Message from the Dean...

Welcome to the Summer 2005 edition of Visions! As I read over the manuscripts for this issue, I experienced mixed emotions: sadness, pride, excitement, nostalgia. It is sad to note the passing of beloved former Associate Dean Joe Hourihan, yet I was so pleased with the celebration of his life that we held in March. My excitement comes with the school’s major milestone announced here: the establishment of our doctoral-degree program. This accomplishment comes at the end of a long and sometimes arduous process to which many on the faculty and staff have contributed. I am proud of their hard work and dedication.

I am also excited by the introduction of the university’s (and the school’s) capital campaign. We are beginning with a strong show of support and I anticipate greater participation as the campaign unfolds.

I’m saddened by having to say goodbye to key members of the school, Ann Alvarez, associate dean, and Mavis Spencer, associate professor and coordinator of Field Education, but I am grateful to know that Ann will begin the next phase of her life in the beautiful state of Hawaii—saying farewell to Michigan’s winters. I am pleased that Mavis’ friends and colleagues have given her a warm and wonderful beginning to her retirement with the event at the International Institute at the end of May and the establishment of our first PhD endowed scholarship in her honor.

The accomplishments of our faculty and alumni are another source of pride, as demonstrated by several articles in this issue. Two faculty members, former Dean Leon Chestang and Professor Creigs Beverly have been awarded well-deserved emeritus status. And I couldn’t finish this message without giving kudos to Nora Holt, who is stepping down after a very successful term as president of the Alumni Association. Fortunately, she is joining the Board of Visitors.

I enjoy my job as dean, thanks to the great support from all of you. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the pleasure I had in meeting so many of our alumni and friends at the Detroit Yacht Club in June. It was also gratifying to hear the applause and cheers signaling approval of Anwar Najor-Durack as the new director of field education. It was wonderful to give an upbeat report on the state of the school and to reconnect with many of you.

Happy Summer!

Dean Phyllis I. Vroom
University and School
Kick Off Capital Campaign
with Festive Celebration

Wayne State University and the School of Social Work publicly launched the “Wayne First” Capital Campaign at a May 24 kick-off ceremony on the main campus. University President Irvin D. Reid, joined by city officials announced the campaign. The university has received a total of $251 million in donations to date. The capital campaign goal is $500 million. The School of Social Work’s share of that is $77.25 million and Dean Phyllis Vroom has announced that the school has reached 21% of its goal.

“We applaud all the generous donors who have shown a commitment to this campaign and see the value of investing in education and endowing Wayne State’s future for years to come,” said Wayne State President Irvin D. Reid. “Their gifts have pushed Wayne State to the halfway mark of our $500 million goal for the Wayne First Capital Campaign. We are excited about reaching this milestone and believe this establishes a positive tone for the campaign. This campaign will be the catalyst to take Wayne State from a great university to an extraordinary one.”

Planning for the campaign began in the Fall of 2001. Actual solicitation of “Leadership Gifts” covered the period between Spring 2003 and the launch date. The campaign is expected to wrap up in 2009.

The funds generated from the capital campaign will be used in several areas including:

• Support of student academic programs and scholarships, research and community outreach.
• Increasing the number of endowed chairs and professorships.
• Supporting new construction and renovation.
• Related priorities have also been established for the School of Social Work: expansion of the School’s endowment to provide additional financial support for students; funding the new Doctoral Program and establishing an endowed chair, and developing a Center for Social Work Research and Technical Assistance and Professional Development to link the School’s research and training capabilities with community organizations.

The kick-off celebration marked the announcement of the public phase of the campaign. The festival-like celebration took over Anthony Wayne Drive at North and South residence halls and featured Detroit-themed treats such as Good Humor Ice Cream, Coney Island hot dogs and Vernors. Schools and Colleges each had a tent to host alumni and other potential donors. WSU community artists, singers and dancers performed.

At the School of Social Work tent, Dean Vroom was joined by Professors Eileen Trzciński and Anna M. Santiago, Associate Professor (and now interim associate dean) Beverly Black as well as Assistant Professors Poco Kernsmith and Joanne Sobek, all of whom presented displays of current projects. Other representatives of the School of Social Work included Neva Nahan, coordinator for research, Marilynn Knall, assistant to the dean, Mavis Spencer, director, field education and Cassandra J. Bowers, senior lecturer and coordinator of the BSH Program.

For more information on the various ways you can contribute to the capital campaign, fill out and mail the tear-off card included with this issue or contact Marguerite Carlton, director of development 313-577-8807.

School of Social Work
Announces New PhD program

This fall, the WSU School of Social Work will begin to accept applications for its new doctoral-degree program — Michigan’s only PhD program focusing solely on research to advance social work practice in urban settings. The first students will begin classes in fall 2006.

“The PhD program in social work will build on our school’s international reputation in creating knowledge for social work practice, especially in urban settings,” said Irvin D. Reid, WSU president. “This knowledge will help to address social problems not only in Detroit and Southeast Michigan, but also worldwide.”

Dean Phyllis I. Vroom added, “This program will integrate theory and practice to produce changes for the greater good based on evidence, and will contribute significantly to our mission to further the well-being of diverse, poor, vulnerable and oppressed individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.” The new program is among only 73 doctoral-degree programs in social work worldwide, of which 64 are located in the United States.

The school’s years of work on the doctoral-degree proposal culminated on April 20, when the university’s Board of Governors approved the program. In addition to the PhD program, the School of Social Work offers the nation’s No. 1 bachelor of social work program, according to The Gourman Report. The master of social work program is ranked in the top 25 percent of all graduate social work programs in the nation, according to US News & World Report.

Further information about the PhD program will be available soon on the school’s Web site, http://www.socialwork.wayne.edu/.

Anna M. Santiago, PhD, professor and director of the doctoral-degree program can be reached at (313) 577-8806 or sswphd@wayne.edu. Peggy Brunhofer, chair, Edith Harris Endowed Lecture series, and committee members Poco Kernsmith and Anthony King have selected Carl C. Bell, MD to deliver the 18th annual lecture to be held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 15, in the Community Arts Auditorium.

Bell is President and CEO, Community Mental Health Council and Foundation, Inc. This comprehensive community mental health center in Chicago has 475 employees and is worth $22 million. Bell’s lecture is titled “Overlooked Aspects of Youth Violence: Implications for Social Work Interventions.” His books will be available before and after his lecture.

Bell is also director of public and community psychiatry and a clinical professor of psychiatry and public health at the University of Illinois. During his 30-year career, Bell has published more than 275 articles and several books on mental health. He recently authored The Sonity of Survival: Reflections on Community Mental Health and Wellness. He has appeared as an expert on television shows such as Nightline, CBS Sunday Morning, The News Hour with Jim Lehrer and Today. He has also lectured internationally on various topics. Bell graduated from University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, in 1987 and earned his MD from Meharry College in Nashville, Tenn. He completed his psychiatric residency in 1974 at the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute in Chicago, where his work was with children, adolescents and adults.

The Harris Lectures honor the memory of Edith Harris, a student at the School of Social Work from 1966 to 1968. After her untimely death, the Harris Foundation established an endowed series to carry forth her concern for the mental health of individuals and families. For more information on this year’s lecture, call (313) 993-4066.

Carl C. Bell Named Speaker for Edith Harris Memorial Endowed Lecture

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SSW welcomes three new faculty members

For the 2004-05 academic year, the School of Social Work's outstanding faculty is poised to become even stronger with the addition of three new full-time members.

Dr. A. Antonio Gonzalez-Prendes is a home-grown scholar in the sense that he earned both his MSW and Ph.D. from Wayne State University. He has also been a member of the part-time faculty here, teaching graduate courses in Human Behavior in the Social Environment and Cognitive-Behavioral Applications for Interpersonal Practice.

Gonzalez-Prendes’s teaching and research work focuses on applications of cognitive-behavioral theory and treatment within the context of social work education and practice. As a relatively recent doctoral degree recipient, he hopes to build upon his dissertation research addressing the cognitive basis of anger as it relates to minority populations and substance abusers.

In addition to teaching at WSU, Gonzalez-Prendes has held various leadership posts at Renaissance West Community Health Services in Detroit. He has also been on the staff of several local social service agencies.

Dr. Royce A. Hutson comes to the School from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which awarded him his Ph.D. last March. He also holds an MSW in Social Work from the University of Georgia and a BS in Psychology from Loyola University of Chicago.

Hutson has taught various Social Work classes at the University of Wisconsin and has served as a technician, counselor and therapist for various mental health agencies. He has also been the Director of Evaluation for Families and Schools Together (FAST) a national training and evaluation center.

Hutson’s teaching interests include social welfare policy, macro-practice, program evaluation and research methods. For four years, he has been a commissioner on the Community Development Block Grant Commission in Madison, Wisconsin.

In 1998 Hutson was the commencement speaker at the University of Georgia School of Social Work.

Dr. Shirley Ann Thomas received her Ph.D. in Social Work and Sociology from the University of Michigan. Since 2001 she has been an Assistant Professor in the Bachelor of Social Work Program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Dr. Thomas earned her M.A. in sociology from the University of Michigan, her MSW from the University of Denver and her B.A. in sociology from Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado. She has held several teaching and research positions in the Departments of Sociology and Psychology and School of Social Work in Ann Arbor.

Thomas’ professional interests include social work intervention and methods with children and families, focusing especially on health and health disparities among diabetic children; family policies within the military; and social stress among wartime veterans.

Associate Professor Emerita Mavis Spencer Celebrates Retirement

Mavis M. Spencer, who joined the School of Social Work faculty in 1968, has announced her retirement. In her honor, colleagues and friends gathered Thursday, May 20, at the International Institute for a reception and celebration. The venue was especially appropriate, given Spencer’s heritage. Growing up in Jamaica, the daughter of a Panamanian mother and Jamaican father, Spencer has made major contributions both to the community and the school.

The celebration featured music by the Wayne State University Jazz Trio, as well as food and refreshments provided by the Caribbean community. The recognition program was emceed by Spencer’s colleague Loren Hoffman, who introduced tributes from the community, the school and Spencer’s many friends and colleagues.

After the program was completed, attendees were entertained by the Universal Expressions Caribbean Band, under the direction of Richard Parvis and DJ Roland Bood.

Spencer served for 14 years as a faculty member teaching in the group work concentration where her colleagues asked her to lead the effort to infuse minority content into the curriculum. Early on in her academic career, she helped establish the WSU Student Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers and the Organization of Latina/o Social Workers. Leon Chestang, former dean, asked Spencer to be the first coordinator of Field Education at the school. She served in this faculty and administrative position for 23 years before her retirement this year.

Spencer was also very active in the community, serving a wide variety of organizations, including the Catholic Youth Organization, the Mayor’s Committee on Aging, the Detroit Housing Task Force, the Wesley Foundation, St. Peter Claver Community House, the Federation of Girls Homes, and Wayne County Community College. She also contributed significantly to the cultural enrichment of the greater Detroit metropolitan area through her work and years of leadership with the Caribbean Cultural and Carnival Organization which organizes the annual Detroit Caribbean Festival and the New Detroit Cultural Exchange Network which annually brings the Concert of Colors to Detroit.

The program for Spencer’s celebration included a tribute that spoke for those who know and work with her, “You have enriched and nurtured our lives during your distinguished career. You have touched so many...and will always be in our hearts. The Thompson Home will always have a light on for you.”

First PhD Scholarship honors Mavis Spencer

An endowed scholarship fund is being established by the friends and family of Mavis M. Spencer to acknowledge her many contributions to Wayne State University and her many avenues of community service. The fund is established to provide assistance to doctoral students in the School of Social Work. This represents the first financial support to be offered to students who enter the new program. To be used at the discretion of the dean, funds generated by the endowment will be available to cover expenses related to students’ invitations to present workshops, deliver papers or otherwise be involved in scholarly conferences.

Anyone interested in honoring Mavis Spencer with a contribution to the endowment can contact Marguerite Carlton, director of development, at 577-8807.

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From left, new faculty members Hudson, Thomas and Gonzalez-Prendes.

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Ann Alvarez, associate professor and associate dean, is leaving the WSU School of Social Work to accept a faculty position at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, where she will teach and serve as the director of Distance Education for the School of Social Work. During her 12 years as a faculty member of the WSU School of Social Work, Alvarez contributed significantly as a teacher, a scholar and an academic administrator. She was co-chair of the Concentration on Community Practice and Social Action for 10 years, and received the WSU School of Social Work Excellence in Teaching Award for 2001-2002. In 2001, she received the Emerging Scholar Award from the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) in recognition of her record of scholarship in multicultural community organizing, the development of critical consciousness through praxis; participatory research; group work and social action; feminist social work history; and multicultural education, especially within community practice.

Along with WSU faculty member Professor David P. Moxley, Alvarez is one of the four editors of the Journal of Community Practice (2002-2007). Within the Council on Social Work Education, she is a member of the Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice (2004-2007), and is the immediate past chair of the Council on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education (2002-2005). Alvarez is a board member of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups (AASWG), and was co-chair of its 26th Annual International Symposium, held in Detroit, in 2004. She is writing the history of the first 20 years of AFFILIA Journal of Women and Social Work. Her practice experience has been primarily in community organizing and administration in the Philippines, Louisiana, and Michigan, where she has worked with and on behalf of youth on the streets, schoolchildren and the elderly. Alvarez’s practice experience and academic work reflect her many interests, which include issues of race and gender, social work education; cross-cultural comparisons of social service needs and programs; organizational issues of service delivery; qualitative research methods; reproductive health issues; community-based programs; multicultural community practice; and social welfare history.

Dean Phyllis Vroom has announced the appointment of an interim associate dean, Beverly M. Black. She will assume responsibility as interim associate dean on August 18, 2005. Black is an expert in curriculum and instruction in social work education, having served as director of field education at St. Edward’s University and Texas Christian University before her appointment to the WSU faculty. She has provided outstanding service as chair of the school’s curriculum and instruction committee and as lead teacher of courses in human behavior and the social environment, and developed a course for the PhD program. A native of the school’s self-study process. She is rated as an outstanding teacher by her students and colleagues, and has a long history of publications in areas of expertise in domestic and dating violence prevention — and has contributed in many ways to the school, the university and the profession.

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In marking these goings and comings, Dean Vroom says, “We will miss Ann’s warm and friendly ways of saying and doing things. Alice Lamont spoke about Joe, and read comments by Mel Raider, one of the few current faculty members whose tenure over-lapped Hourihan’s as associate dean. Raider wrote, “Behind Joe’s First Sergeant exterior was a sensitive, compassionate, caring person who went out of his way to honor the unique-
Retired Professor Creigs Beverly awarded Emeritus Status

School of Social Work professor Creigs Beverly has been named Professor Emeritus by Wayne State University, upon nomination by Dean Phyllis Vroom. Effective with Beverly’s retirement in May of last year, the appointment was announced recently by University Provost Nancy Barrett. Professor Beverly’s first appointment in this School was in 1987-1988 as a Martin L. King/Cesar Chavez/Rosa Parks Visiting Professor. Subsequently, he was appointed to the rank of Professor and joined the full-time faculty in 1988. He retired after 16 years of outstanding teaching, scholarship and service to the School, University, community and the Social Work profession. Consistently rated as an outstanding teacher by his students and colleagues, Dr. Beverly was awarded the University’s Excellence in Teaching Award for the academic year 1992-1993. He was also awarded the School’s Excellence award and lead several workshops on teaching for the Social Work full- and part-time faculty.

In 1992, Beverly was honored as Social Worker of the year by the National Association of Social Workers- Michigan Chapter for his outstanding community service. At several times during his tenure Dr. Beverly has been recognized by other local, regional and national groups for his distinguished record of service to the African American and broader community.

He has also been recognized nationally for his scholarship in the areas of mental health policy, youth violence prevention and substance abuse research. In addition to numerous publication articles, he has been the major invited speaker at the annual program meetings of the Council on Social Work Education, the National Association of Black Social Workers, the National Association of Social Workers and regional and local groups in the United States and in Canada. Dr. Beverly earned several grants that extended the research for practice orientation of the School as well as integrated the School’s urban research, teaching and service missions. For the Kellogg Foundation, he developed a program in two Detroit public schools to increase academic achievement, retention and advancement to postsecondary education. He also received a substantial grant to achieve the same objectives in a Detroit middle school. These successful projects have had lasting impact on the public schools and the youth and families they serve.

Former Dean Chestang named Professor Emeritus

Leon W. Chestang, PhD, distinguished professor and former dean of the School of Social Work, has been awarded the title of professor emeritus, effective upon his retirement on Jan.15. Chestang served as dean for 19 years. In that time, many significant achievements enhanced the reputation of the school. The curriculum was streamlined and updated, and a part-time MSW degree program was inaugurated (one of the first in social work education), making graduate professional education accessible to minorities and others working in human service agencies.

During his tenure as dean, the School of Social Work underwent a paradigm shift from an urban teaching/service program to one with a focus on urban research to advance knowledge for practice without reducing the commitment to teaching and service. Chestang also strengthened and extended the research courses in the school. In response to this transition, the MSW Program climbed from obscure rankings in US News & World Report to the top quarter of all MSW Programs and the BSW Program ranked first in The Gourman Report.

Among the numerous awards and honors he has received, Chestang was named the first William H. Cosby, Jr. and Camille O. Hanks Cosby Visiting Scholar in African-American Families at Howard University. He has served as Distinguished Visiting Commonwealth Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University; Distinguished Visiting Lydia Rappoport Professor at Smith College; and Eminent Scholar, Norfolk State University. Blackburn College and Washington University’s School of Social Work have honored him with their distinguished alumni awards and the Boy Scouts of America presented him with the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Service Award.

Chestang has a breadth of experience in social work private practice with individuals and families and has worked with state family service agencies. He has served as an expert witness on cases of housing discrimination and transracial adoption, and been a consultant to major cities and state educational boards and judicial institutes as well as the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Black Child Development Institute and the Council on Social Work Education.

Chestang has published more than 25 articles on a wide variety of subjects, including child welfare, the impact of race and culture on social functioning and human development. His paper, “Character Development in a Hostile Environment,” is considered a classic in the social work and human services professions. His scholarship on social work practice was recognized when he was invited to publish an article on “Myen: Direct Practice” in the 19th Edition of the Encyclopedia of Social Work. A nationally respected lecturer and scholar, he has been a visiting scholar or lecturer at a number of distinguished institutions of higher education, including Atlanta University, Howard University, Fordham University, Columbia University, Bryn Mawr College and the Washington University, St. Louis.
Alumni Association Members and Friends Renew Connections at Yacht Club Event

On Thursday, June 9, the School of Social Work and the SSW Alumni Association held their annual get-together at the Detroit Yacht Club on beautiful Belle Isle. The event was part reunion, part networking opportunity, part information gathering, with a lot of fun and warmth in between.

More than 200 guests heard Dean Phyllis Vroom give a “State of the School” presentation, which included announcement of the school’s long-sought PhD program. Also included was announcement of the first scholarship offering support for participants: The Mavis M. Spencer Endowed Fund for Scholars. The dean gave a progress report on the school’s capital campaign, which has reached 21 percent of its $7.725 million goal. In addition, there was news of Spencer’s retirement and the naming of her successor, Anwar Najar-Durack, along with other staff and faculty updates.

Anwar Najar-Durack gave the audience an update on the new State of Michigan Licensure program for those in the profession and also supplied a number of related handouts.

A silent auction arranged by president Nora Holt and Anwar Najar-Durack featured bargains while it raised a bit of money to help support Alumni Association activities.

Richard Brehler, Louise Guyton, Al Seoud, John Talick and Eloise Whitten, members of the School’s Board of Visitors were also in attendance. Richard Bernstein, member of the WSU Board of Governors, also joined the festive group. A good time was had by all midst the networking and reconnecting.

Clip and return this form, completed, with payment to: WSU Alumni Association, P.O. Box 64340, Detroit, MI 48264.