

Bright

Crable goes postal in his *Census Series*, an exploration of Americans' artistic expressions.



Lights

Some of the professors, students and alumni who shine in Madison's constellation

[Jim Crable]

Painting with his lens

By Michelle Hite ('88)

Photo collages may have emerged as a widespread method for artistic expression; but if you see a large-scale photo collage featuring unique perspectives of human movement against countless architectural backdrops, you can bet your Museum of Modern Art admission money the artist is James Crable.

Known throughout the nation for his photo collage constructions, Crable is seeing his works on book covers and in more and more national exhibits. Robert Hirsch, author of *Exploring Color Photography: From the Darkroom to the Digital Studio*, chose Crable's *Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y.*, for the cover of the fourth edition of his book. The text is a standard in many college art programs including JMU and EMU. "Hirsch's book is one I've always admired, and I was truly honored to have my piece selected," says Crable.

Crable retired in May after 30 years on the JMU faculty, and Madison's loss is the art world's gain. Last spring, two works in Crable's *Recycle Series* were selected for Photoworks 2005, a national juried exhibition sponsored by the Barrett Art Center. The curator of the Whitney Museum of American Art chose works by 50 artists

from 23 states, and Crable was the only Virginia artist chosen.

In his latest expression, Crable is going postal. "I have been working on my *Census Series* for the past 15 years," he says of the work (displayed at left). "To date I've photographed more than 5,000 mailboxes in 15 states. I choose images for variations in color and texture, as well as for interesting text, folk painting and sculpted surfaces. It amazes me how many Americans use their mailboxes as a means of artistic expression."

'Each seemingly symmetrical and uniform construction, you see, is made up of all sorts of different, even eccentric, individual scenes.'

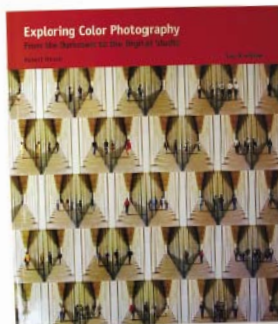
POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Although his work is based on photography, Crable says he is more influenced by painting and drawing. His undergraduate and graduate studies focused on painting and graphic disciplines. "I got into photography by accident; it simply provided a fresh, new way to explore my surroundings," he says. "Getting into something through the back door is good because you have no preconceived notions, and you can create something that is unique. You find your own voice."

Popular Photography magazine lauds Crable's work: "Each seemingly symmetrical and uniform construction, you see, is made up of all sorts of different, even eccentric, individual scenes. Crable's pictures are more aptly described, perhaps, as multi-cellular DNA combining with others to form a patterned, organic, complex whole."

Crable studied painting and printmaking at the Rochester Institute of Technology and Chelsea School of Art in London. His first major exhibition was a solo show in the mid-'70s at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, the oldest public museum in the nation. That big break brought further recognition, and Crable signed contracts with Gallery K in Washington, D.C., and J.J. Brookings in California. His work has appeared in *Art in America*, *Art News* and *The Washington Post*. He earned a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Professional Fellowship. He won the state's highest honor in the arts, the Virginia Prize, presented by former Gov. Gerald Baliles. His numerous solo exhibitions include shows at Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art and the San Jose Museum of Art.

Devoting more time to his art unfortunately meant that Crable would have to retire from teaching. "I will miss JMU, but it's time to devote myself full time to my art. I've signed a couple of contracts this year, so I'm going to be very busy. Hopefully, it will be my best work."



CRABLE PHOTOGRAPH BY DIANE ELLIOTT ('00)

Retired JMU art professor Jim Crable's piece *Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y.* (1985) adorns the cover of the fourth edition of *Exploring Color Photography: From the Darkroom to the Digital Studio* by Robert Hirsch. The text, a standard in many college programs, introduces photography students to contemporary analog and digital approaches, images, techniques, and the history of color photography. "Hirsch is a highly experienced image-maker, professor, curator and writer," says Crable. "It is truly an honor to appear on this cover." McGraw-Hill, 2005, ISBN 0-07240-706-9

[Erica Mercke]

Balance with dedication

BY LISA FREEDMAN ('05)

May 2005 dance major Erica Mercke has set the stage for her dreams on both sides of the Atlantic. As a junior, Mercke won a spot in JMU's prestigious summer dance program at the London Institute of Contemporary Dance and Theatre. She and her peers spent four weeks at JMU's London residence, Madison House, and performed in twice-weekly, two-hour dance labs taught by Scott Smith. "It was an amazing experience to study what I love in such a rich and historical city," says Mercke, who has studied modern dance, jazz and ballet.

Students also trained at London studios like Pineapple, The Place, and Dance Works and then attended professional dance and theater shows five nights a week.

It was a dream trip for Mercke, who started performing in musical theater as a child. "I started dance lessons when I was 8 at the Loudoun School of Ballet; it became my home five or six days out of the week." In 2004, Mercke returned to her home dance school and took first place in the professional division for the company's National Dance Week Annual Choreography Competition.

Perhaps surprisingly for a dancer of Mercke's dedication, balance is important beyond dance. "I was interested in JMU's balance of dance training and formal education," she says. "I was very studious in high school, so I wanted a school that not only had a dance program, but also a very strong academic program. JMU's dance department not only offers a lot of performance opportunity, but also a lot of choreographic opportunities. "I love to choreograph, and I have always dreamed of starting my own company and teaching."

Since her senior year of high school, Mercke has shared her gift with students on many stages. The 2004-05 recipient of JMU's Earlynn Miller Tuition Scholarship returned to the Loudoun School of Ballet to teach jazz



Mercke couldn't choreograph her nonstop dance achievements any better.

and serve as a guest choreographer. During her sophomore and junior years, she taught jazz at a small studio in Elkton, Va. "The girls there were really excited to be working with the JMU students," she says. "I aspire to go to graduate school and teach dance at a university."

Another junior-year honor for Mercke was having her piece, *Imminent Landings*, selected as one of four student works featured in the year's Contemporary Dance Concert in Latimer-Schaeffer Theatre. Professional costume designers costumed her number, and she worked with professional lighting designers. "This is a unique opportunity for students," she says. The same piece was later chosen to represent JMU's dance department at the American College Dance Festival Mid-Atlantic Region. Only one student piece was selected.

As a senior, Mercke joined the Virginia Repertory Dance Company, JMU's pre-professional dance company, and performed at the Jack Guidone Theatre in Washington, D.C.

Mercke capped her four years with JMU's Dance Theatre as club president. The club supported a local Girl Scout troop and JMU's community Adult Health and Development Program.

Mercke also volunteered as a "FROG" to help new freshmen adjust to campus life and serve as a guide during the first few weeks of school each August. "I wanted to give back by helping other students," she says. "JMU has given me so much."

[Don Rhymer]

Thriving in Hollywood

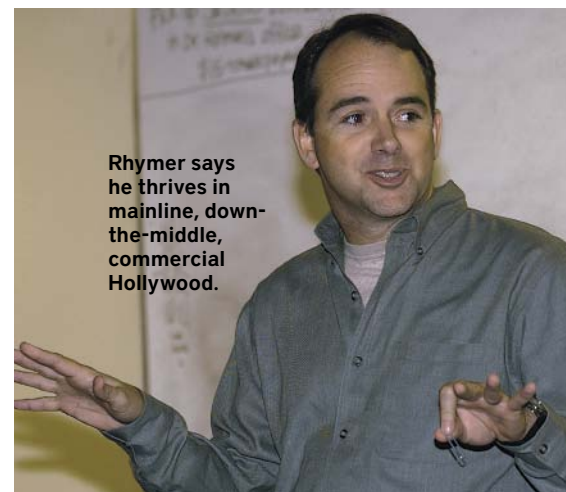
BY CHRIS EDWARDS

On the credits of this year's film, *The Honeymooners*, look for Don Rhymer ('82) among the writers' names, somewhere below Cedric the Entertainer and Mike Epps (cast as Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton).

Rhymer was not daunted by resurrecting the immortal Jackie Gleason sitcom because, "We weren't trying to 'do' *The Honeymooners*. We basically used the characters as a jumping-off point and just tried to find a fun story that would showcase the talents of the stars." Modesty is typical of this alum who several years ago tapped his Hollywood success to start a JMU screenwriting scholarship that supports two students and a future initiative with the School of Media Arts and Design.

At Madison, the North Carolina native double majored in communication arts and English and met his wife, Kate Walther Rhymer ('82), who co-owns a calendar business.

Having once dreamed of being a stuntman or cameraman, Rhymer may have chosen cinematography if today's technology had been available then. He is impressed with special-effects videos by novices such as son Andrew, a New York University film student.



Rhymer says he thrives in mainline, down-the-middle, commercial Hollywood.

It is possible that Rhymer's writing seed germinated in Ralph Cohen's Shakespeare class after Cohen insisted that instead of rehashing notes, he write his own ideas. Rhymer pondered, "I'm a 19-year-old kid, and I can have a new idea about Shakespeare?" The effort proved "empowering."

After graduation, he tried graduate school and then political advertising before scripts. For 10 years he wrote TV sitcoms, including *Caroline in the City*. In 12-hour production days, "Four-fifths of it is being in a room full of people all trying to be funnier than everyone else. It's a real snake pit."

Rhymer learned, "You have to be very thick-skinned," and "not a prima donna" — lessons he says still serve him well.

After starting a family (also including now-teens Molly and Carrie), Rhymer tried breaking into film. A producer advised, "Don't write another movie until you can see the poster." Rhymer channeled such a mental picture while schlepping kids around the family's LaCanada, Calif., neighborhood. The result: *Carpool* (1996) starring Tom Arnold as a comic carjacker. "It's an awful movie, but it's what set me on the path of screenwriting."

Since then, Rhymer's two-part *Big Momma's House* cast Martin Lawrence as an undercover FBI agent disguised as the title character. *Agent Cody Banks 2: Destination London* starred Frankie Muniz as a teen CIA agent. *The Santa Clause* and its sequel made Tim Allen a reluctant jolly elf. Now Rhymer is working on the poker comedy *All In*. And of this reading, might be in production for *Big Momma's House 2*.

Rhymer waxes philosophical about his own legacy: "I write mainline, down-the-middle commercial Hollywood. I couldn't write *Monster's Ball* to save my life." Yet since *Big Momma's House* and *Santa Clause 2* each grossed upwards of \$150 million, "I have a little more control over my scripts. I don't mind that."

Off work, he bypasses the Hollywood orbit. His best friends are not movie people; his kids attend public schools. "You learn not to be star-struck. Actors are just regular, flawed people like anyone else."

His advice to anyone ambitious? "Be massively persistent."

[Amy McPherson]

Meteoric rise to exec VP suite

BY SANDE SNEAD ('82)

No doubt Amy McPherson ('83) would concur with *Fortune* magazine's assessment of Marriott International as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work for."

In her 19 years traveling all over the world with the company, McPherson has helped make it so. In November, she was promoted to executive vice president of sales and marketing for Marriott Worldwide. She reports directly to J.W. Marriott III, executive vice president of Lodging for Marriott International Inc. David Marriott, senior vice president, global and field sales, reports to her.

It's pretty heady stuff, and, yet, McPherson is surprisingly humble about it all. "When I run into old friends or other people from JMU, they've worked for 10 different companies and they can't believe I'm still at Marriott. That's what my dad's generation did — stay with the same company forever. I feel like such a loser."

Whoa.

In fact, McPherson has been on a meteoric career path to the top ranks of the company. She joined Marriott in 1986 and worked in several key positions including vice president of finance and business development and senior vice president of business transformation and integration, where she developed

the strategic business plan for ExecuStay, Marriott's corporate housing brand. Before her promotion last fall, she was senior vice president of global revenue management and reservation sales. Marriott is a \$19 billion global lodging company with 2,700 properties in 70 countries.

"Every time I got bored and thought I'd like to do something else, Marriott acquired a new business, and I moved into a new area of the company," the business management and economics major says. She received her MBA from the College of William and Mary immediately after graduating from JMU. "We acquired Renaissance Hotels, and I got to go into their hotels all over the world and see what we could learn from them and what they could learn from us. Then, Marriott said, 'Can you fix ExecuStay?' I spent four months traveling to ExecuStay properties. I'm excited by that kind of challenge."

Now on the road less, McPherson tries to find time for music, running and sports. She says she's not a morning person, and she generally doesn't get home to her toney Pennsylvania Avenue address until 8 p.m. each night. She does make it a priority to serve on JMU's College of Business Executive Advisory Council.

"When I was asked, I thought, 'I don't have time for this.' Plus, I'm traveling all the time. But Dr. Bob Reid [dean of the College of Business] said, 'It's only two meetings a year. Just try it.' I've been able to hit one of the two annual meetings for the last two years. I love the experience. I enjoy it immensely."

It goes both ways. "Amy is one of those unique people who is incredibly competent and a delight to be around at the same time," Reid says. "She's a genuinely good human being with whom you would like to work. There is no ego." ■



McPherson has helped make Marriott one of *Fortune's* "100 Best Companies to Work for."

More than clothes make this woman

Professor Pam Johnson opened my eyes to the world BY GINJER NORRIS CLARKE ('94)

How many professors can you say truly changed the way you look at the world? Every time I look at a theater set, costume or even a magazine advertisement, I find myself evaluating the use of line, color, symbolism and sometimes subtle (or not so) innuendo.

From the first class I ever took with theater professor Pam Johnson, I began to see how seemingly simple images in art and in life were really highly orchestrated combinations meant to please the viewers or readers and to get them to feel something specific and emotional. I became aware of the amount of thought that goes into psychologically convincing a prospective buyer that a product will make him or her feel sexier, younger or more fulfilled. But more important than my changed worldview of theater, art and advertising, I began to really see the world around me and to take in the details like never before.

Pam Johnson instructed me on the visual aspects of theater, rendering technique and makeup design, and served as one of my honors thesis advisers. She taught me how to make myself look old, glamorous and even like professor Tom King for the memorable makeup final. She fostered skills of diagnosis, assessment, risk taking and problem solving. In the grand scheme of life, she taught me about persevering in the face of challenges, believing in myself, exhibiting grace under pressure and expecting the best from yourself and others. She was demanding, but her expectations were clear and achievable. She was highly critical but tremendously supportive.

Since my college years, Pam has continued to be a force in my life as a mentor and friend. We have met for lunches in Har-

risonburg when my husband and I visit, and she even came to my home in Richmond for our housewarming party. I think I fretted more about the prospect of Pam visiting than even my mother-in-law, because I know that her designer's eye takes in everything. Her notes to me are chatty and informative, and they brim with enthusiasm and love for her profession. She exhibits pride in her significant accomplishments and in those of her children and students.

I chose to pursue writing and editing rather than theater after college, but even in that realm, Pam was one of my best guides. During the arduous thesis writing process, she insisted that I rethink and rewrite until I had said what I meant, serving as my first editor and giving me a glimpse of what was to come

in my writing life. Now that I am a children's book author, she is one of my strongest supporters. She still encourages me to be fearless and to go beyond what I think the limits of my abilities are. Sometimes I think she really overestimates what I am capable of, but what a wonderful quality to have — to believe so fiercely in the talents of your students. I would like to think that our professor-student bond is special, and it is, but I can tell from hearing Pam talk about other former and current students that she has developed this connection with many students. She stays involved in their lives by choice and truly cares about and cham-

pions their endeavors. Pam is a gifted professor, director, designer and artist; but her greatest gift may be her ability to inspire and to dare us to dream.

About the Author: *Ginjer Norris Clarke ('94) is a children's book author and freelance writer with elephanteditorial.com. She has published five non-fiction children's readers for the Random House Step Into Reading Series and the Grosset and Dunlap All Aboard Reading Series. Clarke and her husband, Jay ('92), were married on the Quad in 1995 and live in Richmond.*

About the Professor: *Theater professor and nationally recognized costume and stage wear designer Pamela S. Johnson won a Meritorious Achievement Award at the 2004 Region IV Kennedy Center American College Festival. She also won a 2004 national faculty fellowship in costume design and the 2004-05 Carl Harter Distinguished Teacher award in the College of Arts and Letters.*



Kennedy Center Meritorious Achievement Award winner Pam Johnson.

The healing power of play

Despite the tsunami's devastation, the children of Sri Lanka send a message of hope BY ANNE STEWART, PH.D.

Looking out of the window of the van as we travel southward, I am overwhelmed with both the beauty of Sri Lanka's coastal scenery and the magnitude of the devastation. I arrived in Sri Lanka in early February in response to the tsunami that struck South Asia and parts of Africa on Dec. 26, 2004. Scientists report that the earthquake that generated the tsunami was 23,000 times as powerful as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. In Sri Lanka alone, the death toll was more than 43,000 mothers, fathers and children; family, friends and neighbors.

I had come to Sri Lanka with others from the Association for Play Therapy to provide play-based interventions to children traumatized by the tsunami. I had left my home in Harrisonburg and my psychology classes at JMU to come to Sri Lanka because I believe the welfare of each child is connected to the well-being of all children everywhere and because I believe I can help.

Even after the tsunami, Sri Lanka is a paradise. As our small team of mental health professionals continues to head south from Colombo, however, the devastation soon appears. The road, running parallel to the beach, becomes lined with rubble — pile after pile of bricks, cement and decaying tree trunks. The piles are dot-

ted, poignantly, with colorful tangles of clothing. We also see these bright spots of clothing high in the trees. We are told that these are bright saris, stripped from the women and girls during the tsunami. While we silently offer our hope that the women and girls who once wore the clothing are safe, we know it is not likely that they survived. Unexpectedly, I begin to question the logic of being there to play in the midst of this disaster. I feel unmoored and adrift.

Almost three hours south of Colombo, our team reaches the fishing village of Weligama, lying right next to the sea. The van slows to a stop. The Indian Ocean is about 20 yards to my right. A broken boat lies on the beach amid piles of debris. On the left is a desolate scene, more rubble and a blue tarp suspended in the breeze. I do not see any people and am not sure why we are stopping. We are told, "This is our camp. The children are expecting you."

As we step out of the van and walk across the road, a young woman approaches us with a baby on her hip. She greets us with a head shake and smile. Within seconds, 40 children, from 2 to 16 years old, appear. The woman explains that she is the teacher for the children and that the children would like to perform for us. A young girl performs the "bangle" dance, gracefully posturing her small hands and then tapping her wrists together. Of course,



As a welcome to the play therapy team and the author (inset), the teens of Weligama perform a traditional Sri Lankan dance as younger children clap and sing along.

Tell us about those special Professors You Love. This series, written by alumni and students, won the CASE District III 2005 Grand Award for feature series writing. Keep those top-notch submissions coming. Send entries to madisonmag@jmu.edu or Madison, JMAC #6, Suite 21, MSC 5718, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.

she has no bangles. Three teenaged girls then do a traditional dance while the other children clap and sing songs to accompany them. Their pleasure and enjoyment in one another are clear.

Then, surprisingly, the children scurry into a large circle and motion for us to join them. Their faces have the same impish looks we have all seen on our own children. Giggling mischievously, the children look at one another and raise one arm. In unison they sing, 'You put your right hand in, you put your right hand out.' We laugh, and almost cry, in disbelief. *The Hokey Pokey!* These children had been taught *The Hokey Pokey* by an earlier team and practiced it in English for our visit. These children without homes, full of grief and loss, had been getting ready to surprise us. Here by the sea, with these children, I understand again the resilience of children and the important contribution of play in changing a legacy of destruction and loss to a future of hope.

Our team works directly with children and family members who survived the tsunami and consults with teachers and caregivers. We visit one to three sites each day, seeing children who resided in orphanages and tent camps. In most instances, the camps are near their previous home community and very close to the sea.

The children approach the team curious and shy, and very quickly join us in our play activities. Our team includes our fellow playmates, aka translators, Surangani and Kumari, who help us identify and engage with the groups' leaders, and then have a playful introduction to the children, usually with a "Hello" song. We find the children also enjoy having a time to perform for us, often singing songs they composed about the losses they had sustained.

All of the play activities we engage in with the children are based on research regarding the components of effective treatments for child survivors of trauma. These were the same kind of activities I had done in Boston with children healing from the trauma of abuse and neglect or from witnessing domestic violence. These were the same activities I shared with children in Bosnia, Cambodia, Mozambique and Vietnam to heal from the trauma of living with

'Nature is a gift for us. We were proud to have such a beautiful gift. But today the situation is different. It is so sad.'

DINANI NISANSALA, 14 years old

landmines. The very same activities I see with children in Virginia. Children healing from the trauma of witnessing the drowning of a classmate. Children healing from the trauma of 9/11.

Such play-based activities help normalize reactions, promote positive coping and self-soothing, correct misattributions, encourage social support, and instill hope. Translated (literally and figuratively) into action, these factors are incorporated into culturally congruent puppet plays, songs and expressive arts, and experiential activities. For example, guided by information from the orphanage or camp leader, a puppet play might have characters displaying a range of trauma-related symptoms: trouble sleeping, not wanting to be with friends, only wanting to search for lost parents or friends. In play, the characters, with the children's suggestions, explore a variety of ways to feel better.

A particularly powerful activity is "Rebuild your Village," in which the children are asked to work together to create a new village using the materials at hand. In a few minutes the children gather materials and collaboratively construct a village to their liking, replete with a temple, homes, a school, bridges, roads and, of course, a playground. In the middle of this destruction, the children were ready to create.

We also have the opportunity to conduct training. We discuss the rationale for our work and provide experiential training in the play activities for 25 teachers and community development officers. We first describe our approach with the municipal officials and receive assurances that it is just what the participants are expecting and desire. However, a short way into the program, we notice some women who seem quite shy and perhaps embarrassed. Concerned that we are

violating some cultural or religious norm, we ask the official to make sure our group is comfortable and satisfied with the training. After consulting with the participants, she approaches us and announces that "the women would very much like you to repeat everything, so they can learn it more thoroughly while you are here." What a delightful surprise. It is a deeply gratifying training experience and a tender and tearful parting as we genuinely tell the women, "From our hearts, to your hearts, we wish you well." And we continue to, every hour, every day.

There is special joy in working with these adults and children. I want to tell them everything will be all right, but everything is not all right. Nor is it all right with many children around the world. In the world, there are mountains of despair. The landscape is littered with all types of debris, with the remnants of broken families and broken communities. Children's lives that are broken by violence, by oppression, by hopelessness. But despite the debris, despite all our concerns, fears and all that we see, I see a message of hope in Sri Lanka.

I find the devastation of the communities is more than matched by the grace, wisdom and resilience of the children and families we meet. Their pain and hope is reflected in words Dinani Nisansala, a young teenage girl shares: "Whenever I think about the day of December 26th, I feel like crying. ... My friends, my relatives lost their lives. The sound of weeping, crying and shouting are still in my ears. ... I don't hate the sea. I will not be able to get anything back by blaming nature, so I will not weep by thinking about what I lost. I wish to live with what I gained."

I went to Sri Lanka because I believe how we care for our children, all our children, is a measure of the state of our humanity. I went to Sri Lanka because just one caring adult — here, now, anywhere — can make a positive difference in the life of a child. ❧

About the Author: *Anne Stewart, Ph.D., is a graduate psychology professor and licensed clinical psychologist in Virginia. She is a trainer, supervisor and playful practitioner of play and family therapy.*

Learn more about the author's work in Sri Lanka at www.psyc.jmu.edu/gradpsyc/srilanka.html and support her work with a gift to the Children and Family Foundation at www.jmu.edu/development/how_to_gift/give_now.shtml

How do great souls express themselves?

The humanities offer the key to the best of our culture BY GIULIANA FAZZION, PH.D.

As a professor of foreign languages, literatures and cultures, I have a strong basis in the humanities; and, while I cherish them, I also try to spread their values and importance to my students. Why the humanities?

Because they are the best that has been said, thought, written and otherwise expressed about human experience. They are important, not just to a few scholars or gifted students, but to any educated person. They are important precisely because they embody mankind's age-old effort to ask the questions that are central to human existence. To study them means to illuminate life.

Kant defined the essence of the humanities in four questions: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope for? What is man? Those questions are not simply diversions for intellectuals or playthings for the idle. As a result of the ways in which these questions have been answered, civilizations have emerged, nations have developed, wars have been fought, and people have lived contently or miserably.

The word humanities comes from the Latin *humanus*, which means human, cultured, refined. The word had different connotations in different historical eras.

When the first medieval universities were established in the 12th and 13th centuries, the professors, mostly churchmen, were interested in arguing about metaphysics and religion. To them humanities meant primarily philosophy and theology.

The humanists of the Renaissance asserted the intrinsic value of man's life on earth, as opposed to the medieval interest in eternity. Hence humanities included disciplines that would make man's life richer and more meaningful: the languages and literature of Greece and Rome, fine arts, music, and philosophy.

The 19th century witnessed a certain loss of prestige of the humanities to the sciences and social sciences because many men believed that science could procure everything that man needed or wanted. But, in the 20th century, there came the important realization that science is not an unmixed blessing. The atomic bomb, insecticides, drugs and other scientific inventions can ultimately destroy man unless they are controlled by individuals of high ideals, morality and good will.

Another troublesome development has been the tendency to explore a field of knowledge in depth rather than in breadth.

While this technique has produced amazing discoveries in all fields of learning, it has also produced the specialist who, according to the adage, "knows more and more about less and less." Now, realizing that all fields of knowledge are interrelated, educators are beginning to believe that students should learn about these interrelationships before they select a field in which to specialize.

The humanities are not educational luxury, and they are not just for majors. They are a body of knowledge and a means of inquiry that convey truths, judgments and significant ideas. Why read great works of literature by great authors? Because an important part of education is learning to read, and the

highest purpose of reading is to be in the company of great souls. Great souls do not express themselves by the written word only; they also paint, sculpt, build and compose. An educated person should be able not only to recognize some of their works, but also to understand why they embody the best in our culture.

When one reads thoughtfully in the great works from classical antiquity, medieval, Renaissance, 16th- through 20th-century Europe, American literature and historical documents, what one finds most impressive is not the competence their writers show in the studies with which we associate them. That is, of course, impressive; but as impressive is the range of what they knew, the staggering breadth of their

reading, without which they could never have achieved the insights for which we honor them. I experience this in Dante. It doesn't matter how many times I read and teach the *Divine Comedy*; I always find some new facet that makes me appreciate this great poet even more.

We are a part and a product of the great ideas of Western civilization. But Western civilization is not, of course, the world's only great cultural tradition. There are others, and we should expect an educated person to be familiar with them because they have produced art, literature and thought that are compelling monuments to the human spirit and because they have made significant contributions to our history. Those who know nothing of these other traditions can neither appreciate the uniqueness of their own nor understand how theirs fits into a larger world.

Whatever endeavors our JMU students ultimately choose, some substantial instruction in the humanities, including non-western traditions, should be an integral part of everyone's collegiate education. The study of the humanities enriches all. ❧

About the Author: *Giuliana Fazzion, Ph.D., is head of JMU's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and a professor of Italian. The Rome native has organized three conferences with universal themes that highlight the rigorous intellectual and interdisciplinary climate of JMU.*



Professors and students from a variety of disciplines participated in the author's 2005 freedom and humanities conference.

Do you have a story of service you'd like to share with Madison readers?

E-mail madisonmag@jmu.edu, call (540) 568-2664 or write to *Madison*, JMAC #6, Suite 21, MSC 5718, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.

Crisscross the Quad

The Quad was churned up this summer as crews completed the renovation of Harrison Hall and also replaced and upgraded the lighting and existing sidewalks where students have beaten paths into the grass. Now sidewalks crisscross the Quad and intersect in a paved circle. See before and after photos at www.jmu.edu/MadisonOnline

