

# New perspective: Simpson alumna returns; uses experiences to benefit alumni relations

By Jennifer Whitham Johnson

The phrase 'It takes one to know one,' may be a bit trite and overused but it's also true.



Witke

Coreen Witke knows this well because not only is she Simpson's director of alumni relations but she is also a Simpson alumna. What better way to get an inside scoop on what young Simpson alums are

looking for than to be one yourself? Getting and keeping as many as the approximately 10,000 living alumni as possible involved and interested in their alma mater is no small task. But it's one to which Witke brings enthusiasm as well as a fresh perspective and ideas.

Witke says her main focus is increasing attendance at alumni events, something she hopes to accomplish through making some changes to the current event planning and invitation processes.

"My first thought when planning things is to plan them the way we've planned them in the past for the first year or so and then make changes after that," says Witke.

In so doing, she takes the initiative to make specific notes and generate ideas regarding how to modify events to increase attendance and to make the gatherings more interactive.

One thing Witke has already discovered in the past five months since she took the job, is that many of the alums would be more likely to attend if the

invitation were personalized.

"Instead of just getting an invitation in the mail, they are getting an invitation and a phone call from a friend and perhaps an e-mail to encourage them to attend," says Witke.

Of course, this personal attention requires volunteers to make the calls and send the e-mails. Thus, recruiting alumni to give of their time and talent is another issue high on Witke's priority list.

She says, "Through talking with alums, some that are on the alumni board and some that have just been involved in the past, it seems to me that the overall feeling is that people are going to decide to come to an event by seeing who else is coming. And I think that by calling people and having friends call other friends will help increase our attendance and obviously we need volunteers to do that."

Another benefit Witke has found in alumni involvement relates to establishing relationships.

"I think it's very important because they're the ones that we are looking at to support the current programs. We work very closely with the advancement office and I think that relationship building is a key component in fund-raising efforts."

Witke adds that she didn't necessarily expect the highly positive response she's received from alumni wanting to get involved.

"One thing that surprised me the most is the number of alumni that are really willing to participate. They are just waiting for somebody from Simpson to call them and ask them to volunteer."

These individuals not only make the phone calls encouraging fellow graduates to attend alumni events, they also serve on various alumni committees put together for each event and 35 of them are specifically on the alumni board.

"These people are all volunteers."

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Coreen Witke, director of alumni relations

There really is no compensation in any way shape or form other than maybe a free soda or something occasionally. They help form our events, how we communicate with our alums, where the alumni association is going to go and their input is invaluable because it gives us insight into what our alums are thinking."

Additionally, Witke is working with alumni to explore the possibility of offering new opportunities for networking.

"I have had a chance to talk to some graduates that have ideas about new

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# Alumni:

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programs they want to start or ways that we can use their abilities to help either our current students or other alums," says Witke.

She shares an example of an alumnus who works for an organization offering a specific kind of continuing education for accountants. Typically the accountants would get the credits through a seminar and pay for it themselves. However this alumna's organization offers them for free.

"Her idea was, 'how can we offer this to our alums and let them know that this service is out there,' says Witke.

Adding, "Perhaps Simpson could organize something where we let the organization use our facilities so that our alumni can continue to see the benefits of being a Simpson graduate."

Witke has other ambitions as well. She would like to start alumni chapters in

cities around the nation where there are large populations of alumni. Through talking with other alumni directors she has learned that these chapters can be very successful in engaging alumni and providing a Simpson connection without them actually being on campus. Witke is also hoping to form a student alumni association here on campus.

"This would engage the students while they are students so they begin to see what alums do and how they help the current students and see how they can stay involved in Simpson's environment after graduation."

Lastly she adds that she is having a great time.

"I think this job is a lot of fun and I'm really glad that I'm here and can plan these events, talk to our alums and talk to all my friends. I think it's pretty cool."

## LIFE AFTER FIVE



Clark

## A look at life with Jennifer Clark

**Title:** conference and adult learning evening secretary

**Started at Simpson:** June 2001

**Family:** Two cats Sophie and Sassy who are "the joy of my life."

**Likes most about job:** "In the conference office I get to deal with people I wouldn't normally talk to on campus and in adult learning I love working with the students. Watching them reach their goals is very satisfying."

**Recent vacation:** "I don't plan vacations because people get hurt on them. Once I had a friend get her foot runover. So I might take an impromptu trip but I never call it a vacation because then chaos ensues."

**Outside of Simpson:** Maintains CISHRM (Central Iowa Society for Human Resources Management) website and does their monthly newsletter, teaches computer classes year-round for CITA (Community Information Technology Access) and hopes to get back to volunteering at the library again soon.

## NEW FACE



Mertes

Jeni Mertes has joined the adult learning staff as part-time secretary in the Indianola office. Previously, Mertes worked at Principal through Manpower Temp. Agency.

# Benefit performance planned as part of V-Day celebration

In celebration of the V-Day college campaign, Simpson senior theatre major, Aimee McCabe will direct a benefit performance of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," on Thursday, Feb. 27 and Friday, Feb. 28 in Pote Theatre at 7:30 p.m.

V-Day is a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues," to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their

communities.

All proceeds from the Simpson College V-Day campaign will go to the (WCDVC) Warren County Domestic Violence Coalition. Along with the performance, food, clothing and monetary donations will be accepted in the theatre lobby.

According to Jennifer Nostrala, associate professor of theatre arts and producer of Simpson's benefit performance of "The Vagina Monologues," there are approximately 700 colleges around the world currently producing the play.

Through this campaign, Simpson is working to raise \$6,000 for the WCDVC; monies will be pooled with grant funds to finance a victim's advocate for Warren County.

Nostrala believes strongly in the production and says it is in no way a male-bashing play.

"We didn't want to do this just for the sake of doing it. We aren't doing it so we can say, 'we did the 'Vagina Monologues,' aren't we neat. The production is not an

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## FOOTNOTES

An article on the history of Iowa's coal mining industry by **Michael Adams**, public relations and marketing, was the cover story for the January-February 2003 issue of *The Iowan* magazine. The 2000-word article is titled "King Coal."

**Ron Albrecht**, professor of music, presented a piano and flute recital with Sandra Wacha at St. John's Lutheran Church on Nov. 6. They performed several selections from their new CD recording "Silver".

Assistant professor of English **Dan Bauer's** essay titled "Speaking Matters: Liberation Theology, Rhetorical Performance, and Social Action" has been accepted for publication in the June 2003 issue of *CCC*.

**John Bolen**, registrar, led an "Ethical Leadership in Academic Administration" workshop at Southwestern Community College at the Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium in November.

**Tricia Calkins**, assistant professor of German, attended the national conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Nov. 21-23 in Salt Lake City. This was part of her leadership training through the American Association of Teachers of German.

**Maria DiPalma**, professor of music, attended the National Association of Schools of Music annual conference held in New Orleans on Nov. 23-26.

**Amy Doling**, assistant professor of biology, gave a seminar at Des Moines University on Nov. 15, titled "The use of a modified form of anthrax toxin as a delivery system for the stimulation of CD8+ T cells."

Music Department faculty members **Maria DiPalma**, **Anne Larson**, **Scott LaGraff**, **Virginia Croskery** and **Jacqueline Thomson** attended the state meeting of The National Association of Teachers of Singing and also served as adjudicators for the event on Nov. 1 and 2 at Wartburg

College. There were 15 Simpson students who were winners in the various levels of competition. **Michael Patterson** and **Jean Park** also attended as accompanists for many of the Simpson students.

**Jennifer Hedda**, assistant professor of history, presented a paper titled "The Role of the Orthodox Church in the Formation of Civic Society in Late Imperial Russia" at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. The AAASS met in Pittsburgh, Penn., Nov. 20-24.

**James Kim**, instructor of music, and **Maria DiPalma**, served as adjudicators for the Iowa Music Teachers National Association district auditions which were held at Drake University on Nov. 3.

An essay by **Gary Kinkel**, associate professor of religion, called "Jesus Projects: A Theological Critique" has been published in the most recent edition of the journal *Quaker Religious Thought*.

**Alvera Kromer**, assistant professor of communication studies, attended the Public Relations Society of America International Conference in San Francisco, Nov. 15-19. Five Simpson College students attended the concurrent Public Relations Students Society of America, also in San Francisco.

**Eduardo Magalhaes III**, associate professor of political science, attended the annual meeting of the Iowa Conference of Political Scientists at Drake University Nov. 2. He participated on a panel discussing teaching in political science and presented materials on integrating current events into class work. In addition, he was elected vice-president of the ICPS, which means Simpson will be hosting the conference next year.

**Bob Nutgrass**, associate professor of physical education, was a presenter at this year's state convention of the Iowa Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance on Nov. 2-3 at the University of Northern Iowa. As president

of IAHPERD, Nutgrass presided over the convention and worked with the president-elect and vice presidents to run the two-day event at Price Lab School in Cedar Falls, the only school in Iowa to have daily physical education for every student. He presented a session to the future professionals on getting their first job, along with national president of the American Alliance of HPERD, JoAnn Owens-Nausler of Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Jeff Parmelee**, assistant professor of biology, hosted the annual fall meeting of the Iowa Natural History Association at Simpson College on Nov. 22 and 23. There was a scientific presentation on the results of a biological survey of the proposed Honey Creek Resort State Park along Lake Rathbun. Also, more than 20 naturalists from throughout Iowa met to discuss potential scientific problems and research projects around the state.

**Parmelee** and **Ron Warnet**, professor of chemistry, gave talks to the West Central High School Science Club in Stuart. Warnet talked about his research with inhibitors of Agrobacterium virulence and Parmelee talked about his research with rattlesnakes in Madison County.

**Steve Rose**, associate professor of education, will present a topic based on his sabbatical research, called "Where Choice Theory and Brain-Based Research Meet: A Formula for Effective Education," at the Midwest Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference on Feb. 24-26.

**Tobias Winright**, assistant professor of religion, preached at Trinity United Methodist Church on Nov. 17, and he gave a presentation to Sunday school classes there on "United Methodist Perspectives on War and Peace." He also did presentations for the youth group at St Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Des Moines on Nov. 10 and for the youth group at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Indianola on Nov. 13. On Nov. 22-25, he attended the American Academy of Religion meeting in Toronto.

## V-Day campaign

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end, it is a means to an end.”

Nostrala adds, “There is a lack of awareness in Warren County regarding what is going on in our own backyards in terms of domestic violence.” Nostrala says she hopes this performance will heighten that awareness.

Everyone who auditioned for the play got a part to read. Forty-six individuals will appear in the production, including six faculty/staff members and three men.

Tickets for the benefit performance can be purchased through the Simpson Theatre box office at X1601 for \$5. The box office opens Wednesday, Feb. 19.

Additionally, there will be a luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 13, with the proceeds going to the WCDVC. Contact Karen Render in the theatre department at X1647 for luncheon details.

For more information on V-Day go to <http://www.vday.org>

### THE CORNERSTONE

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## Former Governor Ray to speak on character and ethics in the workplace

The Honorable Robert Ray, former governor of Iowa, and Scott Raecker, executive director of the Institute for Character Development, will speak on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m. in Lekberg Hall. The talk is titled, “Character Counts: Ethics in the Workplace.” The presentation will include time for questions about current ethical issues.

Created as a lasting legacy of the Sesquicentennial and chaired by Ray, the Institute for Character Development at Drake University is focused on enhancing the atmosphere and environment in which decisions are made in Iowa—both individually and collectively.

An Iowa native, Ray served five terms

as Governor of Iowa from 1969 to 1983. He was Republican State Chairman. Ray has been a United States Representative to the United Nations. He was chairman of the National Governor’s Association, Midwestern Governors’ Association, Republican Governors’ Association, chairman of the Educational Commission of the States and a number of other national organizations.

Raecker, also an Iowa native, is certified by the Josephson Institute of Ethics as a character development specialist and corporate ethics trainer. In this capacity, he works to create a better Iowa by sharing and developing the important message that character counts in Iowa.

## Chicoine to deliver 2003 Open Boundaries Lecture

Jerry Chicoine, former chairman and president and current business consultant for Pioneer Hi-Bred, will deliver the spring 2003 Open Boundaries Lecture.

Chicoine will speak about “Business Ethics and Integrity in the Age of Enron,” Wednesday, March 5 at 4 p.m. in Smith Chapel.

Along with being on the Simpson College Board of Trustees as co-chair of the capital campaign committee, Chicoine served the college as a business ethics professor during the fall 2001 term.

Additionally, Chicoine serves on the FBL Financial Board, the Iowa Health System Board, the Color Converting, Inc. Board and is a member of the On with Life

Board’s Foundation Committee.

The Open Boundaries Lecture serves two main purposes; to expose students to new ideas through outside speakers and to increase the visibility of the department of management, accounting and economics as well as Simpson College.



Chicoine