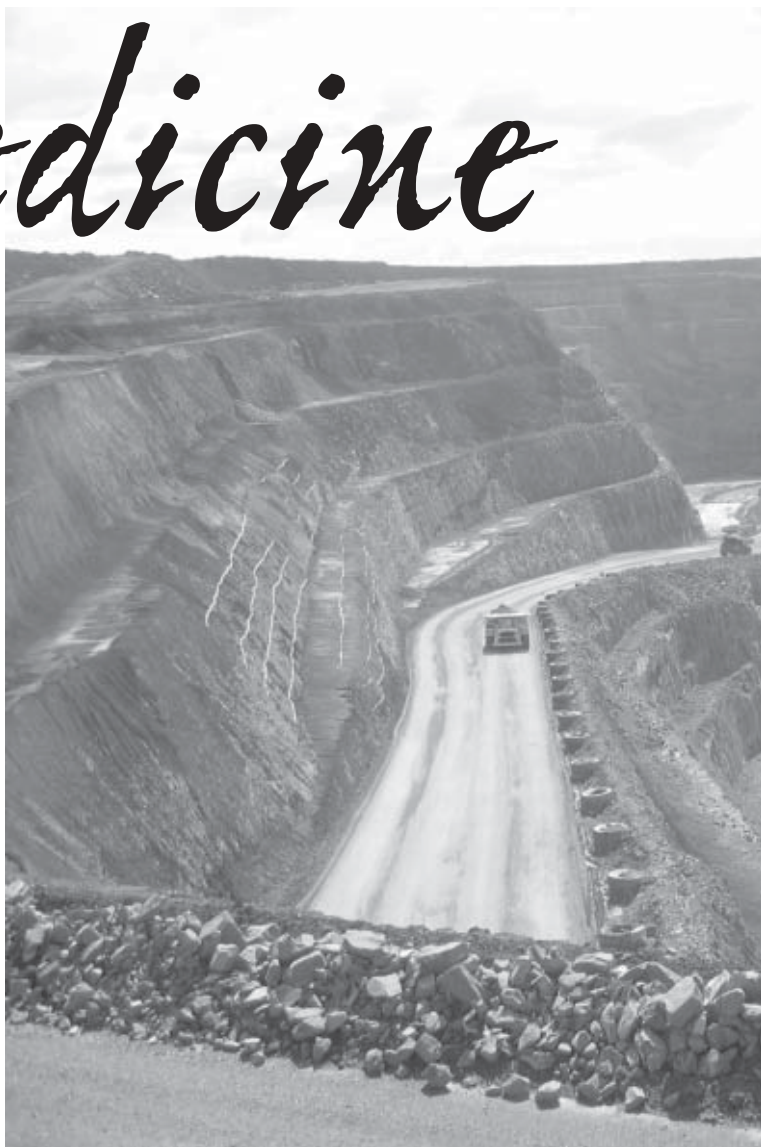
UWA's Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry is the only medical school in Australia that grasps this issue by the horns, taking young first year students to country towns for five days, just four weeks after they have started their studies.

Later this month, 200 students, barely dry behind the ears, will take part in the fifth annual Rural Week, going in groups of about 35 (plus academic staff and senior student mentors) to seven towns: Collie, Bridgetown, Moora, Katanning, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Northampton.

A/Professor Reagan, problem-based learning specialist in the Faculty's education centre, started with the first cohort of students and still co-ordinates Rural Week. She says there is little point in initiating rural health education in the final years of a curriculum when students have already decided on other areas of interest.

"We need to get them into the country as soon as they start, armed with guidelines for directing their own learning. This way the benefits of Rural Week are two-fold: the students learn about rural health and life styles while staying in a rural town, and they do it through what is probably their first experiential student-directed learning, setting them on the right path for the rest of their studies," A/Professor Reagan said.

Intensive preparation and the development of a strong framework for Rural Week, at both the academic and administrative levels, have been crucial in achieving what has



"We need to get them into the country as soon as they start, armed with guidelines for directing their own learning..."



been described each year as an outstanding success. Students, staff and community members have all rated the program as brilliant.

Students are introduced to rural health through problem-based learning. During their week in the country, students must determine the health issues of the people living in the town, describe what keeps them healthy, what detracts from their health, what health services are needed, what are available, and to understand why people choose to live in the area.

They examine three sub-groups in the town, for example, senior citizens, cultural groups, occupational groups (abattoir workers, miners, cray fishermen), youth and young families. They are provided with some contact numbers, then organise their own appointments, visits, research and activities to develop a comprehensive picture of the case study, the group and the town as a whole.



“One of the greatest benefits of Rural Week is improvement in student communication and interviewing skills,” A/Professor Reagan said. “The self-directed nature of the program enables the students to practise these skills again and again. They seem empowered by the opportunity to make decision for themselves.

“And, similarly, it is very powerful for them to make discoveries about rural life for themselves, rather than have it presented to them in a lecture. One student came to the conclusion that the town was run by volunteers and it seemed to be the same people who did everything! Another was intrigued by the underlying politics of the town and how that influenced the lives and health of those who lived there.

“One of the advantages of student-directed learning is that the boundaries for learning are not pre-determined and the students generally achieve far more than they expected.”

Rural Week provides students with a solid introduction to and a firm understanding of rural health issues and the topic is revisited several times throughout the medical course. They also have a lot of fun and it puts a positive spin on the possibility of rural practice in the future.

Rural week 2003: students toured an open cut mine in Kalgoorlie (top and top left), got to know local children (above centre) and went out with ambulance officers (far left). Sally Reagan (above) joined them at the mine.

Finding the needle in the information haystack



Catherine Clark (left) and Carol Newton-Smith are interested in helping students to become information literate

The days of thumbing through indexes and pages of lists to find just the right information are gone – with the click of a mouse.

Computer technology will find you the subject in less than a second – much easier: or is it?

Information technology is certainly fast, but it's indiscriminate. And today's students need to learn how to deal with perhaps 40,000 items of information to answer just one question.

The Library's Teaching and Learning team has been working on embedding information literacy skills into undergraduate courses. The first courses to have these skills fully integrated as part of the curriculum are medicine and law.

"These skills became part of the new curriculum when it was set up a few years ago," said Carol Newton-Smith, chair of the Teaching and Learning team. She is now working, with another member of the team, Catherine Clark, to assist the integration of information literacy skills throughout other courses.

They say that the skills needed differ for different courses and professions. "For example, medical doctors need to

be able to quickly find a synthesis of information to help them deal with a patient's acute problem, while an historian may well want to read every piece of information available, and go back to the primary sources of that information," Carol said.

It's more difficult and complex to embed the learning of the skills into more general courses like arts and science where students choose their own learning pathways.

But the Library's Teaching and Learning Team see it as a challenge. As librarians, they are much more involved with teaching and learning than they were even ten years ago.

"We are now involved with enabling the students to learn, but the funny thing is that the better we set up the infrastructure for that to happen, the more transparent the flow of information becomes," said Carol. "It's easier to find specific journal articles on line because we have done a lot more work in negotiating with publishers, lining up deals and developing systems so that staff and students both on and off campus have access.

"In the past, we just ordered the journals and put them on the shelves."

The aim of embedding information literacy into course curricula is to ensure that all UWA graduates can recognise when and how much information is needed; know how information is organised; effectively access and evaluate information; manage information; understand economic, legal, social and cultural issues in the use of information; and recognise information literacy as a prerequisite for lifelong learning.

All of this needs to be developed in the context of their own learning areas.

"In short, they'll have alternative professional methods of information access instead of dealing with 40,000 choices on Google," Carol said.

Catherine said the fourth year medical students, the first cohort to go through the medical school with the new curriculum, were surveyed last year and their tutors noted that their information literacy skills were higher than those of the students going through on the old curriculum.

"It's hard to measure this sort of thing, but they definitely had higher levels of confidence about access and finding information," she said.

In the past, the Library had offered voluntary courses for students in managing information, but not many students took up the offer.

"Now, they realise how valuable these skills are, and are keen to learn them," Carol said.

Catherine and Carol both work in the Medical and Dental Library but are working on the information literacy program as members of the Teaching and Learning team. Their web page, Academic partnerships for information literacy, is at http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/services/education/academic/_partners.html

Local hero

The University's most feted staff member, Clinical Professor Fiona Wood, is the guest of the Friends of the Library next week.

Entrance is free for members, \$5 for non-members. For more information, call Pia Savage on 6488 2356.

Margaret's smile sadly missed

Patients at UWA's Medical Centre are already missing the familiar friendly face at the front counter.

The smiling face belonged to Margaret Armitage, who died recently, after an illness.

Margaret was the centre's administrative secretary, and director of the centre, Dr Christine Pascott, said Margaret made an enormous contribution to the running and growth of the centre.

"She always ensured that things ran smoothly," Dr Pascott said. "With her professional manner and high level of competence, she was respected by all staff and felt to be an essential part of the practice."



Margaret Armitage (far right) with members of the UWA Medical Centre, in 2001

Dr Pascott said Margaret had a compassionate nature and was conscious of and sensitive to patients needs. "In turn, she was well liked, respected and trusted by the patients."

Margaret leaves her husband Terry, three children and three grandchildren. Staff and patients will all miss her but her smile, her laugh and her easy-going nature will always be remembered.

Brilliant biographies

Two UWA academics are among just six finalists in the National Biography Award, to be announced later this week.

History Professor Richard Bosworth and economic historian, Dr Pamela Statham-Drew, have both already been feted for their biographies of Italian dictator Mussolini, and Western Australia's first Governor, Admiral James Stirling.

The UWA connections with the prestigious award don't stop with the authors. Dr Statham-Drew's book is published by UWA Press.

And UWA's Associate Professor Terri-ann White is one of the three judges. An author herself and a former owner of a bookshop, A/Professor White is the Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies, and has been an occasional judge for writing awards since 1991.

"The fact that there were 55 entries for this award, that there were that many high quality biographies published in Australia in a 12-month period, just blows me away," she said. "The two local books stood out with the other four short-listed books and no, it doesn't make it harder for me to judge, knowing that two of the authors are from UWA and one book is published here."

The \$12,500 annual award is administered by the State Library of New South Wales, but is funded by a private benefactor, Dr Geoffrey Cains, a dermatologist from Mittagong, NSW, who has a passion for writing and for biography in particular.

Research exchange *molto bene*

The University is the home for a new branch of ARIA.

But don't expect the members to be handing out awards to Kylie Minogue and Delta Goodrem.

ARIA is the Association for Research between Italy and Australasia (or Associazione per la Ricerca tra Italia e Australasia) and, as the name suggests, the organisation encourages research, collaboration and exchange between Italy and, in the case of this branch, WA.

The group has about 25 members, most of them from UWA. Secretary Dr Charlie Musca, from the School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering, said a few members from Curtin University had recently joined.

"We would like to extend our membership to all the universities in WA, to all academics who have an interest or a link to Italian research," Dr Musca said.

Currently, most of the members are of Italian descent but membership is not limited to these people. It is open to any researcher in any discipline, to promote scholarly liaison between Italian and Australasian universities.

Dr Musca said the initial benefit of ARIA, over the past several months, had been networking. "We also ran a conference late last year. And an exchange agreement has been drawn up between the Western Australian Telecommunications Research Institute (WATRI) and one of the regions in Italy."

The director of WATRI (based in the UWA Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics), Professor Tony Cantoni is the chair of ARIA in WA.

For details about ARIA, call Charlie Musca on 6488 3787 or Tony Cantoni on 6488 7251.

THE last word

Tony Phan

PhD student, tutor and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital's Young Investigator of the Year 2003

Where is my evil Science Lab Master?

A look at medical research and how it can be used in modern society.

I am just a simple PhD student. I haven't done anything spectacular, nor won any major awards.

However, the Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR) Week last year left me thinking about my role in medical research.

There is a void that exists in the public awareness and recognition of medical science. For too many years science has been stereotyped as a "boring and complex" field. It is seen as something that only the elite can comprehend or something that is only accessible to those with PhDs.

Try playing a word association game about science. Physics – Relativity. Rela-what? Chemistry – Boyle's Law. Who's Boyle? Psychology – Cognitive. Speak English please. Biology – Ribonucleic acid. Ribobu-who?

Then there are the fictions which portray scientists as evil geniuses trying to clone Adolph Hitler and destroy the world. Let us not forget about the evil dark scientist living in the dungeon whose aim is to create a super-human race to kill mankind. And the stereotypical science nerd with thick dark glasses and a voice like Steve Erkel.

Science, however, is so much more. Professor Fiona Stanley spoke at the ASMR student symposium and said: "Make



mistakes!". What did she mean? She referred to, in my opinion, the removal of the egotistical head scientist. I mean, it is US that have made science what it is today. It is the SCIENTIST who has made science boring and elitist. Professor Barry Marshall said: "The smartest people should be in science".

Science IS fun, it IS interesting and Science IS cool.

Did you know that approximately 85 to 90 per cent of human DNA is considered to be 'junk'? Did you know that we have millions of proteins that are coded by only thousands of genes? Have you heard of Moore's Law and how the doubling of transistors on computer chips may eventually lead to a halt in computing technology? Have you ever had a lucid dream where you are 'conscious' within your sub-conscious? Did you know that changing the way babies sleep drastically reduces their chance of SIDS death? Did you know that cells involved in modelling bones could talk to each other?

Most will answer no to these questions. How then do we change the face of science, so it is not surprising that people know these answers and want to know more? How do we turn 'dull, complicated' science into 'fun, simple and interesting' science? One of the keynote speakers at the ASMR Gala Dinner said "I was talking to Dog about medical science". She was referring to a rugby player whom she had met previously. They spent some time talking about medical science and its implications for society. Some may say what she did was silly. Why talk to a guy who probably does not know anything about science? Why? Because to change science you need to bring it to the people.

We must turn to the guy next door and talk to him about science in a language that he understands. Science is the past, present and future. Imagine this scenario: you are at a dinner party and someone raises the question of cloning. What do you do? Step away from the debate? Step into the debate as an egotistical scientist who knows all, and every layman who challenges him should go to the centre of the universe and burn in 20000000C heat? No. Talk about it openly. Present your ideas. Be humble but informative.

When I was listening to the talks at the ASMR conference, it occurred to me that we, as scientists, are too elitist!!!! That's right. We, the scientists, have made what science has become today. Absolutely boring. No wonder the general public does not understand what cloning is or what a stem cell is. How can they understand when we are stuck in the labs 24/7 and refuse human contact?

What do we do about it? How can we fix this issue? Firstly, we continue what we do best. Scientific research. Let us not forget that we are scientists and it is our job to search for the answers that are eluding mankind. Secondly, be open. Be open to your colleagues, businessmen, truck drivers, school teachers, rugby players, the cleaning lady etcetera.

Everyone has something to express. Let them talk. Be patient when explaining a concept to another colleague or non-scientist. Thirdly, be open-minded. Someone once said, "An ignorant man, is an angry man." Let's share what we know with those who don't.



Gorillas in the Gallery

barrier that humans like to draw around themselves is not really so tight after all.”

He said he was sure *Pri-mates* would appeal to a wide range of people across the University. It was opened by Professor of Animal Biology, Lyn Beazley.

Huge, much larger-than-life charcoal drawings of apes' hands, feet and fingers are executed on silk or rice paper. “The texture of the paper is important to help capture the texture of the animal's skin and hair,” said Lisa.

She works from sketches she makes while observing apes – something she's done in zoos around the world as well as in Borneo where she saw orangutans in the wild. “I also take videos and have them playing in the studio while I'm making the big drawings. They help to give a life of its own to each drawing.

“Anatomy experts have said that an ape can't bend his finger as I've drawn it, but this is a drawing, an impression, not a photograph.”

She says living in Berlin gave her an appreciation of the huge monoliths so common in the eastern bloc and her oversized works draw on that feeling of iconography.

Lisa has also used photographic images put together on computers and displayed on light boxes, which give a shining but misty look to photos taken in Borneo.

A series of photographs and videos, called *Ape and the Bunnyman* is a re-enactment of a scientific experiment, putting a human in a rabbit suit, alongside apes in a zoo, like a mediator between the apes and the humans.

She has done her research in Europe and Australia and had residencies at the Atlanta (Georgia, US) Zoo and the National Gallery of Malaysia. One of the highlights of her observing and communing with apes around the world was handprinting a baby gorilla in the Berlin Zoo, with the help of a police officer and his fingerprint kit.

Another was seeing an orangutan run, upright, on his hind legs, just metres away from her on the Kinabatangan River in Borneo.

Pri-mates is at the Gallery until April 20.

Artist Lisa Roet isn't surprised that the bronze chimps that are part of the current exhibition at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery remind some people of a high profile Australian politician.

But look again and you understand why the soft sounds of chimpanzees chattering are wafting around you. These busts, which curator of the exhibition, John Barrett-Lennard says lend a certain dignity to the subject, are of primates, not prime ministers.

“I love using traditional media like bronze for busts,” says Melbourne-born artist Lisa (above), whose multimedia works make up the *Pri-mates* exhibition.

“But I like to make it more contemporary, with the sound of the chimps adding another dimension.”

Lisa became fascinated by apes (gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans) as a child. While studying art at the RMIT, she always incorporated animals in her work. But it wasn't until she went to Berlin after she graduated, that Lisa began to concentrate seriously on apes.

She has been studying them, drawing them, photographing them and sculpting them since 1990. Her works always relate the apes to humans.

“Animals are often rejected by a lot of artists because they see them as sentimental subject matter,” said John Barrett-Lennard. “But this exhibition suggests another way of thinking about the fact that we are all animals and realising that the tight



Classifieds

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HOME OR APARTMENT for returning US-based visiting academic. Seeks accommodation from 1 April to 31 August 2004 or portion thereof. Two large or three bedrooms for husband, wife and daughters 16 and 13. Prefer UWA vicinity including Crawley, Nedlands, Subiaco, Claremont, Dalkeith, Cottesloe, Mosman Park, Swanbourne etc. with water views ideal. Up to \$350 per week for unfurnished or \$450 for furnished. Contact Kevin Lowe at klowe@ecel.uwa.edu.au. References from 2002 visit available.

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Newstaff

Just over a hundred new staff joined the University between November and February. Welcome to:

Irina Akopian, library officer I, Library
Romulo Allio, Analyst/programmer, Student Services
Dr Claudia Amonini, lecturer, Economics and Commerce
Paul Anderson, apprentice cabinetmaker, OFM workshop
Melissa Andrade, Lab technologist, Biomedical and Chemical Sciences
Jacqueline Ash, graduate research assistant, Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences
John Atwell, admin officer, Library
Donald Ayers, library officer I, Library
David Barber, maintenance planner, OFM
Dr Christopher Beer, senior lecturer, Medicine and Pharmacology
Dr Anthony Blackett, information systems officer, Human Resources
Alexandra Bremner, research associate, Population Health
Michael Brophy, fractional lecturer, Graduate School of Management
Dr Jie Chen, lecturer, Social and Cultural Studies
Eddy Ciciriello, fractional lecturer, GSM
Graeme Clark, painter, OFM workshop
Dr Alan Collins, research fellow, Earth and Geographical Sciences
Dr Christine Cowpland, lecturer, Medicine and Pharmacology
Anna-Marie Cream, secretary, Dentistry
Linda Creswell, admin assistant, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Jenny Damjanovic, receptionist, Oral Health Centre of WA
Rosa De Castro Cruz, library officer I, Library
Professor Patricia Dechow, visiting appointment, Economics and Commerce
Dr Susan Drieberg, research associate, Earth and Geographical Sciences

More new staff, who joined the University over the summer, will be published in the next issue of UWANews.

Research Grants & Contracts

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL LINKAGE/BHP BILLITON MINERALS PTY LTD

Mr Paul Crompton and **Dr Yanrui Wu**, Economics and Commerce: 'The future of Australian mineral exports'—\$52,780 (2003-04).

AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

Dr Robert Woodward, Physics: 'Clustering in magnetic bulk metallic glasses'—\$4000 (2003).

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & AGEING: MISCELLANEOUS

Dr Suzanne McEvoy, **A/Prof Mark Stevenson**, **A/Prof R. McClure** and **Prof R. Norton**, Population Health: 'Strengthening national capacity in injury epidemiology, prevention and control: development, implementation and evaluation of a distance-based delivery system', \$246,745 (2003-05).

THE APEX TRUST FOR AUTISM

Ms Alana Maley and **Dr Murray Maybery**, Psychology and Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences: 'The effectiveness of early intervention treatment for children with autism spectrum disorders'—\$1590.91 (2003).

CHEVRON TEXACO

Dr Roberta Bencini, Animal Biology: 'Gorgon support for Barrow Island Boodie Project, Felicity Donaldson'—\$27,272.73 (2003-04).

MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA (MLA)

Adj/Prof Michael Ewing, Centre Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity and CLIMA: 'National perennial grass breeding and selection workshop'—\$34,400 (2003).

FUNDING APPLICATION FOR AUSTRALIA-INDIA COUNCIL

Prof Dennis Haskell and **Ms Megan Mckinlay**, Social and Cultural Studies: 'The Tenth Biennial Symposium on Culture and Society in the Asia-Pacific Region'—\$3500 (2003).

ARTSWA

Prof Dennis Haskell and **Ms Megan Mckinlay**, Social and Cultural Studies: 'The Tenth Biennial Symposium on Culture and Society in the Asia-Pacific Region'—\$1800 (2003).

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL LINKAGE/EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Prof Paul Miller, **Ms Margaret Giles**, **A/Prof Nicolaas Groenewold**, **Mr Ross Kelly**, Centre for Labour Market Research, Faculty of Economics and Commerce Office and Economics and Commerce: 'Estimation of school cost functions'—\$60,000 (2003-05).

SOUTHWEST DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION/BUSSELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms Fiona McKenzie, Earth and Geographical Sciences and Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences: 'Busselton local government area economic activity audit'—\$22,727.27 (2003-04).

Research Grants & Contracts will feature in each issue of the UWANews. Any queries about the research grants published in this issue should be directed to the Research Grants Office, ext. 3702.

CALL FOR PAPERS: ECONOMIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

What We Teach and How We Teach It:

Perspectives on Economics from Around the Globe

at the **University of South Australia**, presented by **The Centre for Regulation and Market Analysis**
Adelaide 13 to 16 July 2004

Some conference presentations will be published in **The Journal of Economic Education** and in a proceedings volume.
Other participants include William Becker • David Round • Martin Shanahan • John Siegfried • William Walstad • Michael Watts

Call for Papers: The conference organisers call for papers in all areas of tertiary economic education. Abstracts of no more than 300 words are due by **19 March 2004** and should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, 12 pt. Times-New Roman, double-spaced. Authors of accepted papers will be notified by 30 March 2004. Completed manuscripts are required by 3 May 2004. Details about the conference and the requirements for papers are available from www.ecoed.unisa.edu.au

Keynote Speakers include

Ted Bergstrom • Edward Chen • David Colander • Avinash Dixit • William Green • John Hey • Kim Sosin

ABSTRACTS to kellie.wright@unisa.edu.au

GENERAL ENQUIRIES to ecoed@unisa.edu.au

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Apple iMac computers, 320.0 MB RAM, 100 MHz, G3 processor, 350 MHz, 7 GB HD, slot loading CD-ROM, built in network and modem, Mac OS 9.1	4	\$450	—	Shana, x 7207 or James, x 1659	
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Bids should be accepted by Monday 22 March with schools to have first option

Schools are reminded that all University equipment available for sale must be advertised in the **UWAnews**. Receipts should be PeopleSoft account coded 490 (computing with barcode), 491 (non-computing with barcode) or 493 (items with no barcode). If equipment has an existing barcode please contact extension 3618/2546 for details.

CONDITION refers to the general condition of item (1 = as new; 2 = good; 3 = serviceable; 4 = unserviceable). AGE refers to the nearest year.



CAMPUS Diary

March 8-21

Thursday 11 March

CHEMISTRY SEMINAR

'Dating skeletal remains using the luminol test for blood', Jonathan Creamer. 5.15pm, Simmonds Lecture Theatre.

Friday 12 March

MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR

'MCMV mediated inhibition of apoptosis in dendritic cells', Dr Chris Andoniou, COVS. 9am, Microbiology Seminar Room 1.1.

PHILOSOPHY SOCIETY MEETING

'Is there a nexus between reasons and rationality?' Professor Michael Smith, Australian National University. 4.15pm, Arts Seminar Room 1.33.

LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY

The Soul of the White Ant and Other Stories. Referring to the work of Lisa Roet, critic Diane Losche argues that the artist's works are natural science precisely because they "problematise the nature of the knowledge that we have of other forms of life on this planet". WA artist Perdita Phillips will speak about investigations into the boundaries of this other kind of natural science in her own artwork. 1pm, LWAG.

Friday 19 March

MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR

'Flavivirus resistance: the complex story', Dr Nadia Urosevic, Microbiology. 9am, Microbiology Seminar Room 1.1.

LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY

Leif Cocks, curator of exotic mammals at Perth Zoo, has worked with the successful orangutan programme for over 15 years and is heavily involved in international efforts to develop conservation plans for them. He is also President and founder of the Australian Orangutan Project, which supports in situ conservation of orangutans. 1pm, LWAG.

CLIMA SEMINAR

'GRDC Western Panel update', Mr Dale Baker, GRDC; 'Biosecurity issues for researchers on farm and staying on the look-out with GrainGuard', Mr Greg Shea, DAWA. 4pm, CLIMA Seminar Room.



What's On Next

Places are still available in the following workshops:

WEBCT SUPPORT

Good Web Design for WebCT

Mon 29 March (9.30am to 12.30pm) Closes 8 March

Communication and Collaborative Learning with WebCT

Mon 5 April (9.30am to 12.30pm) Closes 15 March

MANAGING YOUR CAREER

Applying for an Internal Position Practice in Facing Selection Panels (Academic Level B)

Mon 5 April (1.45pm to 3.30pm) Closes 15 Mar

Applying for an Internal Position The Written Application

Wed 31 March (12 noon to 2pm) Closes 10 March

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

English as a Second Language-Improving Your Pronunciation

Wed 24, 31 March, Wed 7, 14, 21, 28 April (3pm to 4.30pm) Closes 3 March

SELECTING THE BEST

Staff Selection for Academic Staff Panels

Mon 5 Apr (9am to 4.30pm) Closes 15 March

LEARNING IT


My Source Mondays


Mon 22, 29, Mar, 5, 19, 26 Apr (9.30am to 12.30pm) Closes 23 March onwards

A Novice's Approach to Using Excel


Tues 23 Mar or Thurs 22 Apr (9.30 to 12.30pm) Closes 2 March or 1 April

For further information and registration for these or other workshops, see <http://www.csd.uwa.edu.au/programme/0104/workshop.asp>





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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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The University of Western Australia

invites all graduates and other members of Convocation to attend the

First Ordinary Meeting

of

Convocation, the UWA Graduates Association

which will be held on **Friday 19 March 2004** at
6.30p.m. for 7p.m. start at University House

The address

'Neural Repair—What does the future hold?'

will be given by:

Professor Alan Harvey

Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences, UWA

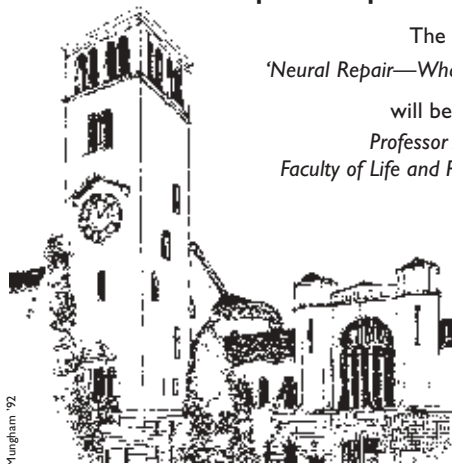
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