



Out of Iowa

The University of Iowa/Department of English

Spring/Summer 1999

NEW CHAIR: BROOKS LANDON

As we reconvene in the fall, Brooks Landon will take over as Chair of the Department of English. After four years of gracious and productive service, Dee Morris will have taken off for a year of climbing in Nepal and research at The University of California - Berkeley, where she will hang out with the avant garde poets who have become her study. Brooks, meanwhile, will inherit her stewardship of the department.

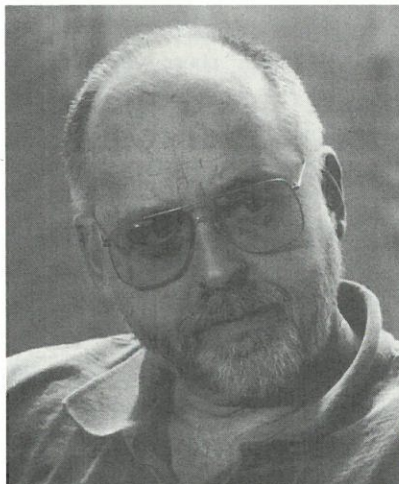
Brooks joined the department in 1977, fresh from completing his PhD at Texas, and he has been with us ever since. His web page, "Horizon of Invisibility Homestead," which can be found at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~english/profpage/blandon/>, is surely the best introduction to him. Or take this near credo that follows his name in our faculty web pages.

The ways in which people interact with science and technology seem to be at the heart of my scholarship, my teaching, and my service to the Department and the University. My last two books have explored constructions, representations, and implications of science and technology in science fiction film and in science fiction literature. Most of my classes either focus on various literary responses to technology or ways in which American culture has made technology, usually constructed as progress, one of its central concerns. Most of my classes also employ learning technologies, study electronic textuality, and require multimedia writing. And I've been deeply committed to helping the Iowa English Department figure out how technology will revo-

lutionize the way we do business in the twenty-first century. In short, I'm fascinated by what comes next.

Indeed he is. Brooks has done more than anyone since John Huntley to urge his colleagues into the computer age. He has given abundantly of his time in myriad ways, large and small, to help us all along, and he has been a model of techno-possibilities.

Brooks teaches Modern Fiction, the American Novel, *Ulysses*, Multi-Media Writing, and Science Fiction. He has written a book on the novelist (*Little Big Man*) Thomas Berger and two on Science Fiction: *The Aesthetics of Ambivalence* (1992) and *Science Fiction After 1900* (1997). He has also initiated a multi-media project revivifying the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. For the next several years, however, his first project will be the Department, which could be considered yet one more multi-media project.



Brooks Landon, Chair of the Department

Careers for English Majors

IN OUR LAST ISSUE, we invited stories of how some of you had used or moved from your English major, or from careers, finished or unfinished, in graduate English studies. We assumed and hoped that in moving on, English remained a tool of use and so an influence. Several dozen of you were kind enough to reply, thus a sampling. Given the space, I have edited radically, but I hope those who wrote will still find that their words—for they are their words still—reflect their thoughts adequately.

This probably isn't too unusual. After graduating I worked as a program officer for a foundation in Manhattan. My writing skills were useful in writing their five-year report and in developing summaries of proposals for presentation to our board of directors. Well, I quit that job and have backpacked in Asia and Latin America (and a bit in Europe) for the last three and a half years, teaching diving and picking up odd jobs to keep myself on the go. Now I'm going for my master's in public policy/urban planning: comparative transportation in the third world. I'm not sure how that fits in with my degree from Iowa, but the degree (and a recommendation from Professor Landon) certainly helped me get into Rutgers!

—Heather Fenyk

Since leaving Iowa with an MA and an MFA in nonfiction, I've had a progres-

sion of jobs for which writing has been both entrée and chief professional requirement. Those have included three Fortune 500 companies, a global management consultant, the Senate Finance Committee, and the Treasury Department.

This all has occasioned interesting travel (Europe, Asia, South America, and Lima, Ohio), permitted some personal diversions (I'm a master scuba diver with belts in Karate), and afforded a few caprices (three Porsches). I've rubbed elbows with highly placed people, who customarily are not as interesting as they think they are nor, by my lights, as intelligent as they ought to be—but they usually found me unmemorable, too.

Under my own name I've published eight not-entirely-unnoticed books and batches of articles in magazines people have heard of. I suppose the over-arching point is that practitioners of business, politics, and sciences (including the dismal science) often are not literate, articulate, or logically expressive people, *and they will pay English grads to be so for them*. Provided, of course, English grads also get credentials that make them palatable (and comprehensible) to non-academic bosses. Sadly, they usually don't. But that is another story.

—Donald R. Nichols

I couldn't help answering your question, what does one do with a degree in English? I've been trying to answer that question since December of 1973 when I received my B.A. Since that time, I've encountered every kind of neurotic secretarial job known to womankind: make no personal phone calls, punch a time clock, endure the office virago(s) and/or alcoholic boss, sit down at your computer and shut up—boring, insulting, low paying work. Quite frankly the thought has crossed my mind to gather other underemployed Iowa English grads and file a class action suit demanding a refund of our tuition.

In the meantime, I am buoyed by the dim reminiscence of having for one brief shining moment been a carefree, optimistic, yet foolish student of English at the University of Iowa.

—Jean Marie Estes

Please don't hit me, but I went into advertising. Even worse, I write junk mail. But I'm good at it! I never in a million years thought my struggles with *The Faerie Queen* and *Invisible Man* would pay off so well, but here I am selling everything from software to Web services — and bringing in the kind of consumer response that keeps me in demand.

I had no idea what I wanted to do with my English major when I stumbled into the real world, diploma in hand and my table-waiting skills were far more useful than my understanding of Neo-Platonism. But I took moronic jobs and discovered my gift for the blather of commerce.

I'm also reviewing the arts for the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, writing program notes for Hancher, and working hard to get essays and commentaries published anywhere I can.

—Jake Stigers

I work for Hewitt Associates. We have 71 offices in several countries and work for 75% of the Fortune 500 companies. I can tell you there are plenty of jobs for anyone who can compose a thought, put it to paper, and have it be understood by others.

I began as a writer in the communications department. After four years, I am considered a senior-level consultant, which means I do less writing and more managing of people, projects, and clients. I can tell you that my education set me far and away in front of several other qualified people. Over the past few months I have been bombarded with "head hunter" phone calls. These are folks whose job it is to coax me out of my current position and place me with another firm to do the same job, with fewer resources, for more money. Given the number of calls I receive a week (typically no fewer than three), I am certain there are positions available for people with English majors who do not wish to teach.

—Dan Barrett

I'm so glad you asked. I graduated from the UI in 1971 with a BA in English and a secondary education teaching certificate. I was unable to find a teaching job

after graduation, and took a secretarial position "temporarily," never thinking I'd be in this same career 27 years later. I've had people say to me, "Oh, you must be so disappointed," but that is absolutely NOT the case.

Within six months of hire, I was promoted from a clerk-typist position to a position as the secretarial supervisor in my department. I have been promoted a total of four times and now serve as assistant to a hospital administrator, supervising 40 support staff in 15 departments.

From day one, I have used my "BA in English" skills. I write virtually all the letters, memos, reports, and papers that are needed, and the ones I don't write, I edit. (Shortly after a new director started work, one of the staff complimented him on how quickly he was learning the ropes; she was impressed that already the memos he wrote sounded just like the memos the previous director had written!)

—Linda Liedtke

Here in Santa Fe, a small city where there is some demand for a well-written book review, I had the opportunity to review the new William Gass collection of novellas. The pay is not so great (you can't live on it) but it can, and it did, lead to other things for me. A woman in town needed help editing the letters of Robert Lowell, and she asked me to assist her on a part-time basis. Jackpot! I suppose that when you keep plugging away, things will happen. By making yourself available and making your talents public in any way you can, you will be noticed for your abilities, eventually.

—Peter Eriksson

I am working for The University of Iowa as an admission counselor. I travel to high schools and give presentations, as well as see the many visitors who come to campus. I have found many other counselors for other universities and colleges are English majors too. This line of work isn't a direct offshoot from English, but tends to attract English majors who enjoy encouraging high school students to go to college. Our Associate Director of Transfer Rela-

tions has a PhD in Student Development but started out as an English major.

—*LeDon J. Sweeney*

I have to admit, I chose English as my major for purely selfish reasons. I've always been an avid reader, and writing came to me naturally, so English was an easy way to coast through college and get decent grades. Little did I know that it would provide me with basic skills for the future. In addition to hanging out at George's during college I waited tables. After graduation I worked for a large restaurant group as a manager in Chicago, and believe me, I didn't use one ounce of English skills the entire time.

What I found was a job in public relations. My clients are all food manufacturers—Tyson, Campbell's, Pillsbury and Keebler—and my target audience are managers and chefs. I got this job because I had English (which denotes writing expertise) and foodservice experience. I've been doing it for over three years and I just love it. So, English—it's the ideal major. It provides the basic skills one needs to communicate in everyday life, from short press releases to full-length articles. Plus you can impress your colleagues around the water cooler with your trivial knowledge of Adrienne Rich and Chaucer.

—*Charity Moreland*

Since landing in Seattle with my brand new BA from UI, I know that the three pivotal jobs I got have been because I have a BA in English from the University of Iowa. Many metropolitan areas have lots of techno-geeks who can barely sign their names, let alone express themselves coherently. I started out working in HIV research. My ability to read and write got me the job and made me a very effective researcher.

I am reminded daily of the quality of education I received. When I got my degree, in the dark ages, the requirements were 30 hours of credit, 9 in pre-1800's and 12 above the 100 level. I feel that more "language arts" classes should have been required. I learned the majority of my grammar from the foreign language classes I took. I think that most people feel that this is generally learned through immersion, but you can't fix an

ambiguous sentence if you can't break apart its construction. And writing courses. Require writing courses.

—*Judith Mentzer*

I graduated from the University of Iowa in 1994 with a degree in English asking the very question you pose. I postponed answering the question by pursuing a graduate degree in English, but I was forced to face reality again two years later. Fortunately I was recruited just prior to graduation for a firm looking for technical writers—no experience necessary other than the ability and desire to write. For the past two and a half years I have been working as a consultant for different organizations designing and developing training materials (as well as delivering training, on occasion). Good writers are more difficult to find than one would think. My firm is always accepting resumes.

—*Scott Leeman*

With my Iowa MA, I worked toward a doctorate for a few years. Subsequently I taught in two open-admissions colleges in the rural South. For five years I worked in publishing, first as a copy editor, then as a volume editor, finally as a production editor and writer for *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.

After obtaining a library degree I worked for four years as a cataloguer with the Eighteenth-century Short Title Catalogue at the University of California, Riverside, and two years as a cataloger at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I have been Medieval and Renaissance Manuscript Cataloguer at the Pierpont Morgan Library since April 1998; this is a direct tie-in to my Medieval and Renaissance studies at Iowa.

—*Charles Egleston*

I have worked at ACT, Inc. for 7-1/2 years. I started out as a Test Specialist I and now my title is Sr. Test Development Associate. My responsibilities include editing and proofreading board and licensure examinations in medical specialties and allied health. An added bonus has been the opportunity to travel throughout the country to meet with clients.

My course work in my MAW program helped me qualify for this position. Strong writing skills were absolutely key, although

the writing I do is mostly writing meeting reports and client correspondence.

There are many opportunities for people with English degrees at ACT, Inc. Many positions require people with teaching experience, and others focus on editing, writing, and/or interpersonal skills. Temporary appointments often lead to permanent positions within the company.

—*Rosemary Regan-Gavin*

I am a 1967 graduate of the University of Iowa, with a BA in English and Education. For 16 years, I taught 7th and 8th grade English students and lived to tell about it. I hold an MS in English and Education from Western Illinois University with additional study at Northern Illinois, Iowa, and Cal-Berkeley.

In 1985 I was offered a position as an educational writer for Performance Learning Systems, Inc., in Emerson, N.J., largely on the basis of writing I had done throughout my career for newspapers in the Quad Cities. For twelve years, I had been the book reviewer and film critic for the *Quad Cities Times*, and I had done celebrity interviews, a humor column and some miscellaneous writing for the *Moline Dispatch*. Then in my new capacity, I traveled the country, interviewing national figures in education for the company newsletter and co-authored a book on education *Training the Teacher as a Champion*, 1989.

When my work on the book for PLS was complete, I founded the successful business that I currently own and operate, the Sylvan Learning & Technology Center in Bettendorf, Iowa. I supervise twenty-five teachers who work with students in an after-school tutorial capacity. Soon, I will be involved in helping deliver instruction for the Johns Hopkins-affiliated IAAY program (Intellectually Advanced Academic Youth). I enjoy this business and find it a very "logical" and "normal" fit with my English degrees.

—*Connie Wilson*

The early 80's weren't the time to find jobs teaching literary theory, and I eventually gave up and joined a biotech software firm in Cambridge, MA as a technical writer/trainer. They hired me on the

basis of my Rhetoric TA work and my undergraduate biochem background - it certainly wasn't for my computer science skills, as I'd never laid a finger on a computer in my life.

Nine months later I joined Digital Equipment Corporation as a course developer. I moved to systems engineering two years later then became an engineering team leader and a project manager. At one point I was one of a handful of experts in Digital's mass storage architecture and the only Principal Software Engineer who had never taken a course in computer science. Later, I find myself Manager of Quality Assurance in a major financial services firm. I have a team of 14 people stretched far too thin across 10 projects that span everything from derelict mainframe programs to state of the art distributed object oriented development.

Yes, I paid off my school loan.....

So, do I use my thesis as a doorstep? Did I burn it long ago on some street corner to keep warm? Nope, it's back in different form and guaranteed to upset the software industry about as much as it did some members of my dissertation committee! I'm in the negotiation stage with a publisher for the release of my second book, *Chaos and Complexity in Software*, in which I confront the software industry with a mixture of philosophy of science, Chaos Theory, and phenomenology.

Oh yes, and I'm editor of a new literary review, *Argestes*.

For anyone interested in breaking into the software industry, I would recommend signing on with one of the national consulting firms. Contract business analysts and software testers always have work, the pay is very good, and the right firm will give you the basic training you need to get started. On my team, I have two MAs in English, one MS in economics, and periodically bring in a PhD in astrophysics. Anyone needing to pay off a school loan might like to know that neophytes in the field seldom make less than \$30/hr and I'm paying some of my contractors \$107 an hour.

—“Dr.” Robert Bruce Kelsey

After reading your request for jobs

for English majors, my comment is—DO ANYTHING YOU WANT. My husband and I both graduated from the University of Iowa. He in 1968 with a masters in Business, me with a BA in English in 1970.

I have worked in insurance and in retailing. After many years in many jobs, I own and operate (with my husband) a campground at the Lake of the Ozarks. His business expertise runs the business. My English background helps with the advertising (including assisting in the designing of our Internet pages), contracts for monthly and seasonal rentals, correspondence with campers, writing procedures for helpers. Computers still can't proofread sentence structure.

I am currently president of our local campground association and have helped design the brochure the group distributes to visitor centers, etc. The list goes on and on.

We have owned the campground for 9 seasons. We enjoy the people although the work is demanding at times. We work 9 months a year. The campground is open for 7 months. The stories are many but the life is simple. Sometimes I think of the poems I learned about nature. Our campground is nature after all.

Not all jobs have to be high salaried. We own our own. We make enough to live on, pay the bills and take a vacation in the winter. We are enjoying life - and isn't that what we are supposed to be doing?

—Pat Jones

In 1983 I received my English degree (and a history degree) from the University of Iowa. I then moved to Philadelphia and received my certificate from the Institute for Paralegal Training. The years 1984 to 1995 were spent with various large Philadelphia law firms as a trusts and estates paralegal. It was a very rewarding career. (By the way, I thought about becoming a lawyer while I was still in college, but never thought about being one after working with them—although I did marry one.) Paralegals (or legal assistants) need to know how to write, especially in my area of the law, where there is heavy client contact and correspondence. You are also expected to be literate. I cannot tell

you how many times I was thankful that I had a background in English.

—Caren Carlson Levin

There are many jobs out there for English majors. After receiving my MA (1972), I got a job as a bookstore manager but I have also worked as an editor for a textbook publisher and freelanced for other publishing companies. Then I worked in the advertising department of an insurance company where I wrote ad and brochure copy, billboard copy, benefit books, technical reports, and more. From there I went to work for the continuing education division of the University of Oklahoma, where I am now director of marketing and communication. On the side, I have published six children's books. So there is life after your MA.

—Jerry Jerman

I've been thinking about this since my senior year in college, 1985. After an unsatisfying career in marketing/PR writing, I've moved into dramaturgy to wed my love of the performing arts with my English background and research/writing skills. I'm looking forward to a long career in the literary department of the professional theatre. Dramaturgy has encouraged my writing, too. This past summer I was selected to present (at a national conference) my first professional paper.

—Kristen Gandrow

Finally I'll report on another BA grad, Eve Adamson, who then earned an MFA from Florida where she studied with Donald Justice. Still later, as a young mother, she started a career as a freelance writer. “I read *Writers' Market* and followed directions,” Eve explained over coffee at the Great Midwestern. Along with articles too numerous to mention, Eve has been the writer (as opposed to the “book producer” or “subject expert”) for *Breastfeeding: A Holistic Handbook* and *The Complete Idiot's Guide(s) to Massage, Meditation, Yoga, and Owning, Raising and Training a Labrador Retriever*. Dachshunds are to follow. “I'm making a living,” she said, “working mornings.”

—DH

Undergraduate Honors

The Undergraduate English Honors Program placed seven students with the coveted award of Collegiate Scholar. Congratulations to **Brooke Barnett, Lisa Bradley, Erin Gentry, Megan Rocker, Marie Rutkowski, Jessica Shoemaker, and Sarah Townsend**, and to **Mary Ann Rasmussen**, Director of the Honors Program.

Dwight Codr, an Honors Graduate of a year ago, won an Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies plus a 5-year teaching/research fellowship to pursue a PhD in English at Cornell University starting this fall. Graciously, he passed on much credit to the department in an article in the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*: "The faculty in the English Department were so helpful and supportive during my undergraduate studies," he said. "Without their support and encouragement, I would not have had the confidence to apply for the Mellon Fellowship nor would I have been prepared for the rigorous interview process. It's not just me winning this fellowship but the entire UI English Department."

Our Website

CHECK OUT THE NEW ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WEBSITE AT <http://www.uiowa.edu/~english/>

- One click takes you to Undergraduate and graduate pages
- To faculty offices and phone numbers
- To *SMACK! ON LINE*, the classy new undergraduate electronic literary magazine published bimonthly by the Honors program
- To *The Iowa Review Web*, edited by MFA graduate Brian Lennon, with selections from the *Review* and new compositions written for the Web
- Or browse through photographs of Walt Whitman in the WWQR archive
- And this is but a start.

New Faculty

DAVID WITTENBERG joined our faculty last fall as an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English. David's BA and MA in Philosophy are from Yale and Northwestern respectively. His PhD in Comparative Literature comes from the Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins where he worked principally with Judith Butler, Sharon Cameron, and Werner Hamacher (German). Taking a little time out from his PhD program, David also earned a Masters in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley.

David picks up on a long tradition at Iowa of interest in critical theory and the history of criticism. Geoffrey Hartmann, Gayatri Spivak, Gerald Bruns, Donald



David Wittenberg

Marshall, and Herman Rapaport are several of his prominent predecessors in this area of instruction. David's dissertation analyzes Revision and Reading Practices in Philosophy, with emphasis on Heidegger reading Nietzsche and with chapters on Emerson and Harold Bloom. Meanwhile his architectural studies and studies in critical theory have combined to produce a seminar on the Aesthetics and Poetics of Space, especially as evident in the civic architecture of museums. He has also been teaching an undergraduate seminar on time and narrative theory, with special attention to time travel in the science fiction of Robert Heinlein, Michael Moorcock, and Phillip Dick.

Though intrigued with the landscape around Iowa City, and with his eye already on several old barns ripe for remodeling, David's travel to Corsica last summer has added alternative ideas. If we could only bring Corsica's terraces and cafes to town, . . . Perhaps that's what motivates time travel.

MEANWHILE, MORE NEW FACULTY will join us in the fall:

Kathy Lavezzo, from UC Santa Barbara, to teach medieval literature and culture;

Susan Phillips, from Harvard, to teach in the same area;

Douglas Trevor, also of Harvard, in early modern literature.

Academic Appointments for New PhDs

OUR OWN PhDs MOVING ON—

Loretta Collins, Assistant Professor, University of Puerto Rico;

Dal Liddle, Assistant Professor, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN;

Christi Merrill, Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Virginia;

Kate Moncrief, Assistant Professor, Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland;

Pat Murphy, Assistant Professor, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, Missouri;

Kathleen Rank, Visiting Assistant Professor, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois;

Patrick Ryan, Assistant Professor at Castleton State College, Castleton, Vermont;

Janet Winston, Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

Career Moves

Judith Pascoe and **Phil Round** won promotion this year to Associate Professor.

Jeff Porter became Lecturer in English and Director of the Huntley Multimedia Lab. Jeff will continue to teach key courses and use his computing and video expertise to lead us toward a multimedia literature and culture curriculum.

Mary Hussmann, who continues to be a department editor, will take on a special two-year assignment to develop a writing curriculum for undergraduate students that will be complementary to our graduate program in Nonfiction. Mary's record of excellent teaching and long experience in editing and publishing (she is co-editor, now on leave, from *The Iowa Review*) will be an enormous help in making our Undergraduate Writing Program flourish.

Congratulations To—

1998-99 winners of Special Project in the Arts and Humanities Grants:

Florence Boos ("A Wheen Aul' Memories': Working-Class Women Poets of Victorian Scotland");

Patricia Foster ("In the Heart of the Black Belt"); and

Judith Pascoe ("Royal Collectors from George III to Victoria").

Kathleen Diffley, who has won a 1999-2000 NEH Fellowship.

Barbara Eckstein, who has been selected to lead an Obermann Symposium next year with Jim Throgmorton in Urban Planning: "Planning as Storytelling: Sustaining America's Cities."

Mary Lou Emery, who won the 1998-99 MARION L. HUIT AWARD for teaching and service to students, to the university, and to community life.

Ed Folsom, whose revised edition of *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song*, co-edited with Jim Perlman and Dan Champion, won the 1999 Independent Publisher Book Award in Poetry.

Patricia Foster, whose collection of essays, *Minding the Body*, has been sold to Brazilian publishers, Circulo Do Livro, and is being presented as a play at the Tampa Center for Fine Arts.

Jorie Graham and **James Alan McPherson**, new F. Wendell Miller Distinguished Professors.

John Harper, who won a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Theatre. The award cited his service on the national board, his presidency of the Iowa association, his creation of a regional association for the states of the upper midwest, and his leadership in the national biennial play festival competitions. Meanwhile, ICON named his production of *The Boys Next Door* the best play in the Iowa City area for 1998-99 and his church, New Song, was voted best place to worship.

Teresa Mangum, who has been named a Dean's Scholar in the College of Liberal Arts.

Jim Marshall, for this year's Hancher-Finkbine Award.

Kathleen Renk, whose book *Caribbean Shadows and Victorian Ghosts: Women's Writing and Decolonization* was released this spring by the University Press of Virginia.

Phil Round, whose book, *By Nature and by Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production*, was honored at a forum at Tufts University celebrating the University Press of New England's new interdisciplinary series in civil society. Phil was one of two main speakers on the program.

Claire Sponsler, who won a College Teaching Award for 1998-99.

Graduate Student Honors

Michele Morano and **Kristin Brandser** won AAUW dissertation fellowships for the coming year.

English Department winners of Ballard/Seashore dissertation fellowships this year were

Kristen Brandser

Greg Beatty

Kim Smith

though **Kristen** had to relinquish her award in favor of the AAUW honor. **Kristin**, who must be the grant winner of the year, was also awarded a Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Grant in Women's Studies and the Midwest Victorian Studies Association's Walter L. Arnstein Prize for Dissertation Research. Her dissertation, "In Contempt: Women, Law, and the Victorian Novel," is being directed by Garrett Stewart.

Kim Smith too was a double winner, adding a Huntington Library Fellowship to enable his research.

More Awards for Graduate Students:

Lezlie Hall: The Prairie Lights/Sherman Paul Dissertation Scholarship

Liz Corsun: The Frederick P.W. McDowell Dissertation Scholarship

Kate Lewis: The Edwin Ford Piper Dissertation Scholarship

Laura Dubek: The Frederick F. Seely Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship for Teaching and Research

Anne Stapleton and **Donna Parsons** received T. Anne Cleary International Dissertation Research Awards for travel to England and Scotland in connection with their dissertation research.

Traci Kyle, **Sarah MacDonald**, **Christi Merrill**, and **Carol Tyx** won 4 of the 26 University Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards given in 1999-2000. **Traci** also won the Council on Teaching's Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award.

Elizabeth Dietz and **Kate Lewis** were the winners respectively of this year's Gerber and Irwin Awards for excellent teaching in General Education in Literature.

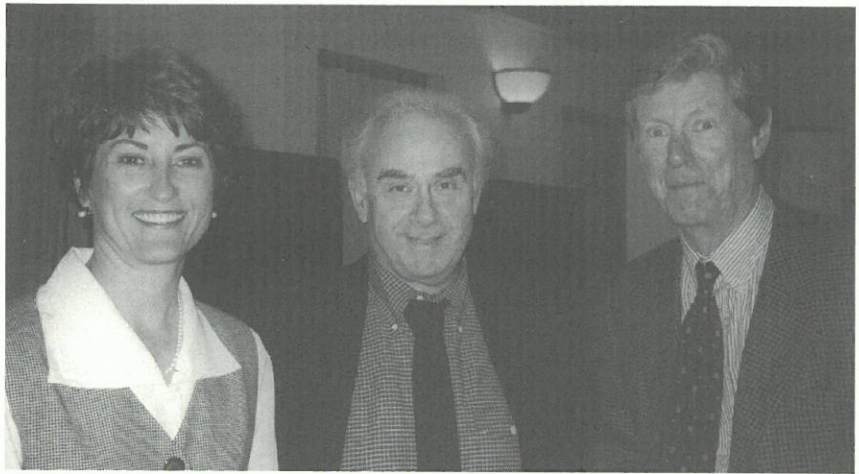
Jodi Byrd won a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, which offers a full year of support and honors her and her advisor, Mary Lou Emery

A Nonfiction Sweep

Eight outstanding women, representing diverse literary forms and chosen on the strength of their writing, have been selected to receive the **1998 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award**. The awards celebrate literary accomplishment while underscoring the special contributions of women writers to American culture. This is the first year that writers of creative nonfiction have received the award, and both recipients are connected with **The University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program**:

Marilyn Abildskov (MFA), who from 1992 to 1994 worked in Japan as an English teacher, has been writing about her time there for a collection, "Wide Love in a Narrow Place." Essays from the book have appeared in *Black Warrior Review* and *Sonora Review*, and one was awarded a Utah Arts Council prize in 1997.

Megan Foss spent last year as an Iowa Arts Fellow in Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program. She has been working on a book about her life in the drug culture of the seventies and eighties, parts of which have been published in *Creative Nonfiction* and in two forthcoming anthologies, *The Creative Nonfiction Reader* and *The Splendid Torch: An AIDS Anthology*.



Professors Joni Kinsey, William Howarth, and Robert Sayre

April Is the Doingest Month

Our academic year came to a close with two marvelous lecture series, the **Robert Sayre Retirement Symposium**, emphasizing landscape and uses of the land, and **The 1998-99 Freedman Lecture Series**, subtitled "The Afterlife of Formalism."

Guests and speakers at the **Sayre Series** were **Professors Joni Kinsey** of the University of Iowa's School of Art and Art History, **William Howarth** of Princeton University, **Sidonie Smith** of the University of Michigan, **Hertha Dawn Wong** (an Iowa PhD) now at the University of California-Berkeley, and **Bob Sayre** himself. Bob's three children were also in attendance: Gordon, recently promoted to Associate Professor of English at the University of Oregon (who also introduced his father); Nathan, pursuing a PhD in anthropology at Chicago; and Laura, who is doing the same in English at Princeton. The program, largely organized by Phil Round, offered two days of talks and discussions ending with a slide-show lecture by Professor Kinsey featuring the landscape photographs of Terry Evans. We hope to recapture much of this event in *The Iowa Review* in early 2000, and the *Review* that year will feature Evans' work on its covers.

The Freedman Lecture Series, not a week later, featured **Frances Ferguson**, Director of the Center for Research on Culture and Literature at Johns Hopkins; **Catherine Gallagher**, from California-Berkeley's English Department; and **Walter Benn Michaels**, also of the Johns Hopkins.

Ferguson spoke on "Envy Rising: What Social Forms Contributed to the Emotion." **Gallagher** followed with "Formalism and Time, or Why Brevity Endures," a paper concerned with how the timelessness associated with classical form became attached in the 19th and 20th centuries to the brief and fleet-



Professors Sidonie Smith and Hertha Wong

ing aesthetic moment. Then **Michaels** addressed the conundrums involved in the elevation of the subject position while demoting the sign to the mark.

Just imagine the conversation at the party afterwards.

