

# education *views*

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

## Summit Gives Voice to Teachers of Color



*From left: Jacqueline Irvine, keynote speaker; Kathy Escamilla, endnote speaker; and Sally Nathenson-Mejia, UCD faculty member, confer after the morning session.*

Many teachers of color see teaching “not just as a career or a profession, but as a calling...a moral act, reminiscent of a lifting as we climb philosophy,” according to Dr. Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Professor of Urban Education at Emory University. Dr. Irvine spoke at the Teachers of Color Summit, a conference for teachers of color and allies sponsored by the School of Education and local school districts, on November 12.

Drawing upon extensive research, Irvine argued for increasing the number of teachers of color to better serve our nation’s schools. Although students of color comprise 40 percent of the student population, only 9 percent of the 3 million teachers in the United States are teachers of color.

Irvine described a small but growing research base that suggests that teachers of color do make a difference in raising achievement of students of color. For example, in districts with higher proportions of African American teachers, fewer African American students were placed in special education, fewer were expelled, more students were placed in gifted and talented programs and more attended college. Similar positive effects exist for Latino students whose reading scores improved in classrooms with Latino teachers.

Increasing the number of teachers of color does not devalue white teachers, Irvine emphasized. “Ultimately what we need are competent, caring, committed, passionate, coura-

geous teachers from all ethnicities and cultures who are not afraid, who are not resentful or hostile, and who genuinely want to teach in schools that enroll students of color...who work together to transform schools and communities of learners where all students are respected, recognized as individuals, and where there’s still a sense of connection, intimacy, visibility, and self worth.”

The summit’s themes of having a voice and a sense of connection resonated with the 140 teachers, teacher candidates, administrators, and higher-education faculty who attended. After the keynote address, morning breakout sessions allowed panelists and participants to share experiences. Speaking of her commitments to working with second-language learners, Denver Public Schools teacher Christina Sati noted “I’ve got to be a voice...And I’m not just speaking for Spanish-speaking kids.”

But not all teachers of color end up teaching students of color. Several described their experiences in schools where they were often the only teachers of color in the building. Johnna Wynn, a primary teacher in Boulder Valley Schools serving as a session panelist, described a strong support network through the district equity office and her belief in creating alliances. “They need to hear my voice, they need to

## Message from the Dean



*The purpose of this newsletter is to stay in touch with our alums. Please send an e-mail if you would like to know about a favorite professor or tell us about your accomplishments. We would love to hear from you.*

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have concluded our annual fundraising campaign. A special thank-you to all of you for being gracious to the students who called and interrupted your evening to ask for a contribution.

In this time of dramatic state budget shortfalls, we rely on your support more than ever. The state of Colorado now contributes only 7 percent of CU-Boulder's total budget. Our tuition is third lowest of all Research I public universities. While low tuition keeps the price of college affordable for some students, it is still out of reach for many, especially first-generation college students. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, CU-Boulder also has one of the poorest financial-aid budgets in the country. Private fundraising has been one way to cope with these challenges.

In education, students' needs for financial aid are keenly felt. First, as our alums often tell us, our students cannot look forward to lucrative incomes. Thus, unlike students in engineering, business, or law, our students are anxious about using student loans to finance their education. The semester of student teaching is especially difficult because a student can't hold a job while taking on the full-time duties of a real teacher, yet still must pay tuition.

Our Partners in Education (PIE) teachers are first- and second-year teachers working on their master's degrees. PIE teachers forego a significant amount of salary to pay for tuition and for intensive mentoring by Clinical Professors. (See the "Eye on Research" story.) Similarly, veteran teachers

in our Professional Enrichment Program (PEP) give up salary to cover the cost of tuition, mentoring, and a permanent substitute one day per week. Through our Adopt-A-Teacher Scholarship program, donors who contribute \$1,000 are able to designate their gift to support a student teacher or new and veteran teacher in the PIE and PEP programs.

On October 7, 2004, over 250 faculty, students, friends, and family gathered at the Millennium Harvest House for the School of Education's annual Homecoming Celebration and Scholarship Ceremony. When this event began in 1993, five scholarships were awarded for a total of \$2,500. Last year we gave 38 scholarships; this year we awarded 55 scholarships with a total value of \$142,000.

Thanks are also owed this year to David Berliner, Regents Professor at Arizona State University and past president of the American Educational Research Association, for writing this year's annual giving solicitation letter. David is a great advocate for public education. You may know him because of his book, *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud, and the Attack on America's Public Schools*. David is also a special friend of CU-Boulder's School of Education. In 1986, when some programs were moved to Denver or eliminated, David was the consultant who worked with the faculty and the new Dean DiStefano to structure and plan for the successful school we have today.

Thank you to everyone for giving so generously this year.

Lorrie Shepard, Dean  
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## Education and English Faculty Honored

English professor **Martin Bickman's** book, *Minding American Education: Reclaiming the Tradition of Active Learning* (Teacher's College Press), has been selected for an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division B (Curriculum and Curriculum Studies) 2003 Outstanding Book Award. Jonas Soltis, Professor of Philosophy and Education at Columbia University, described the book as "an original, scholarly, yet very readable examination of the idea of education as the active intellectual engagement of experience."

Associate professor **Janette Klingner** received the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Early Career Award, which is given to a young education scholar who exhibits a consistently distinguished program of educational research. Klingner's scholarship crosses the disciplines of special education, bilingual education, and language acquisition and connects these areas to mainstream literacy, effective teaching, and teacher development. Her current line of research, which is both theoretical and practical, evaluates Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) with linguistically and culturally diverse populations in heterogeneously mixed classrooms using qualitative, quantitative and discourse analysis methods.

**Derek Briggs**, assistant professor in Research Evaluation Methodology in the School of Education, is the recipient of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Mary Catherine Ellwein Outstanding Dissertation Award. His dissertation, *SAT Coaching, Bias, and Causal Inference*, examined the effectiveness of SAT coaching programs and the difficulty of making causal inferences with statistical models.

**Dean Lorrie Shepard** is this year's recipient of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Distinguished Contributions to Educational Research Award given to an individual who has made meritorious contributions to educational research. Nationally recognized for her work in psychometrics and public policy, her work is widely cited by researchers and K-12 educators alike. Shepard's current research explores standards-based reforms and performance assessments that promote deep understanding.

## CU-Boulder School of Education Receives \$1.5 Million Endowed Chair

Bob and Judy Charles gave a \$1.5 million gift to create an endowed chair for the School of Education—education's first endowed chair.

The Bob and Judy Charles Endowed Chair in Education will permanently fund a faculty position in the School of Education, while also providing additional research funds for the honorary recipient of the chair. Margaret Eisenhart, a professor of educational anthropology and research methodology at CU-Boulder since 1987, has been named as the first chair holder.

The Charleses have been long-time supporters of CU-Boulder, most recently establishing an endowed chair at the College of Music. Judy Charles graduated from the School of Education, and Bob is currently serving on its development board. As Judy Charles noted, "Because of this present association with the school, we have become aware of their challenge to keep quality professors. We are happy to help with this challenge by endowing a chair."

Judy Charles taught elementary school and has always placed a high priority on education. She was involved with school activities in Boulder Valley schools and with many community organizations. She served on the board of the University of Colorado Foundation and on the Board of the Ronald McDonald House in Denver.

Bob Charles moved to Boulder in 1965 with his wife Judy to manage Boulder's original McDonald's restaurant on 28th Street. By the 1990s, he operated numerous McDonald's franchises and was heralded as the "Burger Baron of Boulder County." He pioneered the double drive-through concept and co-developed McDonald's "happy meal."

Bob is also passionate about education. In addition to scholarship programs, he co-founded the original Ronald McDonald House in Denver and founded the McPride program for at-risk high school students.



*From left: Donor Bob Charles, Donor Judy Charles, Professor Margaret Eisenhart, Chancellor Richard Byyny, and Dean Lorrie Shepard proudly display the \$1.5 million endowment check.*

Professor Eisenhart specializes in culture, gender relations, women in science, and women's experiences and achievement in elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and workplaces. She created and devotes her time to Simply the Best!, an after-school science and technology program for middle school girls that she began in 1999 in downtown Denver. The program's goals are to cultivate an interest in science among minority girls while providing them with training in basic and sophisticated technology skills to increase their ability to succeed in school and the workplace after completing their education.

Margaret's work on women and science has received a great deal of attention nationally; and validity standards for qualitative methods, which she developed, have been adopted as guiding principles by the National Science Foundation. Margaret was recently elected to the National Academy of Education, and she has just been named a University of Colorado Distinguished Professor.

## New Professors Join Education Faculty



**Benjamin Kirshner**, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology.

A recent graduate from Stanford University, Dr. Kirshner's research explores the nature and development of civic engagement among urban youth involved in programs that get youth involved in reforming their schools and communities. His dissertation, *Civic Activism Among Urban Youth: A Cultural Developmental Approach*,

explored how young people living in high-poverty urban neighborhoods become engaged in solving social problems of concern to them. Dr. Kirshner is currently teaching Educational Psychology and Adolescent Development to secondary teacher candidates.



**Edward Wiley**, Assistant Professor of Research and Evaluation Methodology.

Dr. Wiley received the Outstanding Dissertation award from the National Council on Measurement in Education and two graduate fellowships at Stanford University, where he graduated in 2001. Dr. Wiley's path-breaking dissertation derived new algorithms to estimate vari-

ance components and their standard errors. Dr. Wiley worked as a specialist for McKinsey & Company in San Francisco, and as a senior research scientist for the American Institutes for Research to evaluate the California Class Size Reduction Initiative. This fall Dr. Wiley is teaching Basic Statistical Methods and Multivariate Analyses to education graduate students.



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## Teacher's Summit

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hear my story, they need to hear my truth. Because if they don't, then that relationship of creating alliances with people who are not in my life group will never break down the wall of what happens to kids in education by making them feel safe, and making them know they can accomplish anything they want to do."

Having a voice, however, sometimes means that teachers of color face impossible burdens when colleagues and students expect them to speak for everyone in their race or culture. "When I stand up and people look at me, I know they see my skin color first, and so it's always a fight with letting them know I don't speak for my entire race...I speak from my own experience," Wynn commented.

Anissa Butler, conference co-chair and panelist, also talked about the problems of being perceived as the "super black teacher" by students, administrators, and other teachers. "What I was confronted with was students coming to me and expecting me to speak for everybody and tackle all the problems," Butler said as she described her first teaching position. "The faculty and administration would see me as the black teacher who would come in and tell them everything they needed to do with their black students, how to answer their questions, how to solve all their problems...I had to figure out how to keep myself from burning out and checking out..."

Afternoon sessions offered participants a chance to establish networking opportunities and make recommendations for future action. Participants agreed that retaining teachers

of color is a challenge; and that along with good mentoring, creating alliances and communication networks could make a difference.

To end the conference, Dr. Kathy Escamilla, Professor in Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity at CU-Boulder, described her study of the impact of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) on Latinos and second-language learners in the Denver Public Schools (DPS).

"Conventional wisdom" claiming that Latinos who are behind their Anglo counterparts in school must learn more English doesn't hold up, according to Escamilla. In fact, 2002 CSAP data suggest that students taking the Spanish CSAP did better in reading and writing overall than students taking the test in English.

Furthermore, only 10 percent of students in DPS are in bilingual programs, but bilingual programs get blamed for the so-called "gap" in achievement. In fact, two-thirds of the Latinos speak English only, and it was these students who had more problems with the CSAP. Described as a case of "wrong diagnosis, wrong solution," Escamilla notes that neither Spanish instruction nor bilingual programs cause a gap in achievement; Spanish CSAP scores were predictors of English CSAP scores.

Those attending the conference believed it was time well spent. "This was absolutely worth my while," Adams 12 teacher Sylvia Wiegand stated. "It's helpful to know how other teachers of color are feeling, and to create an alliance of support when there are so few of us."

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