What book has shaped your thinking and personal and professional life the most?

On behalf of AU Libraries and the Provost’s Office, Glenn Anderson of AU Libraries recently asked that question of faculty who received tenure or promotion, or both, in 2006. At a ceremony at Draughon Library on Thursday, AU recognized those faculty members and displayed their choices in reading material.

With support from the Provost’s Office, Library Dean Bonnie MacEwan suggested a book selection program similar to a popular program at Pennsylvania State University, where she was on the library faculty before joining AU in 2005.

“The achievement of promotion and tenure are significant milestones in a faculty member’s career,” said MacEwan. “By placing a commemorative bookplate in a book of significance in the Libraries’ collection, the achievement will be noted and will inspire generations of Auburn faculty and students far into the future.”

The newly tenured and promoted faculty members were asked to select books with special personal meaning, not necessarily those from Great Books lists. In his letter to those faculty last May, Anderson wrote: “We would like you to name a book that is special to you, whether it helped to shape your thinking, inspired you in your professional or personal life, was your favorite book as a child or is a book you authored or co-authored.”

More than 40 faculty members responded with selections. Each book will feature a nameplate identifying the faculty member who chose it.

The responses varied widely. Selections range from childhood favorites to scholarly publications and from historical and philosophical treatises to The Bible. Some faculty members chose literary classics and others selected scientific texts that influenced their academic direction; among the latter, some chose books authored by leading figures in their disciplines, and some selected their dissertations, noting that those works enabled their entry into the ranks of college faculty.

Several faculty members identified academic works that had a major impact on their careers.
Upcoming Events

Art Exhibitions

Bagn Gallery Ceramics, prints and drawings by Susan O'Brien and Jon Swindler, through Oct. 6

JULIE COLLINS SMITH MUSEUM “The Collector’s Eye,” an exhibition of selected works of art from the personal collection of AU alumnus Preston T. Phillips, through Oct. 6; “Rural. Studio: Education of a Citizen Architect,” examining the legacy of the late Sambo Mockbee and colleagues and students of AU’s Rural Studio, through Nov. 5

Tuesday, October 3

AU THEATRE “Godspell,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Pent Theatre; also same time Wednesday-Thursday-Friday, and 2:30 p.m. Sunday; box office 844-4154

Monday, October 9

Next AU Report

Thursday, October 12

Sesquicentennial Lecture “Intercollegiate Athletics at Auburn University” with former AU Athletics Director, and author of Saturdays to Remember, 4 p.m., Special Collections, Draughon Library

AU THEATRE “Speak Truth to Power,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Pent Theatre; one-performance only; box office 844-4154

Monday, October 16

GOODWIN LECTURE Physician and immunologist Tomas Ganz of UCL, “Hepcidin: An Iron Regulatory Hormone and Mediator of Innate Immunity,” 11 a.m., Greene 207

Tuesday, October 17

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR “Engaging the Next Generation: Instructional Technology Tools In and Outside the Classroom,” noon-1:30 p.m., open to all faculty, staff and graduate students; bring your lunch

AU professor presents evidence of rare Ivory-billed Woodpecker

A research team led by ornithologist Geoff Hill of AU’s College of Sciences and Mathematics has compiled evidence that a population of ivory-billed Woodpeckers exists in a remote river basin in the Florida Panhandle. Ivory-billed Woodpeckers had not been sighted for more than half a century and had been listed as extinct until earlier in this decade, when scientists reported seeing one in an Arkansas swamp. However, attempts to confirm that sighting have so far been unsuccessful. Hill’s team reported its findings last week in the scientific journal, Aves Conservation & Ecology, which is online at ace.eco.org.

The researchers will present their findings at the North American Ornithological Conference in Vera Cruz, Mexico, this week and will expand their search next winter and spring. Hill, a professor of biological sciences at Auburn, led a kayaking expedition in May, 2005, with cooperation from researchers at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. “The excitement that exists with the potential discovery, Hicks, an expert on bird identification, reported getting a clear view of a female ivory-billed Woodpecker, which has distinct plumage, including a white trailing edge on the upper wing along white stripes down the back and an all black crest. The Auburn professor organized another search of the area and invited Dan Mennill, an assistant professor at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, to join the search team. Mennill, who is an expert at recording and identifying animal sounds, devised a means to remotely record sounds in the swamp and erected seven listening stations in the area of the Ivory-bill sightings.

“Typically, going from summer to fall and spring, we would have heard a double knock, the signature sound of the Ivory-bill. Numerous large cavities in trees and places where thick, tightly adhering bark had been removed due to dead trees added impetus to the sighting. It was just to be a weekend outing looking for caribou, said Hill, who at the time was writing a book about bird coloration. “We really never dreamed we’d actually find an Ivory-bill.”

While the Auburn and Windsor scientists express confidence in their evidence, they caution that the evidence amassed to date is not conclusive proof. Hill emphasized that “the only evidence that would constitute irrefutable proof is a clear photograph or video of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and such an image has to date eluded us.”

From May 2005 to May 2006, however, the Auburn/Windsor research team recorded 14 sightings of Ivory-bills, including two by Hill. From more than 10,000 hours of audio recordings, Mennill and his research assistant Kyle Swiston have reviewed more than 300 sounds that match descriptions of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers.
Buddy Weaver dies

Earl H. “Buddy” Weaver, who earned three degrees, including a doctorate, from Auburn and led two fundraising campaigns on behalf of the university, died of cancer at his home in Brewton on Wednesday.

Weaver, a past president of both the AU Foundation and the Auburn Alumni Association, received an honorary doctoral degree from Auburn in August. The co-chair of the university’s current $500 million campaign, he also served as interim vice president for alumni and development at AU during the $201 million campaign of the early 1990s.

“Buddy will be missed as a friend and as an ardent Auburn supporter,” said AU President Ed Richardson. “He never missed an opportunity to help this university. His leadership of our current capital campaign, which has been met with unprecedented success, is a testament to what he meant to Auburn. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.”

Campaign co-chair

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Research grant supports fight against cancer

Researchers in Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine have received a $1.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute for tests that could lead to changes in the treatment regimens for humans as well as dogs.

Bruce Smith of the college’s Scott-Ritchey Research Center is leading an interdisciplinary team that will administer a genetically altered, non-replicating virus to lymphoma-affected dogs. They will then administer a drug designed to seek and kill the virus-infected cancer cells.

“Gene therapy is becoming more common in medical research, but what makes Auburn’s research unique is that we are modifying the virus to target, or specifically infect, the lymphoma tumor cell,” Smith said. “We have also altered the virus so that it encodes a protein, which, when it comes in contact with the drug, converts the drug into a toxic substance and that toxin kills the lymphoma cell.”

Lymphoma, the third most common cancer in dogs, is a rapidly growing malignancy that can occur anywhere there is lymph tissue, including the lymph nodes, spleen, liver, gastrointestinal tract and bone marrow. Average life expectancy for dogs undergoing the current form of treatment, chemotherapy, is about one year. Without treatment, it is about two months from time of diagnosis.

The five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, includes two years of laboratory work developing gene vectors and testing them on cells, followed by three years of clinical trials with dogs diagnosed with lymphoma.

“Our clinics see 30 to 50 dogs with lymphoma per year,” Smith said. “The only treatment is chemotherapy, so the owners who volunteer their dogs for the study have the added hope that this new gene therapy will help their pets.”

Two years from now, when the clinical trial starts, pet owners with lymphoma-affected dogs will be able to participate in the trial at no additional cost, other than the normal veterinary fees. Administering the virus and the drug will take three days, followed by occasional follow-up visits for observation for at least one year.

“We are hoping that gene therapy will help patients live longer, better quality lives,” Smith said. “Even though dogs do not usually have serious adverse reactions to chemotherapy, we want to provide a better type of treatment and reduce their number of chemo visits,” he said.

“For humans, fewer chemotherapy treatments would mean fewer side-effects in addition to having longer lives,” he added. “While a cure for lymphoma is everyone’s goal, any increase in the remission time is significant for the patient.”

National society presents award to professor

Boğdan Wilamowski of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at AU, has won the 2006 Anthony J. Hornfeck Service Award of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Industrial Electronics Society.

Wilamowski, a professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, will receive the award Nov. 9 at the IES international conference in Paris.

The award recognizes outstanding, meritorious services to the organization and the industrial electronics industry.

In January, Wilamowski will become editor-in-chief of IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, the journal of IEEE IES.

How Auburn Stacks Up

Increases in minority enrollment at AU from 2001 to 2006

Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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