

Degrees

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The University of Regina Magazine



Vanity Fair's
Chris Dixon

University
of Regina





While most prairie residents were cursing the harsh winter this year, some University of Regina international students from warmer climates were enjoying their first experience in the cold and snow. The Dr. Lloyd Barber Academic Green was actually very white in early March when students (left to right) Precious Onungwe from Nigeria, Penghui Dai from China and Debora Sakano from Brazil braved the cold to build their first snowman. There are about 1,500 international undergraduate and graduate students attending the U of R from more than 60 countries around the world.

Photo by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department.

Welcome to the spring '13 edition of *Degrees*, the magazine of the University of Regina. We have oodles of interesting and entertaining stories shoehorned into this issue for your reading pleasure.

As the editor of *Degrees* I am fortunate to hear my share of engaging tales about people associated with the U of R. It never ceases to amaze me – the incredible stories of the men and women who study, teach, and graduate from the University of Regina.

This job is a dream come true for those of us who like to spend most of our professional lives chasing down stories that we hope will inform, engage, entertain and resonate with readers. As a coworker of mine used to say when I first stepped into the employ of the U of R, “There is no shortage of great stories around here.”

One of the great stories that you’ll find in this edition of *Degrees* first came to my attention a number of years ago when I received an email from Michael Simons, a U of R graduate who suggested his friend and colleague, Chris Dixon, would make for a worthy alumnus profile. Dixon had been the art director at *Adbusters*, the influential Canadian anti-consumerism, pro-environmental magazine.

During his time at *Adbusters*, Dixon was responsible for the redesign and conceptual development of the magazine. Twyla Smith of *Adbusters* says that when Dixon signed on in 1997 that “he breathed life into the design side of the magazine.” Dixon’s work at *Adbusters* influenced scores of designers around North America; it also set the stage for his ascent to the top of his field.

I must confess that email sat in my story file for some years. Periodically I would revisit the idea of pursuing the story but for one reason or another, ink never met page on the Chris Dixon story.

That was until I checked up on the aforementioned Mr. Dixon last fall. Turns out he was carving out quite the career for himself. So what was any self-respecting magazine editor to do? It was time to start spreading the news. You see, it turns out that Chris Dixon, class of 1991, can make it anywhere. After all, he wakes up in that city that never sleeps. By all accounts, he’s king of the hill, top of the list, and even, head of the heap.

Dixon is the design director of *Vanity Fair*, a magazine with a global reputation and a circulation of nearly 1.2 million. You can read Dixon’s story and find out about the impact his

days at the U of R had on him beginning on page 28.

We also have the compelling story of alumna Denise Batters, a recently appointed Canadian senator whose husband took his own life in 2009. Batters is a tireless advocate for mental health research and treatment and is using her national profile to advance awareness of mental health issues in Canada. Her story starts on page 22.

This issue also has a profile of arts administrator Marian Donnelly, an alumna who is at the helm of a popular arts centre in downtown Regina. She also ran for mayor of Regina in 2012. In “Drive for five,” you’ll read a remarkable story about Chris Gbekorbu, who will, yet again, walk across the convocation stage this spring and receive his fifth University of Regina degree. That story begins on page 26.

We’ve also got a story on the Community Research Unit and the work the unit does in Regina’s North Central neighbourhood, a neighbourhood that was called Canada’s worst in a 2007 *Maclean’s* magazine article. Accompanying the story are some of the photographs taken by history professor Philip Charrier who took his camera into the community in an effort to get to know it better. While

Charrier admits his impressions of North Central were shaped by crime statistics and media reports, what he found was a people-centered, balanced community that bore little resemblance to the media-constructed image of the area.

There’s also our regular wrap up of campus news, class notes and so much more.

Remember, you’ll also find *Degrees* posted on our website at: www.uregina.ca/external/communications/publications/degrees/index.html. If you would prefer to view *Degrees* online rather than receive it in the mail, please contact us at URalumni@uregina.ca, or call us at 306-585-4112 or toll-free at 877-779-4723 and we will remove you from the mailing list.

Please, keep your emails and letters coming. Tell us what we are doing right and let us know where we can make improvements. Send us your story ideas or just drop us a note and tell us what you’ve been up to lately. You’ll find all our contact information on the facing page. We look forward to hearing from you and trust you will enjoy reading this issue of *Degrees*.

Greg Campbell
Editor

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On the cover: U of R alumnus Chris Dixon BA'91 has one of the most prestigious jobs in the magazine industry – he's the design director of *Vanity Fair* magazine, the New York headquartered magazine with almost 1.2 million subscribers.

Photo by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department.

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Features

The fine art of the business of arts

After a lifetime of practical experience in the arts and a U of R executive MBA, alumna Marian Donnelly MBA'08 finds herself right where she wants to be – in the centre of the Regina arts and culture scene.

The class of 2013

Meet this year's honorary degree recipients: Frank Flaman, Art Opseth and Linda Rankin BA'68.

Community connections

The Faculty of Art's Community Research Unit is taking the University's expertise to Regina communities. Regina's North Central neighbourhood, once called Canada's worst neighbourhood in a 2007 *Maclean's* magazine article, has been a major focus of the unit's work.

Never lose hope

In January, alumna Denise Batters BA'91 realized a lifetime ambition when she was appointed to the Canadian Senate by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Now, Batters is using her national profile to bring awareness to mental health issues like those that led to her husband's suicide.

Drive for five

Christopher Gbekorbu BA'01, BA(Hons)'01, MA'05, BSC'11 will walk across this year's spring convocation stage to receive his fifth degree or diploma from the University of Regina. And he has his eyes on a sixth.

Designs on a career in New York

Vanity Fair's design director credits his U of R arts degree as one of his springboards to success.

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President's Note



Spring is always one of my favourite times of the year at the University of Regina. The excitement begins with convocation in June, when we celebrate the achievement of 1,875 graduates – the largest convocation in U of R history. Congratulations to all our new alumni who join a family of almost 62,000 University of Regina graduates.

This summer will be especially busy around the U of R campus. We recently broke ground on a \$73.7 million construction project for a new student residence, child-care facility and underground parkade. The project consists of two, 14-storey towers with a five-storey connecting link, and two five-storey residence wings. Scheduled to be completed by fall 2015, it will be located east of the Language Institute and will provide an additional 605 on-campus beds, 90 new day-care spaces, and 150 underground parking stalls.

This initiative is jointly funded by the Government of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. The provincial government has invested \$11 million in the project – \$1 million in 2012 for planning and design, and \$10 million in the 2013-14 provincial budget for affordable housing.

Understandably, we are very excited about this important project. Lack of affordable housing and scarcity of reliable child-care spaces can be significant barriers to education for many students, particularly

those with young families. This new facility will help our University, and our province, remove some of those barriers.

Our University community is increasingly diverse. We have seen a 22 per cent increase in the number of international students compared to last year, and our campus is benefiting greatly from the many languages, cultures, and backgrounds represented. Currently, the University of Regina has more than 1,000 registered undergraduate international students from more than 60 countries. Equally impressive is the growing number of international students pursuing master's and doctorate degrees. Presently, there are 440 international graduate students, an increase of 15 per cent over the January 2012 term.

We are also attracting ever-increasing numbers of Aboriginal students to the University. The number of self-declared undergraduate Aboriginal students at the U of R has increased by 15 per cent over the past year. Students of Aboriginal descent now represent almost 11 per cent of the total undergraduate student body. This increase is, in large part, due to our concerted efforts towards Indigenizing our campus, so that all of our students – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike – can learn and succeed in the most accessible, and culturally appropriate environment possible. The Aboriginal Student Centre,

which was recently expanded and re-opened, provides a range of services which support new students in making a successful transition to post-secondary education.

One of the goals in the University's strategic plan *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities* is to build relationships with First Nations communities. I recently returned from a tour of Saskatchewan's northern communities where I announced a new \$1,000 entrance scholarship to be awarded annually to one student from each of Saskatchewan's 74 First Nations. The *Honouring our Future Entrance Bursary* will provide additional support for new Aboriginal undergraduate students starting this fall. Making post-secondary education more accessible for Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan is of vital importance to the province's future.

Saskatchewan is experiencing significant growth, and the University of Regina is proud to play a role. In response to the changing needs of our province, we are expanding programs and extending our reach to meet the educational needs of students all across the province. I am pleased to report that the Saskatchewan Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing program has expanded to Swift Current. The partnership between the University, SIAST, Cypress

Health Region and Great Plains College results in eight new students each year beginning this fall.

On the research front, we recently announced the renewal of two Canada Research Chairs. Christine Chan, a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Energy and Environmental Informatics, has been renewed for a seven-year term worth \$1.4 million to support her work. Christine is a professor in Software Systems Engineering, and conducts research into developing and applying artificial intelligence technology in energy and environmental systems.

Christopher Yost, a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Microbes, the Environment and Food Safety, has been renewed for five years for \$500,000. Chris is an associate professor of Biology, and conducts molecular-based research to identify new approaches to reduce microbial threats to food production and protect Canadians from food-borne illness.

This funding renewal recognizes the significant accomplishments of our researchers, and the quality and value of the work they conduct at our University.

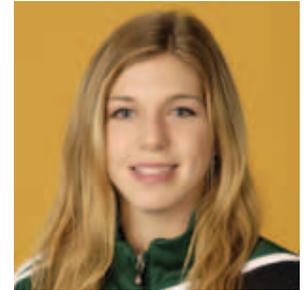
On behalf of all my colleagues at the University of Regina, I wish you a safe and enjoyable summer with family and friends.

Dr. Vianne Timmons
President and Vice-Chancellor

Left: Dean of Education James McNinch was the recipient of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Arbos Award for his contribution to education in Saskatchewan.

Centre: Miss World Canada Camille Munro, a graduate of the U of R's Human Justice program.

Right: Former Cougars track and field athlete Chelsea Valois is the 2012-13 FIBT World Cup 2-women bobsleigh champion.



Briefly

As of January 17, 2013, the **University of Regina Board of Governors** has added two new members. **Pam Klein BA'80** has been appointed to the Board for a three-year term. Klein is the president of Phoenix Group, one of Saskatchewan's leading advertising agencies. **Cathy Warner** has also been appointed to the Board for a three-year term. Warner is a partner with Deloitte and leads the Audit and Assurance Services team for Saskatchewan. She is responsible for the firm's service levels to a number of key clients in the province, including a number of Crown corporations, public and private companies, and non-profit organizations. **Nathan Sgrazutti** has been re-elected as the president of the University of Regina Students' Union and will serve on the Board of Governors for another one-year term effective May 1, 2013.

Dean of the Faculty of Education, **James McNinch**, was recently honoured for his contributions to education by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). He was chosen by the STF Provincial Executive to receive the *Arbos Award for Distinguished Support of Education and Teaching*, which is the highest honour that the Saskatchewan teaching profession confers.

McNinch is a champion of inclusive education and

a vocal advocate of the importance of both student and teacher well-being, and the sense of belonging in schools and communities. A veteran educator with more than 38 years of experience in the classroom and as an administrator, McNinch is fearless in his efforts to address intolerance and sensitive social justice issues that affect Saskatchewan's classrooms and communities.

In May, the University of Regina Board of Governors approved the \$187 million budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year. This **19th consecutive balanced budget** reflects the University's continued commitment to responsible management and governance and the effective use of resources.

The 2013-14 Saskatchewan provincial budget provided a base operating grant increase to the University of Regina of 1.9 per cent plus \$800,000 in funding for the third year of the University's nursing program

While the University of Regina's tuition rates continue to be below the national average, this year's budget realities have resulted in the following increases to tuition rates and fees: a 4.4 per cent increase for all undergraduate credit hours and a 10 per cent increase for graduate students, with the exception of those studying in the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business and the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. As well, international

graduate students will pay an additional \$200 in fees each semester.

Taking into account the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarships and the province's Graduate Retention Program, graduates from Saskatchewan high schools who remain in the province after university graduation will have close to no net tuition increase.

The University has invested more resources in teaching and research activities, and will enhance student services and student assistance from increased fundraising proceeds through the trust and endowment budget. As well, new government-funded programs have increased student financial assistance by more than 40 per cent (\$1.8 million) from the 2012-13 budget.

Full details of the comprehensive budget plan, as well as a summary of how the budget advances the University's strategic plan, are available at: www.uregina.ca/orp/budget.shtml.

Camille Munro BHJ'13, a U of R Human Justice student, has been crowned Miss World Canada. Munro became involved with Miss World Canada to continue advancing the issue she has become passionate about – specifically, the empowerment of young women. She was attracted to the pageant because of its focus on fund-raising and humanitarian outreach. In addition to her studies, Munro

teaches ballet, jazz and tap dancing and is a baton twirling judge. She also works with Dress for Success Regina, which provides professional clothing for underprivileged women entering the workforce. Munro will now represent Canada at the Miss World competition in Jakarta, Indonesia in September, when an estimated two billion viewers will be watching the broadcast from across the globe.

Former U of R Cougars track and field athlete **Chelsea Valois** finished off the 2012-13 Federation Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing World Cup with a championship in the 2-woman bobsleigh competition. Kaillie Humphries, last year's champion and the 2010 Winter Olympics champion, added Valois to her sled this past season. The pair won seven World Cup gold medals during this year's World Cup circuit, topping it off with a gold medal and championship win in St. Moritz, Switzerland late in January. Valois was a President's Award recipient as the top graduating student athlete in 2011.

The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., O.C., O.M., is the recipient of the 29th annual **Distinguished Canadian Award (DCA)** presented by the University of Regina's Lifelong Learning Centre and the Seniors' University Group.

The Distinguished Canadian Award was established by the Seniors' University Group in

1985 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Canadian life. The award is intended to raise public awareness of the dynamic role older adults, specifically aged 55 and over, play in society.

Twenty-five University of Regina graduate students travelled to Beijing, China in May to present their research findings at Chinese institutions as part of the **Shen Kuo program**. Last year, 13 students took part in the program. The students are studying a wide range of topics, and come from the Faculties of Engineering and Applied Science, Arts, Education, Kinesiology and Health Studies, and Science.

Those participants originally from China travelled to their home communities to present their research findings. Two other students travelled to China to take part in the Shen Kuo Internship Program on Sustainability. They will spend three months as research interns on United Nations Development Program projects related to water resource management in China.

In April, the Government of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina announced a **\$73.7 million construction project** that will result in a new student residence, childcare facility and underground parkade on campus. The project, scheduled to be completed by fall 2015, will be located east of the Language Institute. The new residence will provide an additional 605 on-campus beds, 90 new daycare spaces and 150 underground parking stalls. Information and updates about the construction of the new student residence, along with architectural drawings for the project, will be posted to the University's website at www.uofresidence2012.com.

The University of Regina was awarded the 2013 Regina & District Chamber of Commerce **Paragon Award for Environmental Excellence**. This award is presented to a business or organization that acts responsibly on all environment issues and has demonstrated a commitment to environmental responsibility in its operations. This is the first time the University has received this award.

The University was selected from among several finalists in the Environmental Excellence category, and was recognized for its ongoing commitment to energy efficiency, sustainability, and environmental responsibility in all of its operations. Several of the University's recent projects were highlighted for recognition, including the establishment of the President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability; Facility Management's heating recovery and redistribution systems; and the energy-conscious planning for the recently announced residence construction project. Also recognized was the success of the University's tree relocation project, which saw more than 500 mature trees relocated to other spots on campus during the construction of the new Centre for Kinesiology and Health Studies in 2002. Ten years after relocation, more than 89 per cent of the trees have survived.

Graduates of the University of Regina's **Saskatchewan Collaborative Bachelor of Nursing (SCBScN) Program** will have some of their student loans forgiven if they work in certain rural areas in the province. In April, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the launch of a new program to forgive up to \$4,000 per year in Saskatchewan

Student Loans to a maximum of \$20,000 over five years for nurses and nurse practitioners who work in under-served rural and remote communities with populations under 10,000. Details outlining eligibility for the program and the application process are available at www.ae.gov.sk.ca/loan-forgiveness-nurses.

The University of Regina's Canadian Plains Research Center Press has changed its name to the **University of Regina Press**. The new name will increase the name recognition of the University. The new director is Bruce Walsh, a 25-year veteran of the book industry and a two-time winner of the Libris Award for his outstanding contribution to Canadian publishing. Walsh has worked with writers such as Leonard Cohen, Alice Munro, and Peter C. Newman. He is the former vice-president of marketing for Margaret Atwood's LongPen and director of marketing and publicity at McClelland & Stewart. Walsh also worked for Oxford University Press, Routledge and McGill-Queen's University Press.

PotashCorp, the world's largest crop nutrient company, has made a **\$150,000 donation to University of Regina athletics**. The funds will be used to help support each of the University's 16 men's and women's varsity teams. The announcement of the gift was made at a ceremony before a game between the McGill Martlets and the Regina Cougars at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) women's championship basketball tournament, which the University of Regina hosted in March.

Linda Winkler, University of Regina librarian and a long-term University of Regina Faculty

Association volunteer, has been awarded the Canadian Association of University Teachers Academic Librarians' Distinguished Service Award. Winkler has been at the University of Regina for 38 years, and has made significant and sustained contributions to the status of librarians at the institution and beyond during her career.

School of Journalism graduate **Roxanna Woloshyn** has been named one of the 2013 CBC News Joan Donaldson Scholars. The scholarship is named in memory of Joan Donaldson, the founding head of CBC Newsworld who made invaluable contributions to Canadian journalism.

Comings and goings

Esam M. A. Hussein is the new dean of Engineering and Applied Science. Hussein, currently at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, will begin his five-year term as dean this summer. Hussein replaces Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul, who has served as dean of Engineering and Applied Science since 2000.

The First Nations University of Canada Board of Governors has named **Juliano Tupone** as acting president. As a certified management accountant, he has dedicated his career and financial expertise to serving First Nations. A graduate of the First Nations University of Canada where he completed a Certificate in Indigenous Business Administration, Tupone went on to complete a Master of Business Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. He replaces Doyle Anderson who left the presidency to attend to family health matters.

Left: Graduate student Cassandra Opikokew has been awarded funding by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to further her work on Indigenous health and education policy.

Right: Assistant Professor of Biochemistry Mohan Babu has received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to further his study of mitochondrial diseases.



Research news

University of Regina graduate student, **Cassandra Opikokew** CICA'09, BAJ'09, MPA'12, and postdoctoral fellow, **Nuno Ribeiro**, have been awarded funding by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to further their work on Indigenous health and education policy.

Opikokew has been awarded a Doctoral Research Award, totaling \$108,000 over three years, to further her work on Indigenous health and education policy. Opikokew is a PhD candidate at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy and the associate director of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC), where she leads the knowledge translation, policy development and strategic initiatives of the centre. Nuno Ribeiro, postdoctoral fellow with IPHRC, has received \$92,000 over two years to further his work on Aboriginal youth health and the role that culture plays in negative health and healthcare delivery. Part of his research includes collecting data from eleven Aboriginal communities in rural Saskatchewan in order to measure the impact of culture on the health behaviours of Aboriginal youth.

Two **Canada Research Chairs** at the University are receiving renewed funding. **Christine Chan**, a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Energy and Environmental Informatics, has been renewed for a seven-year

term worth \$1.4 million. Chan, a professor in Software Systems Engineering, conducts research into developing and applying artificial intelligence technology in energy and environmental systems.

Christopher Yost, a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Microbes, the Environment and Food Safety, has been renewed for five years for \$500,000. Yost, an associate professor of Biology, conducts molecular-based research to identify new approaches to reduce microbial threats to food production and protect Canadians from food-borne illness.

The Canada Research Chair program provides federal funding to enhance research and development in Canada's universities.

The University of Regina has attracted \$418,500 in Government of Canada funding to support work aimed at improving carbon dioxide capture. The money will be coming by way of a Strategic Project Grant from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). **Raphael Idem**, associate dean (Research and Graduate Studies) in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has been awarded funding over three years for his research for capturing carbon dioxide from fossil fuel-based industrial exhaust gases.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has awarded researchers at the University of Regina more

than \$1.2 million in funding. The funding will help further research in assisting people who deal with chronic pain and elucidating the physical and functional interactions of mitochondria in yeast. **Nick Carleton**, assistant professor of psychology, has been awarded \$467,499 over five years to use computer software to help deal with chronic pain. **Mohan Babu**, assistant professor of biochemistry, has been awarded \$785,135 over five years to help fight a number of mitochondrial diseases.

Gordon Huang, a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Energy and Environment, and professor in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, has been awarded \$662,873 by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to study climate change. Huang is the executive director of the Institute for Energy, Environment and Sustainable Communities (IEESC) at the University of Regina, a research and demonstration institute that integrates the existing energy, environment and sustainability research expertise and undertakes thematic research to address the impacts and challenges of climate change.

Huang's new research project, the Western Canadian Climate Modeling and Environment Analysis System (CMEAS) is Canada's first multi-disciplinary effort for the analysis and mitigation of regional water stress under changing climate conditions within a prairie context.

The fine art of the business of arts

Thirty years after she first attended the University of Regina, alumna Marian Donnelly MBA'08 was back, enrolled in the first executive MBA program offered by the then new Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business. After the degree and a lifetime of practical experience in the arts, Donnelly finds herself right where she wants to be – in the centre of the Regina arts and culture scene – the Creative City Centre.

By M E Powell BFA'80,
BAJ&C'88, MA'01

Photos by Don Hall, University of Regina
Photography Department.



Marian Donnelly's new job is a perfect fit.

"I arrived at work for my first day of work, and there were these business cards sitting on the table, and I just thought, well that's absolutely perfect," Donnelly says with a laugh.

The cards read, "I [heart] culture." And that's exactly how she feels.

The newest job in her cultural career is at SaskCulture Inc., as provincial coordinator of Culture Days, a national event that aims to foster appreciation and support of artistic and cultural activities in Canada. It's the latest in a string of arts initiatives that she has led over the past 37 years.

Donnelly has worked as a concert promoter, artist manager and arts administration teacher. She has headed industry organizations and worked as a strategic planning consultant for arts organizations across Canada. One of her current projects, in partnership with the University of Regina, has her finding places to hang art in empty or underutilized downtown spaces.

It was eight years ago, however, that marked the beginning of the non-profit organization for which she currently serves as chair of the board of directors – the Creative City Centre. The Centre is a creative hub in downtown Regina that gives artists a space to create and collaborate. It's also a venue that engages the community in arts and culture through a myriad of programs and activities.

Donnelly's interest in turning underutilized buildings into art spaces began in 2004, when she attended the Creative Places and Spaces conference in Toronto and learned about artists revitalizing downtown and heritage districts in major cities across North America and Europe. Artists were cleaning up the empty or derelict buildings, and "soon there was a gallery opening up and a coffee shop and the neighbourhood would come back to life," she says. "I came back from that conference and walked around downtown Regina," she says. "There were a lot of empty buildings and there were a lot of boarded up windows."

In 2006, she joined the first intake of students in the U of R's new executive MBA at the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business.

Soon she was formulating an idea to develop an artists' space. To help realize her dream, she also decided it was time to go back to school. In 2006, she joined the first intake of students in the U of R's new executive MBA at the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business.

"I really wanted to make sure that my business skills were where they needed to be in order to make that happen," she says about her decision to return to the U of R after three decades.

Donnelly first enrolled at the U of R when she was just 16 years old, right out of high school. Shortly after that, she got a job in the music industry and ended up dropping out of university in her second semester. For 20 years, she worked in various capacities, mostly as a concert promoter and artist manager, living in Winnipeg, Toronto, Vancouver and the United States.

In 1996, she took a job as executive director of the Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association (now SaskMusic) and later worked as Globe Theatre's general manager.

At the same time Donnelly was earning her MBA, U of R faculty members Christine Ramsay and Kathleen Irwin founded Regina ArtsAction Inc. The initiative was looking at the possibility of forming a creative hub in Regina's downtown core to mirror the artist live-work spaces that had been forming in other cities. When they found out Donnelly had a similar idea, they hired her to do a feasibility study. Donnelly's study involved thousands of interviews, as well as online surveys with artists and arts organizations.

"There was a huge need, clearly articulated by the community," Donnelly says. Regina ArtsAction tried to secure some downtown spaces, but when none of those efforts panned out, Donnelly sought other ways to secure a building. That's when serendipity stepped in.

A few years earlier, Harold Hague, the former owner of Loggie's Shoes



Opposite page: Art administrator Marian Donnelly photographed in the Hague Gallery in the Creative City Centre, the arts centre she was instrumental in establishing. Donnelly sits in front of two drawings from artist Kelcie De Wildt BFA'12 whose exhibit *South on 6* was featured at the gallery from mid-April until the end of May. Above left: The Creative City Centre is home to a fashion design collective, visual artists, arts-related organizations and includes a retail space as well. Above right: Donnelly was the first runner-up in the 2012 Regina mayoral race.



Left: Harold Hague, namesake of the Hague Gallery and former owner of Loggie's Shoes. Right: Regina Creative City Centre board member Christine Ramsay.

in downtown Regina, was serving as chairman of the Royal Canadian Legion 80th anniversary committee and asked Donnelly to coordinate the event. "I was amazed at her drive and her attitude and her confidence," he recalls. "It just renewed my enthusiasm, and renewed everybody's enthusiasm to put on a really good show."

At 92, Hague has long since sold his company to his son Kelly. But he can still be found most days at the store. He knew of Donnelly's study, so the Hagues offered to let her use their empty second and third floors in return for the renovations.

In October 2008, Donnelly began working on the space. "It was a complete disaster up there," the elder Hague says.

Peeling paint, bricked up windows and holes in the ceiling and floor didn't faze Donnelly. She called it "ideal" for what she wanted to do and set about the repairs, often on her own. She even hung up her MBA in the construction zone.

"You wouldn't believe the mess that was up there, and you wouldn't believe the work," Hague recalls. "She worked night and day. It was nothing for her to be there at one and two in the morning."

Donnelly formed the non-profit Inner Circle Creative City Development Corp. (now Creative City Centre Inc.), and borrowed money from friends and supporters for anything she couldn't finance herself.

"That's Marian," emphasizes Ramsay, who has been on the Centre's board since its inception. "She has the vision and she has the kind of skills – the partnering skills, the business skills – but also the elbow grease."

The Creative City Centre opened its doors on May 10, 2011. It was something no one in Regina had tried before;

a venue combining performance, gallery and studio space in an intimate arts setting.

The Centre's tenants include a group of young Saskatchewan fashion designers and a print-making collective called Articulate Ink, along with individual artist studio spaces. It also houses the Hague Gallery, an art gallery and performance space named after Harold Hague.

"She's a hard-working person who works for the community. She's incredibly persistent."

"I was bound and determined to do a building just to show people that it was something that could work, it was something the city needed and it was something that was financially feasible," Donnelly says.

Two years later, the Centre's activities, and those of its tenants, are expanding. Articulate Ink has grown, moving its base of operations from a small studio on the top floor to a larger space on the second floor to accommodate its members, workshops and other activities. The Creative City Centre is now known for an eclectic mix of music concerts, workshops, film screenings, poetry slams and other arts events.

Recently, Donnelly joined forces with two other Regina performance venues – the Artful Dodger Cafe and Music Emporium and the Artesian on 13th. The partners have developed a website (www.takeitallin.ca) to market the three venues that, together, have created a significant surge in arts and cultural activities in Regina.

"It's not a very big market that we're in," she says. "We're all trying to develop an audience, and so rather than competing with each other or trying to outdo the other venues, it works much better if we work together and try to build an audience collectively."

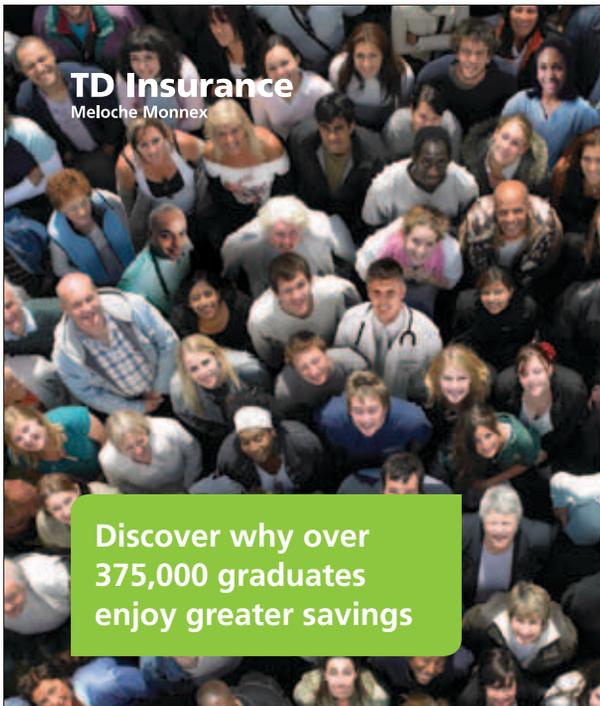
"She has a modern way of approaching business," Hague adds. Donnelly's focus on developing partnerships and connections has helped her – and many of the causes and organizations she's worked for or helped – to succeed.

Ramsay echoes the sentiment. "She's a hard-working person who works for the community. She's incredibly persistent. If she has a vision, she'll take it where it needs to go. If there are blockades, she'll find a creative way around them. She's flexible, but she's committed. She's a hard worker and if she sees a need for something, she'll try to get it done."

Last year, Donnelly was prepared to make working for the community a full-time proposition when she became a mayoral candidate in the civic election. Although she finished second (with 32 per cent of the vote to Mayor Michael Fougere's 42 per cent), in typical Donnelly fashion, she prefers to look on the bright side.

"I had more fun doing that than I've had for a long time," she says. "It was really exciting to see so many people getting engaged and getting excited about the possibilities of what we can do in our city." **D**

*M E Powell is a Regina-based writer with work published or broadcast in regional, national, and international media. Her fiction and poetry can be found in literary magazines, and Scholastic Canada published her book *Dragonflies are Amazing*. (www.mepowell.com)*



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The class of 2013

A successful businessman and philanthropist, a professor emeritus in engineering, and a pioneering broadcaster join the ranks of University of Regina honorary degree recipients.

by Bill Armstrong

Frank Flaman

After a lifetime of business success, honorary degree recipient Frank Flaman has turned his attention to philanthropy and making the world a better place.

Ask Frank Flaman a question and the words come tumbling out, revealing an energetic man who has very definite ideas shaped by his life experiences. For example, Flaman credits his parents and growing up on a farm near Southey, Sask. for giving him a good foundation in life. At the same time, he was not content with just farming.

"A lot of farmers were content to spend the winter curling," Flaman observes. "Me, I'd be buying grain bins or something, and then reselling them. Farming was all right, but I could do a lot better in business."

Flaman's career is certainly proof of that. Soon after he and his wife Bernice settled on the family farm in 1959, Flaman bought a new baler and swather, and began contracting out his equipment and services to other area farmers. If he could sign up enough customers, the equipment would be paid for, he reasoned. He was right. Bernice managed the business while Frank capitalized on the opportunities he saw around him.

"I can't turn on a computer," he says, "but I know it's important to look around at the talents one has and expand on them."

He and Bernice also raised 10 children, including three teachers (Kate, Fran and Cindy), a business manager (Carla), a homemaker (Carmel), a fitness trainer (Gwen) and an entrepreneur (Crystal). When he began offering a wider range of agricultural equipment and expanding geographically in the 1980s, the three sons – Rudy, Don and Steve – began managing different locations in Saskatchewan, while Frank headed to Alberta to establish the company there.

Although he and Bernice separated about 30 years ago, they remain good friends. Both are very connected to their children, grandchildren and soon-to-be first great-grandchild. Flaman recently married his partner of the last 20 years, Ruby, who will accompany him to Regina when he receives his honorary degree.

Flaman shifted his business strategy from expansion to diversification in the 1990s, including into Flaman Fitness, prompting some people to openly question his sanity.

"When I started with a few treadmills," Flaman recalls,



Frank Flaman

Photo by Dan Riedlhuber.

"people said, 'Why would a farm equipment dealer sell treadmills?'" The answer, it seems, is because the market was there, waiting to be tapped. The company is now the largest retailer of fitness equipment in Western Canada.

The Flaman Group of Companies continues to flourish, but the man who founded the company has shifted his focus to the foundation that bears his name, and to managing more than \$1 million in philanthropic donations made by the foundation each year. This activity also reflects a shift in Flaman's personal life.

"I used to have a big house and a new Cadillac every year. I gave up all that (stuff)! Now I have Ruby, a good family, a two-bedroom condo and a Smart car, and that's all I need," he says.

The Frank Flaman Foundation supports some local and national charitable organizations, but most of its emphasis is on providing the basic necessities of life to people in the developing world. This includes projects such as supporting schools, providing clean drinking water and restoring the eyesight of people in the Third World.

"In those places, you can get so much more bang for your buck," Flaman states. "You can drill a well for \$10,000 that will benefit 1,000 people, which means it's only \$10 per person," he explains. "You can restore someone's eyesight for \$50. That's a very effective investment that will help someone reach their potential, and other givers who support the Foundation know that their money will be used to do good work."

Flaman says he would prefer not to be in the limelight, but he's willing to step forward to share his message about helping to alleviate suffering in the world. When asked if he has a formal message prepared to deliver when he receives his honorary degree from the U of R, he says no. At the same time, he repeats his rock-solid belief that the world would be a better place if everyone did more sharing of whatever gifts they have.

Art Opseth

Art Opseth hadn't considered a career in academics until he was asked to teach a class. It was a calling for which he was obviously suited. He would go on to teach in the Faculty of Engineering for almost 40 years.

Professor Emeritus Arthur Opseth estimates that from 1974 to 2012, he taught more than 5,000 students in 12 different courses during his career at the University of Regina. He concedes, though, that he hadn't considered a career in teaching until his former professor and master's thesis advisor approached him in 1974 to teach in the newly formed Faculty of Engineering at the U of R.

Opseth joined the Faculty full-time in 1977. Besides his teaching duties, at various times he also served as acting assistant dean, assistant dean and acting dean. In 1997 he received an Inspiring Teacher Award from the University. After retiring from full-time teaching in 2001, he spent two years managing special projects for the Faculty, and then taught as a sessional lecturer until 2012. All of this followed after Opseth gave up a job with the Saskatchewan Government Computer Centre.

"People asked me why I gave up a secure government job," Opseth recalls. "There was something about teaching that I liked. I enjoyed working with students, and now I have former student friends all over the world, from all kinds of backgrounds."

Growing up on the family farm near Hagen, south of Prince Albert, Opseth's aptitude for mechanical engineering came naturally. He remembers he and his older brother Melvin taking things apart to see how they worked and then (usually successfully) putting them back together again. By age 13 he

was the chief car mechanic on the farm, having learned a lot from working on farm equipment with his dad.

"The great thing was, you got to see how poorly some things were designed," he says.

Opseth has warm memories of attending a one-room country school near Hagen, and then a two-room school in the town, before completing his Grade 12 at the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute in Outlook. He spent a year on the farm before enrolling in the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering.

"Mom and dad were able to scrape up enough to pay my first year," Opseth says, "and after that I was able to get good paying summer jobs. I worked in camps up north, so expenses were next to nothing, and that allowed me to save enough to live on for the rest of the year."

After he graduated, Opseth spent a year at the National Research Council and then two years working as part of a team of consulting engineers in Montreal, making modifications to armoured personnel carriers for the Canadian Army. Then, in 1964, he moved to Regina to begin working for the provincial government's computer centre.

"It was the largest computer in the province," Opseth recalls, "and I think it had 64K of memory. A lot of the people working there were engineers or mathematicians, because the problem-solving and design processes were the same for engineering and computer program design."

With the move to Regina, Opseth became a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Saskatchewan (now the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of Saskatchewan, or APEGS). He served as president of the organization in 2003 and is currently the APEGS representative to the University of Regina Senate. He has also been a member of several other local, national and international engineering and education-related organizations.

On the personal side, his volunteer activities included instructing downhill and cross-country skiing, being a Cub leader, supporting the Regina Water Polo Association and coaching youth soccer. He also served for four years on the Board of Governors of the Regina Symphony Orchestra.

In spite of his many accomplishments and contributions to the community, Opseth was surprised to learn he would receive an honorary degree, calling it a huge honour. His advice to the new graduates will be short, he says.

"You're just starting your education," he chuckles. "You're going to learn more in the next two or three years than you learned in the last five."



Photo by Don Hall.

Art Opseth

Linda Rankin

While Linda Rankin BA'68 looks back fondly on her high-tech broadcasting career, these days, after a pair of health scares, you're more likely to find her living in the moment and appreciating those things that truly matter.

“High-touch” is a once common term that has fallen out of favour, but it aptly describes Linda Rankin's approach to life, even while she has been involved in landmark events in the high-tech world of broadcasting. Rankin's perspective on the world has been heavily influenced by two near-death experiences: one in the early 1990s when she received a bone marrow transplant to overcome B-cell lymphoma, and another six-month period in 2012 when she was very ill.

“Those experiences are most significant,” Rankin observes, “because they forced me to live in the moment and appreciate a whole bunch of different things.” Until her first health challenge pushed her to re-order her priorities, serendipity had played a large part in her life. Attending the University of Regina was an easy choice, since all of her immediate family had gone there and her mother also taught English to international students on campus.

After graduating from the U of R with a bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology, Rankin literally flipped a coin to determine whether she would move east or west from Regina. The toss led her east. After working on contract assignments in Toronto and then with Bell Canada in Ottawa, chance stepped in again in the form of a job offer to join Telesat Canada, which had been established in 1969 as the country's national satellite service. While there she moved the organization from an engineering-dominated operation to a much larger sales and marketing-oriented business. Rankin received the first Outstanding Achievement Award from the Canadian Satellite Users Association for her role in developing satellite communications, and a Gemini award for her role in bringing to air the first HDTV broadcast in Canada.

After Telesat, Rankin became the founding president of Women's Television Network (WTN), the world's first specialty channel for, by and about women.

“I received a phone call from a man who asked me if I'd be interested in preparing a licence application for a channel about mothers,” she recalls. “I realized it needed to be of interest to all women and reflect all areas of their lives.”

While she had an obvious affinity for the project, she had also developed an approach that showed her high-touch side. She held bonding sessions with employees to identify their common beliefs.

“A basic tenet was that we don't lie, cheat or steal,” Rankin states. “When you see stories of corporate wrongdoing today, you see how fundamental these basic tenets are.”



Photo by Gregory Abraszko.

Linda Rankin

Since the successful launch of WTN, Rankin has continued to forge ahead in the area of satellite broadcasting, with both successes and setbacks. A broadcast licence for the Green Channel was granted in 2001, but without full financing, for now, the digital channel is limited to over-the-internet transmission at www.ecology.com. Rankin is also vice-president, Corporate Development, for a company that is developing FreeHD, a more flexible alternative to the way providers currently offer HD movies and other programming.

“It used to be a little easier to find the financing,” Rankin explains, “but now most of the broadcasting industry in Canada is dominated by two or three conglomerates.”

The U of R has recognized Rankin in the past as an outstanding alumna, but when she received the phone call informing her that she was to receive an honorary degree, she admits there was “a long, stunned silence as thoughts of ‘Why me?’” danced in her head. Looking back, Rankin affirms that she couldn't have achieved what she did without her background in psychology and sociology.

“The classes at the U of R were small, and the learning experiences were so good, so intense,” she recalls. “I remember profs treating us like adults and showing that they wanted to learn more, which made you want to know more for the rest of your life.”

Although much of her career has been spent in the business of bouncing digital signals between the Earth and orbiting satellites, Rankin insists she's still a prairie girl at home in Sharon Butala's rural Saskatchewan and Gail Bowen's Regina. And, yes, she remains a proud Rider fan. With plenty of family members still living in the province, and two grade school classmates coming from Calgary, the honorary degree ceremony provides an opportunity for an extended reunion in the days leading up to it. “I am so blessed,” Rankin says. **D**

Bill Armstrong is a Regina freelance writer and amateur photographer with a strong interest in Saskatchewan history.

William F. Ready QC, BA, JD, LLD (Honorary '89) has most ably served as chancellor of the University of Regina since the fall of 2007. During that time, he has conferred more than 13,500 degrees, diplomas and certificates on U of R graduating students. Ready first distinguished himself during a nearly 50-year law career that saw him become a senior partner in McDougall Ready (now McDougall Gauley), one of the oldest law firms in Saskatchewan. He is also well known for his contributions to education. He served as a trustee for the Regina Board of Education for 11 years – two years as vice-chair and two years as chair. In recognition of his commitment to education in Regina, the W.F. Ready Elementary School opened its doors in 1984. This year's spring convocation at the U of R is Ready's last as chancellor.

D What about your role as chancellor has brought you the most joy?

Serving in the governance of the University – particularly as chair of the Senate and as a member of many committees of Senate. I have also enjoyed conferring degrees and presiding at convocations, and serving as a member of the Board of Governors and many of its committees.

D Who stands out as one of the more interesting people you have met in your role as chancellor?

Jack Boan, PhD (Professor Emeritus), a fine gentleman with a continuing interest in the affairs of the University.

D Now that the role of chancellor won't be taking up your time, what will you do to fill your time?

I will continue to follow the affairs of the University as reported, and stay abreast of both local and world news. I also have our home in Regina and the cottage at Kenosee Lake to care for. When all else fails, I will continue writing "The Story of My Life."

D You and your wife Frances have been married for over 60 years. How much of your success do you owe to her?

A great deal. She has always been at my side with her encouragement and support.

D For those of us who will never know, how does it feel to have a school named after you?

I will never forget the thrill I experienced when, for the first time, I saw my name on the school building, and to know that it would be from that building that many would get their start in life.

D What important life lesson did you learn in Valparaiso, Sask. as a boy?

When opportunity knocks, open the door.

D What is your favourite meal?

Christmas dinner surrounded by our entire family, now 27 in number.

D Finish this sentence: The University of Regina is important to the community because...

The University of Regina is important to the community because it makes the possibility of post-secondary education a reality for many and is a source of pride for all.



Community connections



Left to right: Rob Deglau, executive director of the North Central Community Association; Yolanda Hansen, University of Regina Community Research Unit coordinator; U of R Associate Professor of History, Philip Charrier. Photo by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department.

The Faculty of Arts' Community Research Unit is helping out neighbourhoods across Regina, perhaps none more than the much misunderstood, North Central neighbourhood.

By Sabrina Cataldo, BA'97, BJ'99, CPR'04

Rob Deglau CCDEV'08 responded to the idea of a community research unit at the University of Regina with, "Where do I sign up? This is exactly what I need!" As executive director of the North Central Community Association, Deglau knows first-hand the challenges of serving the public, while juggling limited human and financial resources. With staff and funds directed to areas of greatest need, non-profits rarely have budgets for research that could be critical to government lobbying efforts or grant applications.

The Community Research Unit (CRU) in the Faculty of Arts fills that gap by connecting non-profits with University of Regina students and professors. When given the opportunity to serve as one of the CRU's founding board members in 2008, Deglau jumped at the opportunity. "I was so enthralled by the idea of linking academia to the needs of the non-profit sector," he says. "The University was a bit foreign to me, but I knew it had a wealth of intellectual resources and manpower."

The CRU's mandate is to provide independent, participatory research support in response to community-based organizations' needs. The result is mutually beneficial: organizations build capacity and enhance the community's quality of life, and the University increases its civic engagement and opportunities to produce high-quality, relevant knowledge. A true partnership, the CRU's board of directors has equal representation from the University and from community organizations and social agencies.

"The unit is a hidden gem," says CRU co-ordinator Yolanda Hansen BHJ'06, MA'08. "The Faculty of Arts has so much expertise to offer the community through our faculty and graduates. The CRU is a one-stop shop for community organizations. They start with us, and if we are unable to meet their needs, we will find someone else at the University to help them."

North Central Regina has been a major focus of the unit's work, given the number of non-profit service organizations that work in the area. In 2011, the CRU partnered with Carmichael Outreach to research the rental housing market in Regina and the relationships between landlords and tenants. Based on the findings, Carmichael created a 15-minute online video, *Bridging the Gap: Regina Landlords and Renters on Social Assistance*, an accessible tool that aims to start a dialogue between landlords and

government in order to curb the rise of homelessness.

"Most of these projects are small in scope and short in time – they usually only take a few months. But by the end, the organization has something practical in hand that can help them do their work," explains Hansen.

The CRU's connections also led to a unique photography exhibition in North Central. Philip Charrier, a U of R history professor and amateur photographer, was taking photos of people and places in North Central as a personal project. "My goal was to know the community better and develop a sense of a connection to it," he says. "I started out with a view of North Central that was based upon news reports of what the neighbourhood was like, largely influenced by crime-related statistics. Now, the view I have is more people-centered and balanced, and bears little resemblance to the media-constructed image. Every person who stopped for my camera has a unique story to tell."

When Charrier decided to share his photographs with the residents of North Central, he approached the CRU for advice on where to hold the exhibition. Hansen connected him with the North Central Community Association and the photography was installed in the organization's office in fall 2010. Charrier's intent was to take

the pictures down in spring 2011, but the community response has been so great that the exhibition is still up.

"It has taken on a life of its own. I'm still getting people who recognize themselves or identify friends or relatives in the pictures," Charrier adds. "My goal is to give copies of the images to those who appear in them. Keeping the exhibition up has allowed me, over time, to re-connect with an increasing number of subjects. There is a living element to the show that is exciting."

Deglau believes that Charrier's exhibition struck a chord with the community because it reflects residents' passion for the neighbourhood. "Sometimes people look at the neighbourhood in a jaded way. But Philip saw a neighbourhood that was very eclectic and unique. He was able to portray it in a new light," Deglau says.

The project shows how a small unit like the CRU can make a major impact on the community. "Sometimes all an idea needs to be successful is a connection to the right people," says Hansen. **D**

Sabrina Cataldo is an award-winning communications consultant who is proud to be a homeowner in North Central Regina. She is vice-president of People for Animals of Saskatchewan, a local cat rescue that does the majority of its work in North Central and surrounding areas.

CRU Collaborative Research Projects

North Central's Community History – A look at the history of the North Central neighbourhood, its citizens and important spaces through profiles and an interactive map found at www.northcentralregina.ca.

The Cost of Healthy Eating in Regina – Why are so many people using the Regina Food Bank? This project examined the gap between the cost of healthy food and income available to Regina Food Bank clients.

Bridging the Gap: Regina Landlords and Renters on Social Assistance – This project examined the Regina housing crisis and the relationship between landlords and low-income tenants. Winner of the CRU's 2013 Community Connections Award. Watch the video at www.vimeo.com/30740948.

Mapping Corporate Power in Saskatchewan – This project mapped the ways and means through which influence may be exercised over public policy formation and implementation in Saskatchewan.

Ecole Connaught Community School: 100 Years of Education and Community – In honour of Connaught School's Centennial, this project gathered historical information through oral histories and archival research. Available at www.connaught100.com

More info about projects and partners is available at www.uregina.ca/arts/community-research/collaborative-list.html

See Philip Charrier's North Central Portraits in the pages that follow.



Anatasia & Jay, 2010.

North Central Portraits by Philip Charrier



Colin, 2010.



Outside 5th Convenience Store, 2009.



Near Wash-Rite Laundry, 2011.

North Central Portraits by Philip Carrier



Never lose hope



Dave and Denise Batters met in the most unlikely of manners that one could easily believe it had been predestined. But if their meeting and subsequent marriage was providence, why did it end so tragically? Denise Batters BA'91, a recently appointed Canadian senator, shares a story of love and hope – the love she and Dave had for each other and the hope she held right up until the day he took his own life.

By Raquel Fletcher BA'12

Photos by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department and courtesy of Denise Batters.

They sat in nearly complete darkness, their backs against the car, his arm around her shoulders, the subtle features of their faces only faintly illuminated by the soft glow of starlight. On secluded Hapuna Beach on the island of Hawaii, nightfall comes frighteningly fast, but Denise Batters was cheerful. That was her husband Dave Batters' effect on her; he always had a way of making her laugh off trying situations.

"He was an extremely funny man," says Denise. "That's what I miss most about him, his ability to make me laugh."

The couple had only intended to spend the afternoon at the beach, relaxing on the white sand just long enough to watch the sunset together, but they soon realized one or the other had locked the keys in the rental car. It could have meant the end to a romantic outing; instead, both decided to wait patiently for the rental company to rescue them. In doing so, they found a rare, peaceful moment away from the petty annoyances of daily life that come with the busy schedules of a lawyer and a budding politician.

"We just enjoyed it," Denise remembers. "At that point, Dave was just starting up his nomination race. I think maybe we realized we weren't going to get many more of those quiet times."

That would prove not to be the case. A few months later they would share another quiet moment together, that one

much more brief, waiting for the election results in their Moose Jaw hotel room on Dave's first bid to become the Member of Parliament for the Palliser constituency. For Denise, not even the sheer joy of winning a grueling campaign could rival that evening spent counting the constellations and reminiscing about their chance encounter 15 years earlier and their ensuing love story.

For Denise, that moment in 2004 is her happiest memory – just the two of them, alone together. "We were a really good team," she recalls.

Police officers arrived at the home in a quiet neighbourhood in the southeast end of Regina, within walking distance of a church and an elementary school. A crisis negotiator was among them. By mid-afternoon on that Monday, June 29, 2009, it had turned into a perfect early summer day – 24 degrees with a subtle breeze, slightly overcast. But Regina Police were concerned about what was going on inside the home. They had received a call that a man had threatened to harm himself.

It was the home the Batters shared, but Denise was at work. Two years earlier she had accepted the demanding position of chief of staff to the

Saskatchewan minister of justice. The officers tried, but could not make contact with anyone in the house. Five hours later, police would discover Dave Batters' body.

"Even though you know that suicide is always a possibility, you're never prepared for the message that your loved one has died," says Denise.

Nearly a decade has passed since that vacation in Hawaii. Whenever Denise returns, most recently this past Easter, she visits the spot on Hapuna Beach where she and Dave sat covered by that unforgettable blanket of stars. She can't remember what jokes he cracked, but she remembers laughing.

The Batters shared many big moments in their lives – winning elections, getting married and the many events they attended as an MP and his wife. For Denise, that moment in 2004 is her happiest memory – just the two of them, alone together.

"We were a really good team," she recalls.

Now a Canadian senator, Denise's life hasn't slowed down. Quiet moments between committee meetings and hectic schedules are still rare. She can't help thinking how proud Dave would be of her.

"There's nothing that made him happier than when I accomplished something amazing," she remembers. Denise was appointed to the Senate in January, leaving the position she'd taken



Opposite page top: Senator Denise Batters on the University of Regina campus.

Opposite page bottom: Denise and Dave during their university days.

Above left: Dave and Denise opening Christmas presents during their time at university.

Above right: The happy couple shortly after university graduation.

in 2012 as an executive director of the Crown Investments Corporation. “He would be cheering me on like crazy.”

She smiles when she thinks back to the day they met and how far she’s come since then. “I have a lot more confidence in myself and that is what, I think, he always tried to instill in me.”

At 18, the Miller High School graduate had already made it her lifelong goal to become a senator, but it would take a while for her to develop a public persona. “I always considered myself more of a “backroom person,” who wouldn’t feel comfortable with that amount of public spotlight,” she says.

Even so, she was keenly interested in politics from a young age. In the fall of 1988, she began classes at the University of Regina in the department of political science. It was the time of the free trade election. Only a couple of weeks into the semester, she purchased her first Conservative Party membership and threw herself into the campaign, helping to elect Conservative candidate Larry Schneider, a former Regina mayor.

“My political involvement really started at the U of R,” she says. “It was because of that I met Dave.”

At the November 1989 Progressive Conservative convention in Saskatoon, Denise and Dave stole a glance at each other while walking across a busy street. That led to a conversation between 19-year-old Denise and her future husband, who was 20 at the time.

“He said he had a feeling when we crossed that street,” Denise says. “He heard a little voice, ‘be extra nice to this girl, she’s going to play an important role in your life.’”

In her first year of university, Denise often found herself disagreeing with the

opinions of her professors, while she eagerly joined in debates about current events, taking on her classmates in the Ad-Hum pit and even playing then Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine, in a mock Meech Lake conference.

Denise and Dave became good friends but because he was living in Saskatoon, it would be a year and a half before they started dating. “We had one year of very expensive phone calls back and forth trying to maintain this budding romance,” Denise laughs.

The following fall, Denise was accepted into law school at the University of Saskatchewan. The couple began to get serious and they were married in 1997 in Estevan. Right after their honeymoon, they moved to Regina where Denise joined the law firm, Gerrand Rath Johnson.

Dave was elected to Parliament in 2004, after a nerve-wracking tight race. And Denise, true to her self-proclaimed supportive role, stood behind him the whole way. “We always thought that he had a good shot at that seat even though he was running against a well-respected MP, who had already been a two-term member of Parliament,” she says.

The night of the election, though, she recalls was “daunting” and “highly stressful.” They stayed glued to the TV in their hotel room, until Dave was declared elected – by a margin of only 124 votes.

“It was complete euphoria,” says Denise of the night of their victory party. But the euphoria didn’t last.

Denise was prepared for the statement her husband was about to make. Still, as they boarded a flight to Quebec City that September day in 2008, the couple wondered how the public would react to

hearing the news of Dave’s illness. It was just days before a fall election was to be called. Dave had been on medical leave, but only close friends and family knew about his battle with anxiety.

“It is with deep regret that I have informed Prime Minister Stephen Harper of my decision not to seek re-election as the Member of Parliament for Palliser,” Dave wrote in a press release. “I have been ill for the past few months, dealing with anxiety and depression. As well, I overcame a dependency on certain prescribed medications.”

“Those were his own words,” says Denise. “I was proud of him.”

It had not been an easy decision. “Still today people tell me that was quite courageous to do that,” she shares. “At the time, he was a sitting member of Parliament and he was still suffering.”

Even though she had a busy career of her own, looking after her husband’s health became Denise’s main priority in the months that followed. As she recalls, she became “head cheerleader,” but it was tough: “Some days there wasn’t a lot to cheer about,” she says.

Usually gregarious, Dave isolated himself. Denise tried to pull him out of it, creating a network of supportive friends and family. She invited people to the house; she urged him to take phone calls; she accompanied him to doctors’ and counsellors’ appointments. Neglecting her own health, she frequently became ill and out of shape.

Despite her caretaking, things didn’t improve. Recognizing his dependency on prescription pills, Dave sought his doctor’s help to get off benzodiazepines. A switch in medication to the longer-acting and less addictive pills would take six to eight weeks to become effective. In



Left: The swearing-in ceremony of Senator Denise Batters with Speaker of the Senate, Noel Kinsella in February 2013. Right: More than \$21,000 was raised for the Canadian Mental Health Association at the second annual Dave Batters Memorial Golf Tournament in 2012. Opposite page: Batters with Prime Minister Stephen Harper.



the meantime, the 39-year-old fell into a deeper depression.

“That was the stage where I think he lost hope,” says Denise.

Still, she never allowed herself to lose hope. “That would have been very difficult, I think, if I had lost hope too.”

But, always in the back of her mind, suicide was a worry. With understanding co-workers, she was able to leave work when needed and she continued to fight for a turnaround in her husband’s health. “I did everything I could to help him get better.”

That all changed on that day in June when, less than a year after announcing he would not run again, Dave chose to take his own life. In the days following Dave’s death, Denise strived to find peace and not lose hope. She found a sense of calm by cycling around Wascana Lake in the early mornings before heading back to the welcome distraction of work.

She knew immediately that she wanted to be an advocate for mental health and suicide prevention awareness. She started with getting her own health back on track – both emotionally and physically. Over the next year, she began working with a personal trainer.

“I had to heal myself,” she says. But soon, she knew she needed to speak out.

“There’s a stigma with mental health issues. People think that you’re weak if you can’t get over them. But to me, there’s no better example than Dave for a

person that you would never expect to be suffering with these things,” she explains. “I knew there were a lot of people suffering who didn’t talk about it.”

Her first step towards promoting awareness was a charity golf tournament in Dave’s name. To date, the three tournaments have raised \$85,000 and Denise uses the money to create and broadcast a television commercial encouraging men dealing with depression to reach out.

Approximately 4,000 people, mostly middle-aged men, take their own lives each year in Canada. Denise hopes that, through her advocacy and the help of others, she can reduce that alarming statistic.

“My colleagues in the Senate are really incredible people. Many of them have come to me privately and told me that they really want to work with me on this. That makes me really excited about some of the things we can help accomplish.”

In March 2012, Denise appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health to support a private member’s bill which called for a national framework for suicide prevention. The bill passed that December.

Now, she’s looking to collaborate with others – in and out of the Senate. At an Ottawa event in April, Denise was excited to meet Olympic medalist Clara

Hughes, a woman who inspires Denise both for speaking out about her battle with depression and her enormous smile. It’s one thing the two women have in common.

“I feel like when I’m not smiling, it doesn’t even look like me in a picture,” Denise says.

It’s with optimism she approaches her new Senate position: “It’s important when you have a national platform to use it for something important.”

And with the support she’s received, Denise says she will continue to promote her message.

“You’re not alone. There is help – please reach out.” And, perhaps most importantly, she adds, “There’s hope.” **D**

If you or a loved one is suffering from depression or anxiety, help is only a mouse click away. Visit the Canadian Mental Health Association website at www.cmhask.com for more information. To see the Dave Batters commercial go to YouTube and search: Dave Batters CMHA Commercial.

Raquel Fletcher is a freelance journalist based in Regina, Saskatchewan. Her forte is writing on environmental and business issues. She received a silver award in the Emerging Writer category at the 2013 Alberta Magazine Awards for her story, “Ten Tree sees the forest and the trees,” that appeared in the fall 2012 issue of Degrees.

Drive for five

At the U of R spring convocation, Chris Gbekorbu BA'01, BA(Hons)'01, MA'05, BSC'11, will walk across the stage and receive a master of business administration degree. In the process Gbekorbu will become one of the most accomplished students in the history of the University of Regina.

By Sabrina Cataldo, BA'97, BJ'99, CPR'04

Photos by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department and courtesy of Chris Gbekorbu.



At the University of Regina's spring convocation, Chris Gbekorbu will receive an Executive Master's of Business Administration degree, his fifth degree. The 36-year-old adds his EMBA to a Bachelor of Science in economics (2011), Master of Arts in English (2005), Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in psychology (2001) and Bachelor of Arts in English (2001). He also earned a Diploma of Business Administration in 2007.

"To begin with, it's very rare for someone to have completed five degrees, but five degrees from the same institution? In my experience, it's unheard of," says Thomas Chase, University provost and Gbekorbu's master's thesis advisor.

Gbekorbu's passion for learning began at home. His mother, the only one in her family to graduate from high school, stressed the importance of education and encouraged her son to read as much as possible. The library became a major destination during his childhood. "I thought, 'Wow! Look at all of these books! I can't read them all, but I'll try,'" he says. At age eight, he became fascinated with eastern philosophy and symbolism, which led him, as a ten-year-old, to explore psychology and the works of Carl Jung. "My mom didn't always understand the stuff I was reading, but she was very supportive of whatever my interests were."

His interest in psychology continued through high school, leading him to major in the subject at university. Gbekorbu wanted a double major but was unsure of what to pursue as a second specialization. He kept taking classes, searching for a subject he enjoyed as much as psychology. Surprisingly, it was his part-time job as a security guard that led him to choose English. "A lot of the guys I worked with had English degrees and they were all really smart people. I thought, 'Why not? Knowing how to write would probably be a more useful

skill than doing philosophy,' which was the other contender for my second major." However, by the time he had made up his mind, he had earned enough credit hours to receive two separate arts degrees.

After a few years off, he returned to the U of R to pursue a master's degree in English. Unlike many English students, Gbekorbu had little interest in studying literature. Inspired by classes he had taken from Chase as an undergrad, he was drawn to stylistics and how people use language. His resulting thesis explored electronic language and the cognitive and social impacts of website hypertext.

"It was a great pleasure and an honour to work with someone of Chris' calibre. At its best, graduate supervision is a dialogue, an exploration involving the student and the supervisor. I learned a great deal from him during the thesis process," Chase says. "Chris is an unusually gifted and thoughtful man. His intellectual curiosity really knows no bounds. You can see that in the various academic pursuits he has followed. Behind that soft-spoken exterior lies a fascinating mind."

After his master's degree, Gbekorbu began working full-time as a technical writer at Information Services Corporation (ISC), while also teaching English 100 and 110 part-time at the University. "The first class I taught was horrifying because I have never been comfortable speaking in front of people. I was so scared that, on the first day, I considered not showing up," he says. His fear of public speaking was the main reason Gbekorbu decided to teach; it was another way that he could challenge himself and learn new skills without officially being a student. Once he was used to being at the front of the classroom, he really enjoyed it. "The first time I saw people writing down what I was saying, I thought, 'They think I know what I'm talking about!'"

Gbekorbu's employer encouraged him to undertake training related to his work at ISC, particularly when he moved from business writing into market research. "My math had never been strong, so I decided I'd take the science route and force myself to get better at it," he explains. His plan was to pursue a diploma in economics; however, upon reviewing the credit hours from his previous degrees, he realized that



Opposite page: Chris Gbekorbu has just earned his fifth University of Regina degree. Above: Gbekorbu earned two degrees in 2001 – a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in psychology.

if he completed another semester in economics, he would have a bachelor of science. "I figured, 'Why not?'"

Not too long after his BSc was in its frame, Gbekorbu was back in the classroom, this time taking an Executive MBA through the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business, while continuing to work and teach. "A lot of the work I'm interested in is helped by a business degree," he says. "Having already done a master's, I knew how to handle the workload and get more work done in less time."

Gbekorbu also owns and manages rental properties, serves as treasurer on the board of Regina Home Economics for Living Project, and has been actively involved in Habitat for Humanity. In honour of his mother, who passed away from cancer in 2008, he is a regular blood platelet donor to help patients undergoing chemotherapy. "My mom is the real reason I keep going to school," he shares. "I keep hearing her voice in the back of my mind saying, 'You will get an education!'"

Given his busy schedule, ensuring a healthy life balance is important to Gbekorbu. He turns to exercise for stress relief, doing either cardio, weights or yoga first thing in the morning, seven days a week. He has been lifting weights since age 12 but became serious about fitness in university. "I noticed that a lot of people would be at the University gym at the beginning of the semester, but when exams hit, they stopped going," he says. "In my third year, I decided that it was more important to be consistent and

set aside time for exercise to establish that balance." Having an entrepreneurial streak, it wasn't long before Gbekorbu turned his passion for health and fitness into a successful business, working at local gyms as a personal trainer until he completed his master's degree. "I was always at the gym anyway, so I thought, 'Why not? I might as well get paid for it and help other people at the same time,'" he adds.

Although he has just completed degree number five, he is not taking any time off from learning. He is writing the level one Chartered Financial Analyst exam in December 2013 and plans to apply for PhD programs in a few years.

"For me, it's not about getting the piece of paper, but about the pursuit of knowledge. There's not really a plan for what I will do once I get the PhD, but I'm interested in the process," he says. "Why not?"

Gbekorbu wants to pursue a doctoral program in interdisciplinary studies, exploring issues of environmental sustainability through a lens of social justice, policy, economics, business and psychology. The degree would incorporate all of his educational and work experience thus far. "It's all coming together. The more perspective that I get, the more informed the decision is," he contends. He is considering programs at the University of Saskatchewan, University of Manitoba and University of British Columbia.

Gbekorbu admits that he is "a bit obsessive-compulsive about knowledge," but has no plans to quit seeking it. "There's so much to learn. Even though I know that I will never learn everything, I will fight the good fight. I've set myself up to fail, and I'm comfortable with that because you need to fail a lot to find out what works."

When asked, "Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?" he responds, "No. Some of the most interesting people don't know what they want to be when they're 40, and I'm almost there." 

Sabrina Cataldo is an award-winning communications consultant who is addicted to education, tea, cats, and musical theatre, though not necessarily in that order. She plans to finish writing the first draft of her MA English thesis this year, with the assistance of her feline companions, many mugs of green tea and frequent singing breaks.

Designs on a career in New York



Chris Dixon BA'91 has worked for *The Financial Post*, *New York Magazine*, *New York Times Magazine* and *Adbusters*, the influential social activist journal. Now, the U of R grad is sitting in the design director's office at one of North America's most famous magazines – *Vanity Fair*.

By BD Miller BA(Hons)'89, BJ'95

Photos by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department.

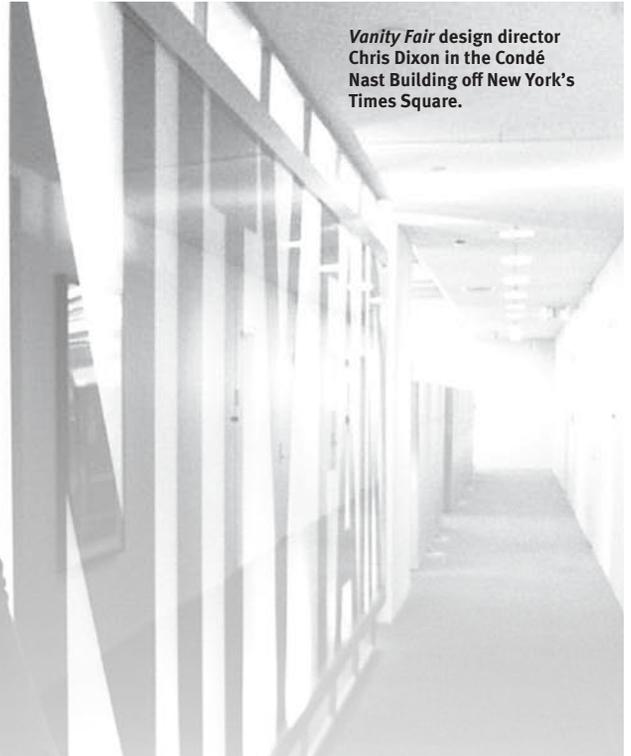
These days, University of Regina alumnus Chris Dixon works on one of the top floors of the Condé Nast Building in New York's Times Square, designing a magazine with a global reputation and a circulation of nearly 1.2 million.

When he's not there, you might find him at *Vanity Fair's* annual Oscar party in Hollywood, or at one of the magazine's other celebrity events.

Dixon's come a long way since the late 1980s, when he was a general arts student at the University of Regina – unsure of what he wanted to do in life or even what his major should be. Rather than regret those years as a “major-less” arts student, Dixon speaks fondly of his time on campus and says his studies at the U of R helped propel him to where he is today.

Dixon was born near Regina and attended Luther High School. He graduated in 1986 and enrolled at the U of R in the fall of that year. He is the son of long-time U of R professor William Dixon, who taught theatre and drama for more than 25 years before retiring in 1990.

When Chris first enrolled at the U of R, he was like a lot of first-year students, not really knowing what classes he wanted to take or what field he wanted to specialize in. But he enjoyed learning as well as the variety in the Faculty of Arts, and so started working toward his bachelor's degree.



Vanity Fair design director Chris Dixon in the Condé Nast Building off New York's Times Square.

"I studied all these things – math and theology and philosophy and logic – and that helped me later in getting into a career," Dixon says. "Especially working in magazines, the arts degree from the U of R gave me a basis of knowledge about everything – all different aspects and disciplines."

Dixon completed his Bachelor of Arts in 1992. "I had a majority of psychology classes, so that's what the major ended up being," he recalls. "But I just wanted to get a general arts degree because I hadn't quite figured out what I wanted to do."

As graduation neared, Dixon contemplated what he should do next. He considered a graduate degree in psychology and thought about enrolling in the Faculty of Education to become a teacher, but nothing seemed like a good fit. Some in Dixon's position might have looked to their father's career for inspiration, but Dixon says he never seriously considered becoming a drama professor. He does remember hanging around a lot at the U of R's College Avenue campus, where the Faculty of Fine Arts (and his father's office) was located.

"Dad was still teaching, and I'd see him around and go visit him in the theatre department quite a bit. We would go over and visit the old campus when they were putting on plays, and spent a lot of time over there watching people build sets and make costumes."

Dixon spent the two years after graduation travelling and working in Regina. For his own interest, he also started taking evening community classes at the Neil Balkwill Centre, studying photography, drawing and design. Gradually Dixon started thinking about photography and design less as a hobby and more as a possible future career. He enrolled at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver in 1994. He says his time at the U of R helped give him a leg up on many of his fellow classmates at Emily Carr.

"What was so good about doing a general arts degree at the U of R was that I'd studied all these other things. When I went to Emily Carr to study art and design, a lot of the students had come straight out of high school to do a four-year program, so they just didn't have as much general education. Later on, the things I studied at the U of R fed into the projects I was

doing at Emily Carr because I was coming at it with a lot more background."

Dixon convocated from Emily Carr in 1997 with a Master of Fine Arts degree, majoring in graphic design. Typically, graduates of that program go on to work for advertising agencies or do other corporate work such as designing logos and signage. Others end up in publishing, either designing book covers or working for magazines. Dixon was open to any of these possibilities, but as his graduation from Emily Carr neared, a chance opportunity came his way. He got a tip from one of his professors that Kalle Lasn, editor of *Adbusters*, a Vancouver-based social activist magazine, was looking to hire a new art director.

"*Adbusters* was a non-profit quarterly magazine, and at that time it was small," Dixon recalls. "They usually hired a recent grad for art director, even though it was basically a top job – you were in charge of the magazine's design."

Lasn had recently visited Emily Carr as a guest instructor in a class on political and social design, and Dixon had done a project for him as part of that class. His subsequent interview with Lasn for the art director position went well, and Dixon was offered the job.

"So I graduated in May and by June I had the job as art director at *Adbusters* – straight out of Emily Carr," Dixon says. "It didn't pay a lot, but it was a good job."

Even though he had the art director title, Dixon was basically a one-man design shop at *Adbusters*. "Now [at *Vanity Fair*] I have an entire department. I've got designers and photo editors and all these things," Dixon says. "There it was just me, so I would do all the design and I would research all the photo shoots and photography."

While at *Adbusters*, Dixon embarked on a major redesign of the magazine. Most of the previous art directors had only worked part-time "so it was always a kind of scrappy-looking magazine," Dixon says. "But I'd just graduated and I thought 'maybe we can maybe make this magazine look good,' because the content was good. It had good essays and the editor was really passionate about anti-consumerism and the environment."



Left: Dixon at his desk at the headquarters of *Vanity Fair* magazine in New York. Centre: Dixon with comedian Tracy Morgan and actress Betty White. Right: The May 2010 *New York Magazine* cover featuring Morgan and White.

Dixon changed the magazine's style by using different types of photography and enhancing the cover designs. The new-look magazine started attracting more attention, and Dixon and Lasn began entering *Adbusters* in Canada's national magazine awards. Their collective efforts culminated in 1999 when *Adbusters* won Canadian magazine of the year.

"That was the pinnacle of my two years there," Dixon says. "After we redesigned the magazine, made it look different, the magazine started winning awards and doing quite well. We were on a roll."

But Dixon had to leave *Adbusters* and Vancouver soon after when his partner, Mackenzie Stroh, was accepted into graduate school in Montreal (they're now married and have a two-year-old son). Dixon couldn't find any design work in Montreal, but landed a job as a designer with the *New York Times Magazine*.

After two years with the *New York Times*, Dixon freelanced for other newspapers and magazines, including designing for *The Financial Times* and developing a new in-flight magazine for South American LAN Airlines. Meanwhile, Dixon's former editor at the *New York Times Magazine*, Adam Moss, had become editor of the city weekly magazine, *New York*.

"Back in the 1960s and '70s, *New York* was quite a good magazine," Dixon says. "They had Woody Allen writing for it and Gloria Steinem, and it was an interesting magazine for journalism. But over the years different publishers had turned it into this kind of weekly 'Where to go in the Hamptons', and it had degraded a bit."

Moss was relaunching the magazine in 2004 with the goal of returning it to its former glory, and he hired a number of former colleagues from the *New York Times*, including Dixon as his art director. Two years later, Dixon was promoted to design director. In total, he stayed at *New York* for eight years, during which time the weekly reclaimed its position as one of the top magazines in American journalism.

"It was kind of a crazy job," Dixon says, noting that a weekly magazine like *New York* requires a much faster pace than a quarterly like *Adbusters*. "It was really busy and long hours, and we were just turning stuff out."

He says the most important responsibility of the design director at *New York* is the cover. "That determines how [an issue] sells and it gets certain buzz, so you want something clever for the cover, something engaging and interesting and exciting. Our editor was really involved in the covers too, so we spent a lot of time in my office going through different headlines and images and trying different things with type."

Fellow U of R and Emily Carr grad Michael Simons BA'97 has been friends with Dixon since high school and has followed his career with interest. Simons is a former creative director at

Adbusters and is currently the interactive director and co-owner of The Goggles, a Vancouver-based media firm. He says Dixon's gifts as a magazine designer and design director are manifest.

"I've always appreciated how good he is at assembling a bunch of different information onto a page and making it not only readable, but enjoyable," Simons says. "He's also very good at working with other artists and having that team around him. He's a natural leader."

Simons says Dixon has a knack for picking the right photo or illustration and then presenting it in a compelling way. "That shines through in his work. He has this innate sense of what's going to give an emotional presence to an image or story. What he did at *New York* – it was the magazine to look at in America for half a decade."

In fact, while Dixon was design director at *New York*, the weekly racked up a number of national magazine awards for its covers and overall design and for general excellence. "We did well," Dixon concedes. "Much of it had to do with Adam Moss because he was a great editor. But the magazine won all these awards every year and we started to get a lot of attention."

One of the people taking note of what was happening at *New York Magazine* was Graydon Carter, editor of *Vanity Fair*. He started poaching some of the staff at *New York* for his own magazine, and one day an email from Carter landed in Dixon's inbox.

"I wasn't too keen on leaving *New York Magazine*," Dixon says, "but over the next year Graydon and I met a couple of times to discuss it, and finally I just decided to go."

He started as the new design director at *Vanity Fair* in November 2011, and his first issue came out in January 2012 with Lady Gaga on the cover (photographed by Annie Leibovitz). Coincidentally, Dixon's first issue also featured a short article about Kalle Lasn, his former editor at *Adbusters*. By then, Lasn was achieving even greater notoriety as one of the instigators behind the burgeoning "Occupy Wall Street" protest movement.

Dixon isn't sure what Lasn would think of his one-time art director now working in New York for *Vanity Fair*, but he hopes he might approve. "There are other magazines that are more consumer driven that [Lasn] would probably find more objectionable," Dixon laughs. "*Vanity Fair* is known, obviously, for covering celebrity and Hollywood, but it's also known for great writing and for great journalism." **D**

Writer and playwright BD Miller is a two-time graduate of the U of R. His full-length musical drama Swept Off Our Feet: Boris Karloff and the Regina Cyclone premiered last July at the Regina Performing Arts Centre as a Regina Summer Stage production.



Alumni Association President's Message

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve this year as University of Regina Alumni Association (URAA) president. Among the highlights of the past year was the Alumni Crowning Achievement Dinner, fall and spring convocations, Slam Dunk and round table meetings with students – in particular Aboriginal students and alumni.

I would like to recognize the engagement of the University of Regina alumni chapters across Canada and warmly welcome our new Regina chapter.

During the past year, the Alumni Association board committees have kept the work of the association moving forward in such areas as scholarships, sponsorship and marketing. The board is particularly proud of the new alumni logo that was launched this year.

We are pleased to have signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Regina that secures association revenue from affinity partnerships. The joint agreement with the University's External Relations unit was developed collaboratively and includes

long-term plans and accountability measures.

The URAA is grateful for the excellent working relationship and partnership that exists with the University's External Relations department as well as the exceptional communications we enjoy with President Vianne Timmons.

I would like to offer a special word of thanks to the Alumni Association board and executive – they are an outstanding team of volunteers, deeply engaged in supporting your University.

Finally, I would like to recognize outgoing URAA board members Richard Kies, Lisa King and Jay Kirkland for their dedication and hard work, particularly through their contributions to the development of memorandums of understanding.

My very best wishes to Jeph Maystruck who will assume the University of Regina Alumni Association presidency in July.

**Gwen Keith BEd'74, MEd'77,
PGDEA'83, MEd'84
President**

University
of Regina

Disclosure and acknowledgement of consent

The University of Regina maintains a database of all its students, alumni and friends that is used for University alumni relations purposes, information and activities; news about the University; electronic newsletter; and requests for support. The database is also used by the University and Alumni Association's third-party business partners that offer benefits to alumni and students through insurance, credit card, financial and other services.

You acknowledge and consent to the use and disclosure of database information relating to you (such as name, mailing address, phone number, degree(s) and year of graduation) for the aforementioned purposes unless otherwise indicated below.

Complete the following and return by surface mail. I do **not** wish to receive the following:

- Degrees Magazine
 Alumni E-newsletter
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Please Return to: University of Regina – External Relations
3737 Wascana Pkwy, 210 North Residence
Regina, SK, Canada S4S 0A2

By e-mail: alumni.relations@uregina.ca
By fax: +1 (306) 585-4997

To access and update your preferences online, please go to:
www.uregina.ca/alumni/uyi.htm

In 2001, a broad coalition of farmers, environmentalists and civil society groups came together to put a stop to the commercialization of genetically modified (GM) wheat by the biotechnology giant Monsanto. Many of those same producers who rejected GM wheat had widely embraced GM canola. Why the vastly different attitudes towards the two crops? University of Regina Assistant Geography Professor Emily Eaton suggests it's, in part, the symbolic importance of wheat and the fundamental difference between bread and oil.

By Emily Eaton

Photos by Don Hall, University of Regina Photography Department and courtesy of Emily Eaton.



Against the grain

Family farmers have always been somewhat of an enigma to me: they tend to vote for parties on the political right against their own economic interests; they'll continue to operate even when they don't make a profit, in fact, they'll subsidize their farms with the proceeds of off-farm work; they deal in huge dollar amounts, but end up with so little. Economists call them "non-rational" actors because they exhibit behaviour that makes little rational sense and political economists continue to be fascinated with how and why they have not already become extinct and replaced by the corporations that characterize all other processes in our food systems.

Despite having grown up in Saskatchewan, I knew very few farmers until I met many of them during my fieldwork while investigating the politics of genetically modified (GM) organisms. Being a descendant of settlers, I have surprisingly few farmers in my family tree. But when you grow up in Saskatchewan, you also grow up steeped in narratives about the settling of the Prairies through the wheat economy and staring at fields upon fields of wheat and other crops on long family car trips. Despite my lack of farm background, studying farmers and, particularly, the politics of wheat seemed inherited from my social and natural landscape.

When six farm groups stood alongside Greenpeace, the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Health Coalition in 2001 at a press conference in Winnipeg, announcing their opposition to the introduction of Monsanto's Roundup Ready (RR) wheat, I was intrigued. Here was another puzzle related to farmers' behaviour and political actions. Over the previous decade, farmers had enthusiastically adopted the same genetic modification from the same company in another crop – canola. In fact, by 2005, GM canola accounted for 78 per cent of all canola grown nationally. So why did farmers lead a coalition that successfully warded off the introduction of Monsanto's Roundup Ready trait in wheat?

This would be the question that drove my doctoral research, which I conducted

as part of my degree at the large urban-focused Department of Geography at the University of Toronto. I spent the summer of 2006 and the winter of 2007 back in Saskatchewan as a home base and talked to plenty of farmers and representatives from other relevant organizations like Monsanto, Agriculture Canada, Canadian Canola Council, Canadian Wheat Board and many more. The answer to the question about why farmers had enthusiastically embraced RR canola but rejected RR wheat proved to have much to do with the diverging political and institutional histories of the two crops and the culturally significant differences between oil and bread.

Wheat still maintains a strong symbolic importance on the Prairies despite an increasingly urban population.

Wheat still maintains a strong symbolic importance on the Prairies despite an increasingly urban population. Stories about the wheat economy and the back-breaking labour of settlers, who lived in relative isolation without services such as running water and electricity, maintain a prominent position in official cultural histories reproduced by the provinces. For Eisler (2006), this is one of the myths that has produced the sense of belonging and the emotional and psychological bonds of a provincial community like Saskatchewan. Of course, this construction of community is also highly exclusionary to groups that were not part of the pioneering history and erases the violence done to Indigenous peoples who were forced off the land in favour of wheat and settlers. Nevertheless, as an image of a shared past the wheat economy remains fundamental to many aspects of modern prairie society. Not only that, but the wheat economy places the Prairies in Canadian national narratives; through wheat, the Prairies make a claim to national belonging.

Wheat farmers produce a crop that is known internationally for its high quality standards and protein content, and farmers understand themselves as producing a breadbasket for the world. This is often spoken about as a patriotic act of global citizenship. Indeed, programs like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, where farmers donate their grains as aid to areas of the world suffering from famine and malnutrition draw on and reproduce the breadbasket narrative. The prospect of delivering genetically modified grain for bread to the global community threatens to undermine the wholesomeness of the breadbasket and the patriotic act of giving.

Campaigners against RR wheat found it fairly easy to engage urban consumers on the issue because of the ubiquity of wheat in processed foods and because of the deep symbolism associated with bread. Indeed, bread is a culturally significant food, one of the main staples of European and North American diets. We break bread with our families and communities, and the food itself is associated with warm thoughts of togetherness.

Canola, on the other hand, is not a culturally significant food. If it has any meaning with consumers at all, it is understood as a healthy cooking oil. Before Canadian plant breeders transformed rapeseed into canola in the 1970s by reducing its erucic acid (thereby lowering its saturated fats) and glucosinolates, rapeseed had been used primarily as machine grease. Thus, concerted advertising campaigns had to transform the crop from machine grease to edible oil in the eyes of the consuming public. Among farmers, the crop is understood as the product of scientific innovation (even though current varieties of wheat are also the product of plant breeding). It is not associated with the pioneering history of the province or its farmers, and has an entrepreneurial rather than a traditional or romantic character.

The history of the wheat economy in the Prairies is also a story about farmers organizing collectively to curb the economic exploitation they were experiencing at the hands of the large corporations that dominated many

Early on in the debate, the CWB was quickly and relatively easily able to survey its main customers about their acceptance of GM wheat and publicize the conclusive results of these consultations – over two-thirds of customers had reservations about accepting GM wheat.

stages of the wheat commodity chain. Despite their relative atomization on distant homesteads, in the early 1900s farmers began to organize collectively against the ability of upstream and downstream commercial actors to capture all the potential farm profit. Much of this early farm organizing took the form of building producer cooperatives in the grain handling industry, including cooperative elevator companies in Saskatchewan and Alberta and a prairie-wide marketing agency established in 1906 called the Grain Growers' Grain Company (GGGC).

In the early 1920s, through large-scale and labour intensive drives that involved going 'door to door' to convince farmers to sign contracts promising that they would pool their wheat, the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta Wheat Pools were established. When international grain prices collapsed in 1929 and the Great Depression began, the Pool's Central Selling Agency found itself in huge financial difficulty, owing substantial sums to banks, and having already given out initial payments for the 1929 crop that international grain prices could not support. Farmers' demands to bring back a national, state-operated central selling agency and pool for wheat (which had been a temporary measure during the First World War) were finally heeded.

In 1935, by an Act of Parliament, the Canadian Wheat Board was re-established as a voluntary marketing agency for wheat. The provincial pools continued to operate their cooperative grain handling systems allowing farmers to by-pass the private grain companies. Cooperatives were also used to fight against banking monopolies; credit unions and cooperative insurance began to be organized in the late 1930s.

Prairie farmers eventually gained a single desk for the Canadian Wheat

Board (CWB), making delivery to it mandatory and thereby providing farmers with a powerful institution explicitly mandated to work in their interests. Indeed the presence and role of the CWB in the wheat commodity chain was another factor owing to farmers' successful resistance against RR wheat. Early on in the debate, the CWB was quickly and relatively easily able to survey its main customers about their acceptance of GM wheat and publicize the conclusive results of these consultations – over two-thirds of customers had reservations about accepting GM wheat.

Canola has no history of collective farm organizing. From the beginning, canola was viewed as a high-value cash crop and farmers could generally sell it at a much higher price than the highest grade of wheat. Although canola involved more risk than wheat, the gamble paid off just often enough. Compared to wheat, canola uses a lot of nitrogen and other expensive chemicals to control flea beetles, diamondback moths and armyworms, but with greater fluctuations in price the rewards can be more handsome. For these reasons, among others, political organizing around canola never coalesced as it did around wheat. Furthermore, by the time canola was being grown in any significant amount, a political movement away from the welfare state was well underway at regional, national and international scales. For example, it was not until 1978 that canola reached 10 per cent of all acres seeded to grain on the Prairies. This happened during the final stage of a broad political consensus that saw relatively stable funding and supports for agriculture, both provincially and federally, including cooperative enterprises, plant breeding, transportation subsidies, etc.

The production of canola continued

to gain momentum as provincial and federal states began to adjust to and promote neoliberal strategies of governance that saw state supports for agriculture slashed (this happened around the same time as widespread cuts in other industries and social services). In this policy context, political organizing among farmers revolved around maintaining the status quo and canola became a cash crop that could help buffer the economic hardships that accompanied international recessions and declining domestic supports. In canola, farmers never formed a collective institution working to promote their interests. The Canola Council of Canada, for example, dates back to the 1960s, but was established in order to pool the resources of all those with a stake in the canola industry. The concerns of private companies (especially those associated with agricultural inputs and processors) easily rose to the forefront of the Council's work.

A final difference between the politics of RR wheat and RR canola comes down to the different agronomic practices of farmers associated with the different crops. Wheat has certain biological and agronomic characteristics that have made it a crop that is particularly attractive to prairie farmers. Specifically,



Assistant Professor of Geography Emily Eaton.

public investment in wheat breeding since the late 1800s has produced varieties that are particularly well-adapted to the short and dry growing season of the Canadian plains. Furthermore, Canadian farmers have relatively unrestricted access to seed and seed saving in wheat. In fact, seed saving remains a culturally significant practice for wheat farmers. The farmers I interviewed as part of this research also report using wheat in their rotations to break cycles of disease and state that a variety of fairly inexpensive herbicides have been introduced to effectively control weeds in wheat crops. For these reasons wheat continues to be a very important part of rotations and prairie farm economies even though farm prices for wheat are low compared to other field crops like canola, lentils and peas. While wheat no longer dominates production like it did in the early 1900s, it still remains a widely planted crop among farmers.

Grown by many of the same farmers who save their wheat seed, canola seed, by contrast, is regularly bought by prairie farmers. Canola is also more intensively managed by farmers than wheat. Specifically, the crop's weed and disease-prone disposition in farmers' fields has meant that farmers are very interested in new technologies (including production systems such as zero till and genetic modification) and chemicals for weed management. Because of these agronomic difficulties, canola is best grown in a four-year rotation, and, thus, canola is less amenable to the practice of seed saving. For all of these reasons a culture of seed saving does not exist with the crop, and so farmers were less resistant to Monsanto's RR modification that forces farmers back to the store each year for seed.

By the end of my research into the diverging histories, agronomies and cultures of wheat and canola I wondered are farmers really "non-rational" actors as economists would have us believe? Perhaps they behave in ways that defy rational economic behaviour, but family farming has always been about more than making a living. It's also about making a community, fostering people-



Eaton's current research interest focuses on the Saskatchewan oil industry and the real costs associated with industry and government securing consent for oil extraction in the province.

plant relationships, warding off risk, fighting for a fair share of the profits derived from farm labour and so much more. Cultural attachments to bread as a meaningful food and wheat as the crop with which the Prairies were settled and around which early farm organizing coalesced meant that farmers and the public understood wheat as much more than its monetary return on the market. We might say that Monsanto's proposed RR wheat economy crossed moral boundaries; it proposed a product that farmers neither wanted nor needed,

moved the products of plant breeding into private hands and infringed on cultural attachments to wheat. **D**

Emily Eaton is an assistant professor of geography at the University of Regina specializing in political economy and natural resource economies. She is also active in a variety of social justice struggles. Her book Growing Resistance: Canadian Farmers and the Politics of Genetically Modified Wheat was published in April by University of Manitoba Press. Excerpts from the book appear here.

1970-1979

Shirley Whitaker BEd'71 worked at the Pembina Trains School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Evergreen School Division in Gimli, Manitoba until 2011. After she retired, Whitaker and her husband moved to British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. They plan to enjoy golf and travel around British Columbia in their new RV.

Gunther Pabst MA'72 is working as a freelance consultant in drug development.

Leonard Moleski BEd'73 was an elementary school teacher with Regina Public Schools for 36 years. He retired in 2007 and later moved to Vonda, Saskatchewan with his wife.

Joanne Skidmore BA'74 received the YWCA Regina's Women of Distinction Award in the Arts category.

Wayne Morgan BA'73, CA'84 was the director/curator at Regina Public Library's Dunlop Art Gallery from 1970 to 1984.

1980-1989

Christine Burton BA'80 (Campion College) received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal at an October 2012 ceremony. She received the medal in recognition of her leadership, particularly in the promotion of diversity and inclusiveness. She was recently appointed the director general of marketing at Service Canada.

Mary Paula Brooke CPR'85 is the editor and publisher of a weekly newspaper in Sooke, British Columbia called the *Sooke Voice News*.

Carol Fulton BEd'86, MEd'93 won the YWCA Regina's Women of Distinction Award in the Education and Mentorship category.

After working for Sirte Oil from 1990 to 2003, **Brian Braun BA'88** relocated to south Florida where he co-developed a device to accurately and continuously monitor the amount of fluid leaving a chemical injection pump.

Blair Stonechild MA'89, PhD'04 won the Rasmussen, Rasmussen and Charowsky Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award for his work *Buffy Sainte Marie: It's My Way* at the 2013 Saskatchewan Book Awards.

1990-1999

Sharon Finnik BA'93 won the YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the Circle of Friends category for her fundraising efforts for breast cancer research.

Melanie Schnell BEd'93 won the National Bank Financial Wealth Management First Book Award and the Drs. Morris & Jacqui Shumiatcher Regina Book Award for her work *While the Sun is Above Us* at the 2013 Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Interim president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Nuclear Association, **Heather Kleb MSc'94** has over 20 years experience in a variety of environmental industries.

Georgina Bugera Mott BEd'95 has been teaching internationally since 1995. She is currently teaching at the Istanbul International Community School in Turkey and welcomed a daughter in 2010.

Rob Ligette BEd'95 is currently working on his PhD in Education Administrative Leadership.

Gladys Lundy (nee Noble) BEd'95 has been working at Crossworld, a mission organization, since 1973 and is celebrating 40 years of overseas service with them this year. She completed her teacher's certificate in 1965.

Sandra Ermel CSW'96 has retired and enjoys travelling. Her most recent road trip took her more than 17,000 kilometres around North America.

Evangeline Godron BA'97 is currently the vice-president of the Green Party of Saskatchewan. She is also a playwright, with her plays having been performed at the Regina Globe Theatre, Halifax Fringe Festival and a women's play festival in the United Kingdom.

Sandra Favel (nee Pelletier) BISW'98 celebrated the birth of her first grandchild in February this year.

2000-2009

Tara Ursulescu BA Hons'03 has explored many career paths since graduating. She interviewed people who experienced natural disasters for a documentary series that aired on The Discovery Channel. She has also used her client-centered skills in psychology to work at a women's shelter, as a recruitment counsellor and as a human resources consultant for various government agencies. Currently, she is pursuing a writing career and is serving as guest editor of *Soulwoman eMagazine*. She is contributing to two upcoming books.

Satpal Singh Virdi BAdmin'03 is enrolled in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy master of public policy degree program. He plans to enrol in the PhD program this fall.

Sandra Cripps MHRM'06 was appointed the new CEO of the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health. The organization's mission is to guide the health-related industry in the elimination of workplace illness and injury. From 1998 to 2005 Cripps was the director of Recreation and Volunteer Services at Regina Pioneer Village. From 2005 to earlier this year, she was director of Program and Resource Development in the Workforce Planning Branch at Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.

Meghan Krahn (nee Anderson) BEd'07 is working for a not-for-profit organization called Rock Solid Refuge. This certified, independent school offers 12 to 15 month programs for teen boys struggling with life-controlling issues, such as addictions.

Aaron Kaytor BA'08 is in the Royal Canadian Navy. He was deck officer for five years before returning to Regina as a recruiting officer in 2012.

Jadon Frank BKin'07 moved to Caronport, Saskatchewan in 2012 to work at Briercrest College as its athletic business coordinator.

Marlene Bugler MBA'08 returned to North Battleford, Saskatchewan recently to become the executive director with Kanaweyimik Child and Family Services Inc.

2010-present

Doug Yaremko MBA'10 recently accepted a position with HSBC Bank Canada.

Recent graduate **Janell Dautel CSW'11, BSW'11** is looking forward to beginning her career as a social worker.

Teresa Thrun BEd'12 is teaching Grade 7 in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan at Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary Community School and is helping with cross-cultural awareness. She is also excited to be leading an after-school beading club.

Kobie Spriggs BA'12 has enrolled in a master's program after completing his arts degree, majoring in philosophy with a minor in women and gender studies.

Kate Ward (nee Kathy DeBenedetti) DipBA'12 will receive her certificate in public relations from the University of Regina Credit Studies Division at the spring convocation. She is also taking classes towards her undergraduate degree in Business Administration.

Jane Lyster BSW'12 is working on a Master of Arts in Integrated Studies through Athabasca University while working full-time.

A complete listing of Class Notes is available on the Alumni Relations website. To view Class Notes go to: www.uregina.ca/external/alumni-relations/alumni-stories/class-notes/index.html.

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

Alumni Annual General Meeting and Reception

University of Regina alumni are invited to the Annual General Meeting of the University of Regina Alumni Association. A reception will follow

Date: Thursday, June 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Location: College Building, Room 112 on the historic College Avenue Campus. Free public parking is available behind the building and at the parking meters.

Please **pre-register** for this free event at www.uregina.ca/external/alumni-relations.

Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards Celebration

The Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards dinner will be held on Friday, September 20 at the Conexus Art Centre, 200A Lakeshore Drive in Regina. Tickets will be available in August for \$75/person or \$600 for a table of eight. For more information, contact Alumni Relations at URalumni@uregina.ca or 1-877-779-4723.

University of Regina Alumni Branches

Get connected to U of R alumni in your region. To find out more about what is happening in your area, please contact your branch representative.

- National Capital Region (NCR)/Ottawa – Joanne Pomalis BSc'86, nrcalumni@uregina.ca
- Greater Toronto Area – Leah Morrigan BFA'96, leah@transformyourself.ca
- Saskatoon – Stormy Holmes BASc'98, CA'01, stormy_holmes@hotmail.com
- Calgary – Stuart Quinn BAdmin'81, Stuartq@shaw.ca
- Edmonton – Brad Rollins BAdmin'78, bradjrollins@gmail.com
- Vancouver – Tricia Gilliss BBA'09, Tricia.Gilliss@SISYSTEMS.COM

Let us know if you would like more information or would like to help organize an alumni event in your region. Contact us at URalumni@uregina.ca.

Congratulations U of R Graduates!

Enter the University of Regina alumni "Stay Connected" contest for a chance to win great prizes:

- iPad mini
- Ticketmaster gift certificate
- Bose Sound Dock III
- Travel gift card



Enter now and we'll send you information about up-coming events, and the benefits of being U of R Alumni.

www.uregina.ca/alumni/contest.htm

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Draw dates:
June-September 2013



The University of Regina Alumni Association

is accepting applications for the URAA Board of Directors 2013-2014.

- Are you interested in serving the University of Regina through alumni participation?
- Are you looking for an opportunity to add value to alumni membership?
- Are you interested in giving back with your professional expertise and committing volunteer hours to the URAA?

Please respond before the AGM with a resume and letter of how you might serve and contribute to the alumni community. There are two director positions available on the Board. Voting will take place at the annual general meeting in Regina on June 20, 2013.

contact: URalumni@uregina.ca

www.uregina.ca/external/alumni-relations



Enjoy time with
alumni and friends.

Alumni Association AGM

Date: Thursday, June 20, 2013

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Room CB 112

College Avenue Campus

Appetizers and beverages provided.

Reception hosted by U of R Alumni Association.

Please pre-register on-line:
www.uregina.ca/external/alumni-relations

Contact Alumni Relations:

Toll free: 1-877-779-4723 • URalumni@uregina.ca

Free parking at meters.

Realize. Supporting **indigenization.**

Moses Gordon, Student,
History & Economics major



JoLee Blackbear, Assistant Professor,
Educational Psychology, and Researcher (impact on
survivors of Residential School Reconciliation Process)

Misty Longman, Manager,
Aboriginal Student Centre

Indigenization is one of the key tenets of the University of Regina's Strategic Plan entitled *mâmahowkamâtowin*, a Cree word meaning "co-operation; working together towards common goals".

We have committed to a wide range of initiatives to support indigenization across our campus and beyond.

Our newly expanded Aboriginal Student Centre helps ensure our students make a seamless transition into university and helps our graduates make successful forays into the job market.

In April, we hosted a two-day summit exploring best practices in post-secondary education for Aboriginal peoples across Canada.

Additionally, faculty members like JoLee Blackbear are attracting funding for research that helps us better understand Aboriginal issues and their impact on society.

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www.uregina.ca/student/asc