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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

SPRING 2009

POLITICAL SPIN

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

IN MEMORY OF C. RICHARD BATH

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Colleagues salute Prof. Emeritus C. Richard Bath**
- **Banquet to honor Prof. Joe Graves.**
- **Political Science Students active in various programs and events**
- **Faculty achievements on the rise**

When colleagues recall Professor Emeritus C. Richard Bath, two things come to mind. First he was a major pillar of the department, since he helped shape much of its early reputation. Second, he told it like he saw it. Both his frankness and dedication provide qualities that would drive his recognition as a teacher, scholar and community leader.

He came to the department in 1966 from Lamar College. Early in his career he wanted to expand his horizons. He applied to UTEP's job announcement for assistant professor and to a Fulbright Scholars position in Bolivia. As luck would have it, he was successful in both. Therefore his first years were actually not in the department but in Cochabamba where he experienced the political and economic instability of 1960s Latin America. His correspondence with colleagues back in El Paso were peppered with accounts of hyperinflation and political violence.

From that research, he contributed to one of the more influential thoughts at the time, Dependency Theory. In fact many of us have read something by Prof. Bath during our studies. His interest was in applying this theory in the areas of health and environmental policies on the U.S.-Mexico border and regional trade. He carried this tradition all through his career even up to the 1990s NAFTA debate. He was concerned of the effect the agreement would have on Mexican agriculture and was affectionately called "Mr. Mexican Tomato" by his colleagues. Even after retirement he was actively writing and participating in academic conferences.

He was also one of the early border studies scholars in the department. His work in shaping UTEP's Center for Inter-American and Border Studies' early mission as one of the first center directors is noted by many. He also was an important force in the establishment and development of the Association of Border Studies.

As a teacher, Prof. Bath had a reputation as a dynamic, but rigorous and tough teacher. He was known for his blunt language on occasion, but this was his way to show genuine concern for a student's performance. A student could not negotiate the academic rigor required by Prof. Bath, but he would spend an extraordinary amount of time working with students to help improve their performance.

These same principles led him to help students outside the classroom. He helped to advise the first Chicano student movement at the University and was influential in establishing the Chicano Studies Program. He convinced students to keep pushing their preferences during uphill battles. His community work also included involvement in protecting local citizens' civil liberties and activity in the anti-Vietnam War movement.

As a colleague, Prof. Bath was viewed as a department leader, a good mentor for junior faculty, and trustworthy person. His candid nature meant one knew where one stood and could rely on his commitments. Faculty would often go on camping retreats and Prof. Bath was always there. He enjoyed his colleagues' cooking (especially Prof. Graves' pancakes!) and passing the time either in conversation or playing a game of horse-shoes.

Dick Bath will be remembered by all as a spirited individual.

The editor would like to thank Professors Graves, Kruszewski, Rocha, Staudt, and Webking for their contribution to this story.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE
BY GREG SCHMIDT

When I interviewed for the position of chair, I saw that the Department of Political Science had a lot of unfulfilled potential. Since my arrival in January 2008, I believe that the department has "turned the corner." Much remains to be done, but looking back, I am very pleased by the progress that we've made. I am grateful to my colleagues, each of whom has "stepped up to the plate" in different ways.

During the past year, three colleagues—Drs. Charles Boehmer, Gaspare M. Genna, and Tony Payan—earned tenure and were promoted to associate professor. In addition, the department made two excellent tenure-track hires in critical fields. This summer Dr. José Villalobos and Ms. Cigdem Sirin (Ph.D. forthcoming in May) will begin teaching courses in American Government and International Relations respectively. Dr. Villalobos is a native of Mexico who grew up in San Antonio. Ms. Sirin hails from Turkey. Both are recent products of Texas A&M's excellent graduate program in Political Science.

Our progress in improving the department's curriculum has been truly amazing. A proposal for a joint Ph.D. program on Transnational Culture, Society, and Politics with the Department of Anthropology and Sociology reached the highest levels of the UTEP administration in late 2008 and is now ready for submission to the State. Next year we will have a new MA track, revamped undergraduate minors, and—pending State approval—new undergraduate concentrations. Professor Kathleen Staudt—who recently returned full-time to the department after a decade of outstanding leadership as the director of the Center for Civic Engagement—has revitalized our internship program in public administration. We've adopted a plan developed by the Undergraduate Director, Professor Robert Webking, to better assess our curriculum, and we are coordinating courses with the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies, Chicano Studies, Women's Studies, and other units.

Our work place environment is better after the repainting of the halls and the replacement of ceiling panels in Benedict Hall. In addition to his hard work as the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Boehmer has resurrected the tradition of brown bag seminars to discuss research and contemporary issues and initiated a monthly Happy Hour for faculty and graduate students. Last but by no means least, we have improved alumni outreach under the leadership of Dr. Genna. The very fact that you are now receiving this newsletter on a regular basis is a testament to his efforts.

BEING A SISD TRUSTEE
BY TANYA KALYA LOYA

During a special meeting held on November 17, 2008 I was unanimously appointed as a Socorro Independent School District At-Large Trustee over 13 other candidates. I was honored by this atypical decision since I am an 18-year old UTEP junior. In this position, I will deal with economic strains threatening the district's budget by adopting new budgets (currently at nearly $383 million) and setting a new tax rate every fiscal year; help approve policies; as well as help select a new superintendent for the district, which has about 40,000 students including four high schools and two under construction. I will fill the seat until the May 2009 election.

As a political science major, I have aspirations to pursue a career in public policy and international affairs or law. My continuing objective is to educate myself, maintain abreast on local and national issues affecting our community and take action where action is required to bring about the best within our community.

STUDENTS WIN LEGISLATIVE FELLOWSHIPS
BY SERGIO VILLARREAL

Sergio Villarreal and Claudia Ordaz were chosen to participate in the 81st Texas Legislature as part of the Senator Gregory Luna Legislative Program. As legislative fellows, they will have the opportunity to develop professional contacts and get a grasp of the day to day legislature through daily interactions with some of our most prominent state leaders.

These opportunities arose out of an open contest among university students who were invited to submit a writing sample on a topic of regional interest as well as a personal recommendation from a supportive faculty.

Sergio is a graduate student currently working on his MA thesis in political science. He holds a BBA in Economics and Finance, also from UTEP, and is hoping to pursue a PhD in Political Science.

(From L to R, Center Row) Sergio Villarreal and Claudia Ordaz with Luna Legislative Scholars

Claudia Ordaz is a recent UTEP BA in Political Science with a Minor in Women's Studies. Some of her accomplishments include being former president of the University Democrats, Senator At-Large-for the UTEP Student Government, membership in the Pi Sigma Alpha National Honor Society and a recipient of the department's best graduating student award.

PROFESSOR JOSEPH B. GRAVES CELEBRATES 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

Although Professor Joseph B. Graves turns 84 this month, he shows no signs of slowing down his work. This year marks his 45th year at UTEP and a great opportunity to learn more about his contributions.

Prof. Graves is a native of El Paso, but he brings a world of experience to the region. He earned his BA in Political Science and Doctor of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University and a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University.

Before returning to El Paso, he worked for the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations in the Housing and Home Finance Agency, the predecessor of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There he worked on getting low income families into affordable housing.

When he came to UTEP in 1964, the school was known as Texas Western College and it was not the department of political science that hired him, but its predecessor, the department of social sciences.

Aside from his leadership of the department as its chair, Prof. Graves was instrumental in curriculum development. In 1973, he founded the Criminal Justice program and in 1979 he created the Masters Program in Public Administration.

Much of his work is motivated by his early experience in Washington DC. He learned first hand the large economic disparities of American minorities. Returning to a predominately Latino city, he dedicated his life to providing extended educational opportunities. His former students are among the Who's Who of El Paso's legal, political, and educational leadership communities: US Federal District Judge Philip Martinez, US Representative Silvestre Reyes, and President of El Paso Community College, Dr. Phillip Rhodes, to name a few.

He also brings his motivation and expertise to the community on various boards such as the Criminal Justice Council. As Radford School Board of Directors Chair, he welcomed former US Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Conner, where she was a former student.

He is keeping up a research agenda in his investigation of ethics in criminal justice. He cites the decline in teaching ethics and willingness among many to accept ethical shortcomings as partially responsible .

As an important contributor to the department, we are holding a banquet in his honor on April 8. We would love for alumni to attend, so please contact Dr. Gaspare Genna (ggenna@utep.edu or 915-747-6066) for more information.

THINKING OF CARLOS

BY SERGIO GARCIA

Carlos De La Chesnaye was born in Mexico City on April 10, 1981 but was raised in El Paso. That made him both a *chilango* and a *fronterizo*. He passed from this life in 2009, but there is much to remember and to be thankful for.

Education was very important to Carlos. After graduating from Montwood High, he enrolled at UTEP to double major in political science and history. After graduating, he went to law school but realized that it was not for him. His passions returned him to UTEP's political science department as an MA student. One could easily tell that he loved the subject from his conversations. He liked to make his point and defend it even at cost of disagreeing with some professors. He loved learning things. Carlos enjoyed simple things: watching the History Channel and cartoons, especially the Simpson's and Family Guy. He also liked playing video games. He liked Whataburger and Sonic, but really enjoyed his mom's food. In fact he only liked his mom's *picadillo* and would criticize any other *picadillo*. Carlos had a great sense of humor, but it was a sarcastic sense of humor.

I eventually learned that he had a heart and lung condition, but I do not know where he learned that the best way to live was to live simply and dream, like dreaming that he could be the governor of Texas. One dream was fulfilled when he posthumously received his MA. I give thanks that he lived his life to the fullest, and for the ways he shared it with us.

VISTING WITH C.A. AMBASSADORS

BY DESIRAE MANZANARES

Politics has always been a fascination of mine. The ability to find solutions to some of the most puzzling and critical questions that plague the world and its citizens is a truly beautiful thing.

On December 5, 2008 I participated in a video conference between a select group of UTEP professors and students from different fields and the U.S. Ambassadors to Honduras and Guatemala. During my studies, I found a special interest in human rights, especially the ways of preventing violations. Learning of recent Central American developments in this area was important to me. We also discussed the pressing medical, economic, and civilian safety issues.

Taking part in this event allowed me to see the important contributions the various fields have in righting a country's wrongs. It also showed me a direct link between the study of politics and the attempt to bettering communities and people's lives.

ALL ENJOYED THE SUN AT THE 2008 HOMECOMING

Alumni, students, faculty and staff enjoyed a wonderfully prepared lunch, good conversation and beautiful weather during UTEP's 2008 Homecoming.

Alumni and faculty engaging in lively conversation

Presiding over the event was our new department chair, Prof. Greg Schmidt. Honored guests included UTEP President Diana Natalicio and College of Liberal Arts Dean Howard Daudistel.

As is customary, we presented outstanding student awards. Two graduate students were given the Thomas Cook Award for excellent theses: Alfonso Sánchez and Stephen Telles. Two undergraduates were given the Joseph Ray Award, honoring academic excellence: Danielle Escontrias and Terrah Thomas.

(From L to R) Prof. Joe Graves and Stephen Telles

(From L to R) Prof. Gregory Schmidt, Dr. Charles Boehmer and Alfonso Sánchez

The food was provided by El Taco Tote with a generous donation from Ms. D. René Acosta. Thanks René!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

BY AZURI RUIZ

It was truly an honor to be at the Presidential Debate in Oxford Mississippi! As an immigrant woman, an MA candidate in political science, with the constant frustration that I am not eligible to vote, this experience was truly priceless. I couldn't help but notice I was the only Hispanic face to be recognized in that auditorium.

(From L to R) National Coordinating Board Members Azuri Ruiz, Yvonne Drayton and NCB Immediate Past Chair Suzanne Durham

Regardless, I was able to absorb this amazing privilege of listening to two candidates' very distinct views of where our country should head and how it should handle many of our challenges. I must admit that it was difficult to sit there and not be able to cheer, groan or react in a way that would cause noise (we were instructed not to), but internally I was bursting with excitement and joy when I heard words that resonated with me and would benefit my community.

I had the privilege of attending the debate because I serve on the National Coordinating Board of the YWCA USA. I was elected by the YWCA Southwest Delta Region to serve in that capacity, and my local YWCA initially sent me as a delegate to the region. The mission of the YWCA is to eliminate racism and empower women, and as a young woman of color, I can appreciate the inclusion of students and professionals like me in the conversation on racism and empowerment.

During these historic times, having elected our first African-American President, I am beyond thrilled and excited about the days to come. Our democracy is rich and there is a feeling of belief and hope for the future. Our economic challenges are truly testing us, but our engagement and continued involvement in our community can only lead to better results.

POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY ACTIVITY

Dr. Charles Boehmer had a very busy and productive year in 2008, publishing two articles in academic journals. The first article examined how democracy affects the chance of militarized conflict for *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. The second article explains why countries join certain international organizations but not others, which appeared in *International Interactions*. **Dr. Boehmer** continues to research topics relating to international organization, economic growth, trade and conflict, the determinants of open and closed borders, and the effect of food deprivation on civil war. He also submitted two grant proposals. The first was on food deprivation and civil war and the second in conjunction with UTEP psychology faculty on the effect of religion on terrorism. He also is associated with the UTEP Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence.

Dr. Gaspare M. Genna had a few things accepted or published in 2008. In an article forthcoming in *Comparative European Politics* he explains that Europeans are more likely to support integration when they hold a positive image and trust the more powerful countries in the European Union with special emphasis on Germany. In a chapter published in *Regional Integration Fifty Years after the Treaty of Rome*, he develops a general theory of regional integration by focusing on the ability of powerful countries in any one region to uniform domestic institutions. Another book chapter in *Elements of Regional Integration*, he reviews methods and data in measuring regional integration. This chapter was coauthored with researchers from the United Nations University and European Central Bank. **Dr. Genna** was also awarded a multiyear Department of Education grant to fund a project titled, *Beyond Borders: Regionalism, Migration and Security in North America*. The project is a collaboration of universities in the Canada, Mexico, and the US to engage faculty and student research in the area of North American cooperation.

In June 2008, **Dr. Taeko Hiroi** accompanied a group of UTEP students to explore Brasilia, the capital city of Brazil. In preparation for the trip, she provided the students with background on Brazilian politics and society. In Brasilia the students attended lectures at the Universidade de Brasilia, presentations by legislative staff at the Chamber of Deputies, and a briefing at the U.S. Embassy. During her stay in Brasilia, she interviewed government officials and congressional staff on corruption and the ethics committees in the two houses of the Brazilian Congress. Recently, **Dr. Hiroi** published three articles on Brazilian politics and economy. "The Dynamics of Lawmaking in a Bicameral Legislature: The Case of Brazil" (*Comparative Political Studies*) and "Timing and Outcome of Legislation: Brazilian Pension Reform in a Bicameral Perspective" (*The Journal of Legislative Studies)* analyze conditions under which the passage of legislation is successful. "Exchange Rate Regime, Central Bank Independence, and Political Business Cycles in Brazil" (*Studies in Comparative International Development)* shows how various economic institutions affect the government's ability to pursue alternative public policies.

Professor Z. Anthony Kruszewski embarked on an in-depth research trip through The People's Republic of China in spring 2008. This was done in preparation for a new course on Chinese Politics, *The Emerging Superpower* for the fall 2008 semester. The course was very well received and enrollment was much larger than expected (80 students!). Obviously it was a course that was long overdue. Thanks to **Prof. Kruszewski's** efforts, the course will be regularly offered by the department.

Professor Gregory D. Schmidt published the second edition of his textbook, *Peru: The Politics of Surprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill Primis Online, 2008), as well as two book chapters and two encyclopedia articles. He attended academic conferences in Guatemala City; San José, Costa Rica; and Boston. After 24 years of living in Illinois, **Prof. Schmidt** enjoys the El Paso weather and learned the joys of ascending and descending mountains on frequent walks with his wife, Marcela, a Spanish instructor of at UTEP.

2008 was a good year in many ways for **Professor Kathleen Staudt** , especially the tremendous energy and excitement associated with grassroots-oriented electoral campaigning. Her six-year research project on violence against women on both sides of the border culminated in the book, *Violence and Activism at the Border* (University of Texas Press, http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/stavio.html). She also wrote several chapters in books including one on immigrant rights organizing in *Keeping Out the Other* (Columbia University Press) and another on gendering development in *Politics, Gender, and Concepts* (Cambridge University Press). In teaching terms, **Prof. Staudt** was honored with the University of Texas Chancellor's Innovative Teaching Award, one of two statewide. Many of her classes are organized around community-based learning experiences and service-learning. Finally, she prepared two new graduate seminars this year: American Political Behavior: Race, Class, and Gender and The Politics of Higher Education.

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UTEP's Political Science Department is attracting diverse and outstanding scholars to an already respected faculty. We have dynamic students, with enormous potential. Everything we do is geared to developing high quality students, enriching our campus intellectually, and increasing the understanding of local and global events through our research. In short, we are doing our part to make UTEP a nationally recognized institution of higher learning. Exciting things are happening in the department and your gift helps make them happen.

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On behalf of faculty and staff, our sincere thanks and best wishes to you.

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